

LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL OPPOSITIONS  
IN DISCOURSE ABOUT THAILAND

by

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## ABSTRACT

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The thesis investigates the rhetorical construction of textual oppositions in the representation of Thailand in a post-colonial context. It falls within the field of linguistic oppositions pioneered by Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2008, 2010 and 2013). It concurrently offers a means of examination of tourism-related promotional discourse related to Thailand as particularised in Lonelyplanet.com and Stickmanbangkok.com. The thesis also takes into consideration and examines critically, personal views on Thai-Western relationships submitted by contributors to the Readers' Submissions section in Stickmanbangkok.com.

At the micro-level, this study is a qualitative analysis of the linguistic oppositions. These linguistic oppositions are examined using lexical and syntactic triggers. These triggers detect both *external* and *internal oppositions*. The *external oppositions* are those that pertain to the Us/ Them relationship *between* Thailand *and* its Other, namely tourists from the West or other origins. The *internal oppositions* are related to differences *among* Thai communities. The textual oppositions are conceptualised and subsequently investigated by comparing them to macro-level oppositions identified to establish the extent to which the textual oppositions detected in this study conforms to the pre-existing cultural oppositions.

The significant findings show that, at the micro-level, the external oppositions could be conceptualised broadly into the domains of FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY. At the macro level, the finding reveals conformity of the textual oppositions to the six stereotypes of Orientalism (Said 2003, McLeod 2012): namely, the association of Thailand and Thai people with the concept of being UNDEVELOPED as opposed to the civilised Other. These categories are also applicable to the internal representation of classes within Thailand. For instance, the Isan people are represented as 'the Other within' due to their

cultural disparities from the rest of the Thais. Nevertheless, to the Western writers, the people of Isan, as well as the prostitutes, appear to represent the authenticity of the country.

Ultimately, the investigation of linguistic oppositions shows that the writers in both websites write about Thailand in a way that conforms to the discourse of Orientalism (2003), namely in the recurring application of DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED in the representation of space and relationships. However, permanent discourses are also challenged. For instance, when used in gradable forms in which the opposite pairs share some similarities, signifying that Thailand and its other are not entirely different after all. Therefore, to a certain degree, the writers both contribute to and challenge Said's Orientalist discourse (2003).

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Lonelyplanet.com</b>		<b>LP</b>
	Highlight, places, and things to do	HPT
	Essential information	EI
	Tips & Articles	TA
<b>Stickmanbangkok.com</b>		<b>STB</b>
	Introduction	INT
	Scams & Problems	SP
	Getting Around Thailand	GT
	Accommodation	ACC
	What to Buy & Shopping	WBS
	Miscellaneous	MIS
	Stickman's Bangkok Tour	SBT
	Historical places/ Temple Ruins	HPTR
	Bangkok	BA
	Phuket	PH
	Ko Samet	KST
	Ko Samui	KSI
	Hua Hin	HH
	Cha Am	CHA
	Ko Chang	KCH
	Kanchanaburi	KAN
	Chiang Mai	CHM
	Isaan	ISA
	Photography & The Internet	PI
<b>Readers' Submissions: Western Writers</b>		<b>RSW</b>
	For Jiraporn	FJ
	You Save My Marriage	YSMM
	Why I Never Married a Thai:	WINMT
	Introduction	W:INT
	Honesty-Integrity	W:HI
	Intellectual Curiosity, Style v. Substance	W:IC

	The role of Husband	W:RH
	Accommodation and Compromise	W:AC
	Sex in the Long Run	W:SL
<b>Readers' Submissions: Thai Writers</b>		<b>RST</b>
	What Farangs <u>Don't Get</u> about Thai women	WFDG
	What We Think are Mistakes Western Men Make with Thai women	WWTM

### SYMBOLS AND TYPOGRAPHICAL CONVENTIONS IN THIS STUDY

X/Y	specifies that X and Y (in lexical, phrasal, or clausal forms) share an oppositional relationship.
<b>Bold</b>	signifies a pair of oppositions both conventional and unconventional in my text; e.g., <b>big/small</b> as in his car is <b>big</b> , but mine is <b>small</b> .
' <b>Bold</b> '	signifies a pair of oppositions both conventional and unconventional taken from other texts
<i>Italics</i>	indicates syntactic triggers for the pair of oppositions; e.g., the house is <i>not big but small</i> .
	Also indicates my emphasis in the text
CAPITALS	signify conceptual oppositions
'Single quotes'	used to designate the word(s) being quoted from a text.

In some part of the study where the work of Davies (2008 and 2013) is referenced, some additional conventions of symbols and typography are listed as follow:

CAPITALS	refers to the concepts that oppositions share on the plane of equivalence; e.g., <b>big/small</b> are considered equivalent to examples of SIZE.
<b>BOLD CAPITALS</b>	signifies the two canonical conceptual oppositions as those that are represented by oppositions; e.g., mice and elephants could be allied with the canonical conceptual oppositions <b>BIG/SMALL</b> .
<i>ITALICISED CAPITALS</i>	indicates the concepts on the plane(s) of difference for an oppositional pair: big and small are different on THE SCALE OF SIZE.

#### LIST OF DEFINITIONS

Farangs	generic terms to identify <i>the West, Western people, and Western-derived things</i> (Kitiarsa in Harrison, 2010).
Isan, Isaan	refers to Northeastern part of Thailand and people from the area. Both spelling is acceptable, but ‘Isan’ is a preferred spelling in the study



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

---

### 1.1 Introduction

The thesis investigates the linguistic oppositions in the discourse about Thailand in Lonelyplanet.com and Stickmanbangkok.com. It experiments with an analytical method by applying syntactic frames of the kind proposed by Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2008, 2010, and 2013) to examine the oppositions constructed within the representation of Thailand.

The study examines the aspects of Thailand that the writers find to be significant. As Hall (1997) puts it, 'representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people' (p.15). The process relies on the selection of 'meaningful' aspects of the places and people to represent them through language. The focus is not on an overall truth about the country and Thai people, but on the way Thailand is represented in writing.

The study aims at examining the representation of Thailand through linguistic oppositions. The purpose is to use micro-level linguistic analysis to shed light on the macro oppositions (1) *between* Thailand *and* its Other and (2) *within* Thailand. The research, therefore, concerns the broader cultural significance of linguistic oppositions and seeks to relate these oppositions to cultural studies on postcolonialism, tourism, and prostitution, which are related to Said's Orientalism (2003).

The study refrains from the assumptions that the oppositions are exclusively about *Thailand/ the West* or *Thais/ the Westerners*. In fact, the Orientalist discourse is not about the fixated *East/ West* dichotomy. As pointed out by Said in the Preface of Orientalism (2003) when discussing the Vietnamese version of the Orientalism, he expressed his great pleasure that his

book is well-received 'particularly in the many different lands of the 'Orient' itself'. The discourse of Orientalism is more about 'the tumultuous dynamics of contemporary history' and that 'neither the term Orient nor the concept of the West has any ontological stability; each is made up of human effort, partly affirmation, partly identification of the Other' (2003, xii). Therefore, the study treats conceptual oppositions that emerge from the linguistic oppositions as a form of *Us/ Them* relation. However, since the study falls within the postcolonial context and is conducted in English based websites founded by the Westerners, the influence of the West as the Other could be inevitable in some cases. The study aims at answering the following research questions:

<b>RQ 1</b>	What conceptual oppositions are constructed between Thailand and the Other (external)?
<b>RQ 2</b>	What conceptual oppositions are constructed within Thailand (internal)?
<b>RQ 3</b>	What are the differences between conceptual oppositions in different types of texts about Thailand?
<b>RQ 4</b>	To what extent do the conceptual oppositions in discourse about Thailand constitute an Orientalist discourse?

This study is based on the premise that writers conceptualise their understanding of Thailand through linguistic oppositions. It discusses cultural theorists' suggestion that various cultural oppositions underpin the relations between Thailand (or 'the East' more generally) and its Other (or 'the West' more specifically). The research contends that these oppositions can be empirically investigated by paying attention to the micro-level linguistic oppositions. In this respect, this work fits with the tradition of critical discourse analysis, whereby cultural patterns of representation are investigated in terms of the specific linguistic features found in textual data (e.g., Fairclough 1992, 2003; Van Dijk 1993). Later chapters will be dedicated to discussing linguistic and cultural oppositions; however, given that these ideas are so central to this thesis, it is worth discussing them briefly at this point.

## 1.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The study is located within the field of Critical Discourse Analysis and can be explained with Fairclough's three-dimensional framework (2001). This framework classifies the analysis into the area of spoken or written text, discourse practice (production, distribution, and consumption of text) and discursive practice (socio-cultural practice). The analytical process is also categorised into *micro-level* for the text analysis focusing on the linguistic aspects such as lexical choices, syntactic analysis, and rhetorical devices, *meso-level* on the production and consumption of text, and *the macro-level* on the intertextuality and interdiscursivity which consider how texts can be affected by the broader social and cultural phenomenon.

This work follows Fairclough's approach to CDA. At the micro-level, it investigates the use of linguistic oppositions with an application of the syntactic frames (Davies 2008, 2010, and 2013; Jeffries 2014). The process should answer the first and second research questions by revealing the types (*internal* and *external*) of oppositions constructed in this study. To answer the third research question, an analysis on the meso-level could provide an insight into how differences in text producers, genres, or nature of the websites could result in various forms of opposition in the representation of Thailand. This matter is also discussed within the framework of Halliday's Field, Tenor, and Mode (1985) in an introduction to the data in (section 1.7). Lastly, the fourth research question is concerned with the linguistic oppositions found in texts and their relationship with more prominent cultural oppositions, specifically Said's Orientalism (2003). This stage is comparable to Fairclough's macro-level of analysis in which the aim is to uncover traces of broader or more prominent cultural oppositions through the application of linguistic oppositions in tourism and personal discourse about Thailand.

The study aims at examining the linguistic oppositions and other related textual features employed in the representation of Thailand in Lonelyplanet.com and stickmanangkok.com (micro-level) and how they reflect the stereotypical beliefs about Thailand on the cultural levels (macro-level). It also takes into consideration differences that may arise from the

analysis of oppositions in different genres of texts (meso-level). A more thorough review of studies within the field of Critical Discourse Analysis will be provided in chapter 3.

### **1.3 Linguistic oppositions**

The micro-level focus of this thesis is linguistic opposition. The approach taken to investigate the textual opposition is greatly influenced by Jeffries (2014) and Davie (2008, 2013), and is outlined in detail in Chapter 2. Here, a brief explanation is provided.

#### **1.3.1 Canonical oppositions**

The term opposition is adopted to include several types of oppositional relations (Saeed 1997, p. 66). In comparison to the various other meanings of the word 'relations', such as hyponymy, synonymy, and meronymy, antonymy is believed to be the most fundamental and significant one (Leech 1974; Cruse 1986; Lyon 1977; Murphy 2003; Lehrer & Lehrer 1982). Cruse (2011) also adds that the opposite relation is believed to be, to an extent, cognitively primitive, as even a young child is able to answer the question, 'What's the opposite of big/long/heavy/up/out?' and it is also believed to be the only sense relation that can 'receive direct recognition in everyday language' (Cruse 2011, p. 153). The answer to Cruse's question above could be 'big/small', 'long/short', 'heavy/light', 'up/down', and 'out/ in' and should be easily recognised by many. This type of opposition is traditionally known as the canonical or conventional opposition. It is considered traditional due to its lexical form, a common form of antonyms, and it is present in the lexical authorities, namely thesaurus or dictionary.

#### **1.3.2 Non-canonical oppositions**

The other kind of linguistic opposition is known as contextual opposition: it is an opposite relation which only occurs in a specific context. It is also known as constructed, non-canonical, and unconventional opposition due to its forms of words, phrases, or sentences

(Jeffries 2014; Davies 2013). Accordingly, a non-canonical pair of opposition between **beautiful** and **stupid** should never co-exist in a traditional dictionary because, in general circumstances, they are not considered a pair of antonyms, especially in comparison to more conventional candidates, such as **ugly/(beautiful)** and **smart/(stupid)**. It is even more unlikely to find unconventional pairs in a sentence form; for instance, '**the women are pretty, sexy, and fun (suay, sexi, sanuk)/ they are also not an intellectual force in any way** (RSW: WINMT, W:IC2).

The thesis adheres to Davies's notion of opposition that it is 'a conceptual phenomenon' and the construction of the non-canonical opposition in context is possible. It is also lexical since people need to rely on the 'core' opposition (traditional antonymy) which is conceptualised at a higher level for comprehension. People are required to share the same linguistic knowledge to understand this type of opposition (Davies 2013, p. 206). In other words, non-canonical oppositions could be subjectively constructed, but users still rely on conventional forms of opposition at the conceptual level to make sense of them. The study treats conceptual oppositions as links to investigate the canonical and non-canonical oppositions.

## **1.4 Cultural oppositions**

Linguistic opposition is the empirical focus of this thesis. However, the interest in the linguistic construction of opposition is rooted in a deep-seated concern for cultural oppositions in general. For this reason, at the macro-levels of oppositions, the following sections introduce some of the central cultural oppositions concerned at this juncture. It includes the principal cultural oppositions in colonialism, Orientalism (2003), tourism, and prostitution.

### **1.4.1 Colonialism**

This study focuses on colonialism as a form of discourse. It refers to the systematic account of colonised countries and their people as perceived by their Western colonisers. Colonial

discourse subtly and overtly veers towards Euro centrality with assumptions made of its supposed higher degree of historical, literary, and technological advancement. The discourse is binary in nature. It predisposes the colonised to view themselves as inferior through a negative form of identification created by the colonisers, coupled with the colonisers' assumptions of their own superiority. Regardless of the status of those colonised in their own societies or their cultural statuses, their relationship with the colonisers still posits them on the primitive side in comparison to the civilised West (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2007, p. 36–37).

Postcolonialism is a term applied to denote the experiences of the colonised in terms of the notions of politics, linguistics, and culture; with particular reference to those countries colonised by Europeans. It attends to the social and cultural consequences of colonialism (p. 168). When conducted within the binaries, the representation of 'them' also allows the reflection of 'us'. Such 'us' and 'them' relations or representations have been argued to be central to discourses of colonialism and postcolonialism. Within the postcolonial framework, the dichotomies represent the unequal relationship between the West as colonisers and the Orient as colonised. Among others, Albert Memmi (1965) sees the practice as a form of power manipulation. He points out the psychological and moral consequences of exploitation by colonisers on the inferior 'Others,' i.e. through the destruction of the language and cultures of the colonised.

Also, McLeod (2012) coins the term 'colonising the mind' to describe a process operated by the colonisers to justify their right to colonisation by making the colonised nations accede to their perceived inferiority in 'the colonial order of things'. The colonised people are persuaded to accept the coloniser's way of logic, use their language, and regard the world through their beliefs and 'ways of thinking' (p.20).

Language and power are intertwined discourses of colonialism. Language is not merely a means of communication: 'it constitutes our world-view by cutting up and ordering reality

into meaningful units'. Hence, through language, people learn what they value and the differences between the superiority and inferiority of things. Regarding colonisation, the colonisers' belief system is the most valued and treated as the ultimate truth. On the other hand, people who are colonised are viewed as 'uncivilised' due to their lack of value, which results in their need to be 'rescued' (McLeod 2012, p. 21).

The discourse related to colonialism is binary in nature. Thailand, formerly known as Siam until 1939, is the only country in South East Asia that escaped direct Western colonisation. Anderson (1978) puts forward the notion that the freedom from colonisation is celebrated by Thais and that there is a prevalent feeling that independence was an outcome of 'the clever diplomacy, astute adaptability and modernising outlook of the Chakri monarchs Mongkut and Chulalongkorn (King Rama V, r. 1868–1910) (p. 197)'. To Anderson, this notion is reinforced and reproduced in promotional material published by the National Tourist Board. It is also a point of focus in other forms of material produced by the Nationalists. To elaborate, Winichakul (2014) states that the Thai curriculum in schools also propagates this notion about Thai independence as part of a nationalistic process.

The country, however, is still a part of the postcolonial culture (Anderson 1978; Winichakul 2011; Reynolds 1999; Jackson 2007). Winichakul (2011) states that Siam also shared in the colonialism experiences of the colonised neighbouring countries, as it was conditioned to be a part of the colonial system of economy. It also had a history of anti-colonialism. The most apparent evidence of colonial influence in contemporary Thailand is in the practice of law and medicine, the systems of education and government, and transportation, which stemmed from Western influence during the time when the country was under the threat of colonisation (Nopphorn 2001 [2009], cited in Harrison 2014). The historical aspects are of significance in this study, as they explain how Thailand fits into the domain of postcolonialism. Apart from the rise of the royal nationalism during the anti-colonial movement, this period also heightened the Thai social class conflict, which also forms a prominent part of this study.

### 1.4.2 Orientalism

The role that language played in setting the tone related to the power relationship between Thailand and the West is crucial to this study. It draws upon Said's *Orientalism* (2003), which is viewed as 'one of the most influential books of the late twentieth century' (McLeod 2012, p. 24). It explores the Western thought-process, their ideology and their perception about the Orient and how these served to justify their motives and impetus for imperial invasion.

As mentioned in 1.2, the study is also grounded within the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In Lazarus (2011), Said's *Orientalism* (2003) is fundamentally part of Foucault's notions of discourse and its construction. This is due to his emphasis on power that is related to knowledge and on representations that are constantly manipulated by the structures of power in which they are part of. As Said put it in an interview that appeared in the post-structuralist theoretical journal *Diacritics* in 1976 when he was writing *Orientalism*:

The focus of interest in *Orientalism* for me has been the partnership between a discursive and archival textuality and worldly power, one as an index and refraction of the other. As a systematic discourse *Orientalism* is written knowledge, but because it is in the world and directly about the world, it is *more* than knowledge: it is *power* since, so far as the Orient is concerned, *Orientalism* is the operative and effective knowledge by which he was delivered textually to the West, occupied by the West, milked by the West for his resources, humanly quashed by the West. (Brennan, *Wars of Position* in Lazarus 2011, p.188, emphasis in original).

The excerpt is lengthily quoted to highlight *Orientalism* as a type of discourse that is concerned with the link between language and established power and knowledge. In this context, language is a means that the West conveys, manipulate, and institutionalise knowledge about the Orient. According to Said's theory, the Orientals, from the Western perspective, are not based on 'an inert fact of nature', but more so the product of supposition and conjecture. The Westerners' existence and their own sense of identity are based on what they consider, to a large extent, that is contrary to Oriental ideals and culture. The essence of the Orient seems to lie in its role of defining the West 'as its contrasting image, idea,



personality, experience'. With this resulting contrast, Said asserts that 'European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self' (Said 2003, p. 2–5). Orientalism, therefore, refers to a Westerners' discursive exercise and construction of the Orient in a manner that propagates and enforces Western superiority. The creation of the Orient in Orientalism (2003) is a reciprocal process by which Westerners learn about who they are vicariously through the Oriental others. The somewhat negative connotation of the identification and the Us/ Them binary underline the concept of Orientalism as also being subjected to a form of power relationship. It is a form of unequal power relationship that generally exists in an in-group/out-group form of representation (van Dijk 2011; Brons 2015).

Within the ambit of postcolonial reflection, one of the most prominent relationships between Thailand and the West is featured in the musical *The King and I*. The relationship between Anna and the King of Siam conforms to mainstream colonial discourse in that Anna represents the superior West. It reproduces the stereotypes of the Orient in Orientalism (2003) by representing Siam (former name of Thailand until 1939) as the land of 'absolute but ultimately acceptable despotism, abundant sexuality, and a strong connection between the two' (Bishop & Robinson 1998, p. 33). The success of *The King and I*, both in the form of musicals and Hollywood movies, reinforces the discourse about Orientalism (2003) in the country, free from imperial invasion. This study follows six stereotypes of Orientalism outlined by McLeod (2012):

1.4.2.1 The Orient is timeless.

1.4.2.2 The Orient is strange.

1.4.2.3 Orientalism makes assumptions about people.

1.4.2.4 Orientalism makes assumptions about gender.

1.4.2.5 The Orient is feminine.

#### 1.4.2.6 The Oriental is degenerate.

The stereotypes outlined above will be further elaborated in Chapter 3 and used as the basis for my assessment of the extent to which the linguistic oppositions that I identify constitute as discourse related to Orientalism.

### 1.4.3 Tourism

The emphasis of this section is on the fundamental nature of tourism, specifically on the act of gaze. It starts with the discussion of the gaze and its power in tourism (1.4.3.1). Then it focuses on the aspect of gender in which tourism, including other forms of media, are controlled by men and for men (1.4.3.2). Lastly, the section points out the reproduction of certain stereotypes about Thailand which contributes to the perpetuation of such images.

#### 1.4.3.1 Tourist Gaze

Tourism revolves around the exoticness as people embark on a journey to escape from monotony. While searching for something out-of-ordinary, they gaze, define, and construct the locals. Each journey is organised and based on a combination of the *reality* and shared *imagination* of the place (Urry 2011; Spurr 1993; Fursich 2002, Salazar 2011, Said 2003, Wearing, Stevenson, Young 2010).

Binary oppositions underline the reasons for travelling. Urry (2011) explains how people, while travelling or performing an act of sight-seeing, expect experiences that are different from what they encounter in their mundane life:

Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered (p. 238).

To Urry (2011), the underlying notion of tourism is not limited to spatial distinction alone but extends to varied perceptions of reality. The tourist destination should provide the pleasure that comes about through the tourist's experiences with the elements of surrealism. To some

extent, it is also a reciprocal learning process. While travelling, people do not merely experience different cultures, but it allows them to reflect upon what they deem normal at home—the normality that could 'otherwise remain opaque'. The tourist gaze is based on the experiences in places travellers have detached themselves from their daily life—something 'out of the ordinary' (Urry 2011, p. 282).

Gazing is also related to power. As pointed out by Spurr (1993), viewed through the postcolonial framework, the act of gazing is fundamental to the colonisers as it allows them to define, make a note of, and construct the colonised 'Other'. From this perspective, tourists behave almost in the same way as did those colonisers in the colonial time. Therefore, the power in tourism is with those who perform the gaze. It is the normality of the gazer that holds a sense of supremacy, almost the same kind that existed during colonialism.

#### **1.4.3.2 Male Gaze**

The section adds to the notion that the tourist gaze is related to power that the power is also gendered. To begin with, in Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1989), male gaze can be defined with an assumption that the production of films is male-oriented. Accordingly, the characters are sexualised and objectified for the pleasure of male audiences. Male Gaze is the lens that reflects the way men see the world, especially their way of seeing women. The act of 'looking' is, then, political and power-related. The recurring construction of female images in accordance with the desire of male audience in films can lead to the persistence of a male-dominated society. It is the society that women are simplified to nothing, but objects for male characters and male audience to gaze upon. This definition of gaze may be prominent in film studies, but it is also applied to gender power in everyday activities, including tourism.

Tourism is also a male-centric activity. According to Kinnaird et al. (1994), it is about 'social interaction and social articulations of motivations, desires, traditions, and perceptions, all of which are gendered'. Gender, therefore, plays a significant role in the way tourist spaces are

represented and consumed (p. 24 in Wearing, Stevenson, Young 2010). The argument that tourism is male-oriented is also elaborated by Wilson (1995), in the excerpt below.

It is this *flâneur*, the *flâneur* as a man of pleasure, as a man who takes visual possession of the city, who has emerged in postmodern feminist discourse as the embodiment of the male 'gaze'. He represents men's visual and voyeuristic mastery over women. According to this view, the *flâneur's* freedom to wander at will through the city is essentially a masculine freedom. Thus, the very idea of the flâneur reveals it to be a gendered concept. (Wilson, 1995: 65 in Wearing, Stevenson, Young 2010, p. 7, emphasis in original).

The flâneur refers to a tourist. His behaviour coincides with Urry's Tourist Gaze (2011) in that visual consumption is central to tourism. Besides their gaze, men occupy a superior position in the gender hierarchy because of their freedom to roam public places. In the nineteenth century, good women were kept inside while only bad ones, e.g. prostitutes, were alone in public space (Enloe 2014, Wolff, 1985: 41 in Wearing, Stevenson, Young 2010,). Likewise, Sanders-McDonagh (2017) also highlights the significance of gazing in her study about female gaze in sexual attractions in Thailand and the Netherlands:

The importance of the visual was highlighted by almost every woman that I interviewed, and many spoke about desire in scopophilic terms, telling me that they wanted to look, they liked to look, they loved to see: *looking* was the only way that many of them could analyse their desire to visit and consume sexual experiences. In fact, when I was coding the interviews, the following words emerged in high frequencies across the entire data set: look, watch, see, spectacle, fascinating. (p. 91, 2017, emphasis in original).

It should be noted that Sanders-McDonagh (2017) focuses on the female gaze in the sex industry. However, it does not mean that men behave in an entirely opposite manner considering that gazing is a fundamental of tourism (Urry 2011). Since exoticness is an *Us/Them* demarcation in tourism, the female gaze in sexual entertainments in Thailand strengthens this existing power hierarchy of otherness. Gazing is politics when the sex workers are regarded as degrading objects, while the Western females are active consumers of sexual commodities. Sanders-McDonagh (2017) sees this relationship as problematic as it

helps maintain the power hierarchy in which Thai sex workers are treated as the inferior Other. However, the fact that women merely 'looking' also lessens the significance of their part in the problems when it is compared with the physical contacts that men have with the sex workers. Viewed from this perspective, their participation in this business could be deemed innocent. Nevertheless, it is also dangerous when the contribution of the female tourists to the prosperity of the sex industry is ignored merely because they are not the mainstream kinds of visitors.

Sanders-McDonagh's study (2017) offers an insight into the discursive construction of the sex industry in Thailand (EAST) and also the Netherlands (WEST). The two countries are utterly different in their social and cultural backgrounds. However, the female visitors visually consume sexual entertainment in similar manners, including how they discursively framed the female sex workers within the concept of Other, strange, and degrading. The result reveals the universal power of gaze, whether it is conducted by men or women, in rendering the female sex workers as an inferior objectified Other.

### **14.3.3 Maintaining stereotypes**

The focus of this section is on the reproduction of certain images of tourist destinations in tourism. Firstly, with an emphasis on an act of imagination, Salazar in *Tourism Imaginaries: A Conceptual Approach* (2011) defines the concept of imaginaries as 'socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people's personal imaginings and are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices' (p. 2). They could be structured in binary forms that are often challenging to distinguish in reality, including the representation of the world in 'paradigmatically linked binominals: nature-culture, here-there, male-female, inside-outside, and local-global' (Salazar 2011, p. 864).

Salazar (2011) also points out how imagination is fundamental in the portrayal of places and groups of people in tourism discourse. To elaborate, travelling is pre-determined and risk-controlled through information that people have garnered before the trip. They draw upon the

knowledge from several sources and expect the place to be so accordingly. He also points out the subtle influence of the ideologies and the social practice embedded in the tourists' imagination on how they interact with the locals or each other.

The reproduction of the knowledge that shapes the experiences of travellers could be elaborated with *latent* and *manifest* Orientalism (Said 2003, p. 206). *Latent* Orientalism refers to the Orient as existing in the imagination of the West and which remains comparatively persistent over the years. On the other hand, *manifest* Orientalism refers to pragmatic aspects of Orientalism that point to an innumerable production of knowledge about Orientalism through a different point in time.

Said suggests that though Orientalism could be manifested in a number of ways owing to 'historical specificity and individual styles and perspectives', they still share the same basis of *latent* Orientalism. Said's analysis of the work of the nineteenth-century writers found that their representations of the Orient share the same basis regardless of their utterly different manifestation:

'...every writer on the Orient, from Renan to Marx (ideologically speaking), or from the most rigorous scholars (Lane and Sacy) to the most powerful imaginations (Flaubert and Nerval), saw the Orient as a locale requiring Western attention, reconstruction, even redemption' (Said 2003, p. 205).

The emphasis on the notion of tourism imagination and *latent* and *manifest* Orientalism is the basis that in any genre of the text, the representation of 'new knowledge' relies on 'shared' or 'given' knowledge about the country. Referring to Hall (1982), the representation of any kind is not established on reality but achieved through the process of selection. In tourism, this could be influenced by an act of imagination or *latent* Orientalism. Therefore, the existence of spaces depends on the selected meanings assigned to them.

The idea of Said's *latent* Orientalism (2003, p. 206) which is in reference to the Westerners' shared and recurrent imagination about the Orient is, to an extent, comparable to the *Given knowledge* in this study. When writing about a country, the writer should have some degree

of background knowledge about the place that he is writing about. I draw on Halliday's functions of information, the *New* and the *Given* (2014, p. 116):

In the idealised form each information unit consists of a *Given* element accompanied by a *New* element. But there are two conditions of departure from this principle. One is that discourse has to start somewhere, so there can be a discourse-initiating unit consisting of a *New* element only. The other is that by its nature the *Given* is likely to be **phoric** – referring to something already present in the verbal or non-verbal context; ... Structurally, therefore, we shall say that an information unit consists of an obligatory *New* element plus an optional *Given* (p. 116).

Following Halliday (2014), in conveying information, in a certain context, what is meant to be said may be embedded with information previously known or *Given* in the context. The structure is also fundamentally “natural” (non-arbitrary) in that the *New* is prominent and usually preceded by the *Given* (116). The *Given*, plays a significant role in this study as it enables investigation of the stereotypes or aspects of Thailand that are already widely held in the mindset of Westerners.

Once space is also repeatedly represented with the same selection, an individual's observation of the place could turn stereotypical. According to Hall (1997), people make sense of the world through the classification of readily recognised social phenomenon and practices. This process allows them to draw conclusions and apply similar forms of categorisation to understand other similar practices based on their previous experiences, e.g. Said's latent/manifest (2003) or Halliday's *Given/ New* (2014). This practice is considered negative when people are reduced and subjected to stereotyping. They are simplified and exaggerated. These traits are treated as natural, with little prospect of change in the minds of those who form these stereotypes.

In the realm of tourism, the stereotypes of Orientalism can be economically beneficial for countries seeking to attract Western tourists. As pointed out by Echtner and Prasad (2003), three recurring myths could be identified in the representation of the developing countries: the myth of the *unchanged*, the myth of the *unrestrained*, and the myth of the *uncivilised* (my

emphasis). These qualities of the Orient mark the contrasts between the West and the Orient, underlining the purpose of tourism: people travel to escape from mundane life and familiarity at home. For the benefit of tourism, what deems to be negative could, in fact, be valued and even adopted by the locals themselves. This process is known as *Self-Orientalism* and will be elaborated, along with other prominent forms of cultural oppositions, in chapter 3.

The representation and promotion of tourist attractions are also gendered. Consistent with the notion of the male gaze in 1.4.3.2, tourist destinations are framed in a way that favour men and mainstream sexual ideologies. The way places and their locals are photographed also shaped the way they are consumed. Hence, this promotion material (e.g. brochure) is where the guided expectation is turned into reality (Pritchard and Morgan 2000). This guided expectation is repeatedly reproduced in the media. As a result, the reputation of Thailand as a hub for sex industry is maintained and has become a part of an *authentic* identity of the country. The history of Thailand with prostitution could be considered a form of GIVEN that is blended in the representation of other activities about Thailand (NEW). For instance, Sanders-McDonagh (2019) points out in her study on female consumption of sexual entertainments in Thailand and the Netherlands that the topics of sex industry are mentioned alongside general facts about the countries. Among others, in promoting Pattaya, Lonely Planet guidebook criticises the sexual activities, but still guide the readers to the exact location. She explains this conflict with a response from Tashi Wheeler, a representative of the publisher:

*Lonely Planet's stance on sex tourism in Thailand is, of course, that it is a bad thing. We feel that we have a responsibility not to ignore it but to try to tell travellers the realities on the ground. We don't try to highlight the sex industry but we do tell it like it is... We don't encourage authors to write about sex tourism but I do feel we have a responsibility to travelers to advise them on what they should be aware of when they are in the country. This covers environmental concerns, sex tourism, poverty, unchecked building development in tourist areas and so on. We want our information to help travelers to have a positive impact on a place.* (personal email communication, 2008 in Sanders-McDonagh 2017, my emphasis).



According to Tashi Wheeler, sex tourism in Thailand is aligned with BAD in the GOOD/BAD spectrum, but it is still presented in the guidebook to cover both sides of the country. In other words, the topic of sexual activities needs to be mentioned in the guidebook even though the writers disapprove of the business because it does exist after all, and it is necessary to introduce all aspects of the country.

Sanders-McDonagh (2017), however, thinks this is problematic because the information about the sex industry and other (innocent) aspects about Thailand are blended flawlessly in the representation, e.g. the reference of 'delicate sea breezes' and 'infamous go-go bars' is mentioned close to each other. The situation is similar in the Rough Guide in which readers are recommended to avoid certain areas in the Netherlands due to their sex reputation, while paradoxically promotes specific activities in the areas. The problem is that the reputation as sex destinations is not random but is discursively constructed through media institutions. The tourist gaze in sexual entertainment is, consequently, carried on since the tourists' search for the authenticity of Thailand (prostitution) is guided and arbitrated by these guidebooks. Prostitution in Thailand is widely perceived as an integral aspect of the country and is often stereotyped as such. Since prostitution is considered a lucrative business and a prominent part of Thailand, the following section discusses the current situation of prostitution and its stigma in Thailand.

#### **1.4.3.4 Prostitution in Thailand**

In Thailand, prostitution is a flourishing business with 120,000 people in the sex industry, according to the Thai Ministry of Public Health and NGOs (endslaverynow.org). For this reason, it appears to be one of the recurring themes in the representation of Thailand globally. As Bishop and Robinson (1998) pointed out, 'Perhaps the matter is one not of quantity but focus. Thailand is, in fact, conspicuous by its presence in the popular media. So, Thailand is a story, but audiences always receive the same story' (p. 53, emphasis in original). The association of Thailand with women and prostitution in media is not new. Amongst others and including the song *One Night in Bangkok* which portrays the capitol of Thailand through a

series of binaries, bars/temples, flesh/history, angel/devil, despair/ecstasy, and god/woman. Bangkok 'makes a hard man humble' and 'the tough guys tumble'. Bangkok is, therefore, a paradise for 'fun-loving male visitors'.

The relationship between Thailand and prostitution has become so entrenched in the country to the point that the stereotype has turned, to an extent, into a version of 'reality' about the country. One of the most evident examples is when Longman Dictionary describes the capital of Thailand as 'a place where there are a lot of prostitutes', enraging the Thais. This edition was withdrawn from the market later on (The Herald of Scotland.com).

The incident with the Longman Dictionary drew the Thai public's attention primarily as a result of the widely held notion of the Dictionary as reference material. However, the problem was not about what was stated in the *Longman Dictionary* per se, but that the definition could go on to create an undesirable stigma of Thailand in other forms of media: 'The Dictionary of English Language and Culture draws its information from a wide range of sources such, as newspapers and magazines, and is intended to reflect the popular meaning of words; it does not influence or create new definitions', the publisher said (The Herald of Scotland.com).

The statement made by the Longman publisher to justify their decision to associate the meaning of Bangkok with prostitution appears to be in line with the definition of representation, as mentioned by Hall (1997): Bangkok is not created out of nowhere but defined by a selection of several other meanings from popular media. What can be drawn from this incident is that the detrimental effect of stereotyping could turn the media representation of a specific topic into a *fact*; and in this case, that Bangkok is the capital for the sex industry.

Prostitution is not the only stereotypical feature of Thailand. As mentioned in the song, *One Night in Bangkok*, this country is also known for Buddhism. However, in this context, the association with the sex industry appears to overshadow the aspect of religion. The incident with the Longman Dictionary could provide some degree of evidence of the effect of the

media has in turning the imagination, expectation, and stereotypes about the country into *reality*.

To summarise, the elaboration of cultural opposition has been on the binary opposition to colonialism, Orientalism, tourism, and prostitution. The emphasis is on the construction of an inferior position of the Orient expressed through language to maintain the unequal relationship at the level of mindsets and reproduced to justify their subjugation. Said's Orientalism (2003) draws attention to the stereotypes of colonial discourse and its continuation in other forms of discourses: e.g., tourism in which the power of gaze in tourist gaze (2011) and male gaze (1962) are also examined. The last section on prostitution focuses on the representation of prostitution in Thailand that turns the Western views on the business into a form of *reality* of the country. The following section is primarily concerned with aspects associated with Thailand.

## **1.5 Thailand**

This section aims at providing some background context in Thailand. It follows two critical concepts in this thesis, the *external* and *internal oppositions*. Simply put, *external oppositions* are oppositions constructed between Thailand and elsewhere, and *internal oppositions* have both sides within Thailand.

### **1.5.1 Brief history of Thailand**

Historically, Thailand, known as Siam until 1939, has long been involved in trade and has had to deal with the rest of the world without being insular. Framed within the discourse of postcolonialism, this study starts with the narration of Thai history during the colonial era. The invasion from the West occurred during the reign of King Rama I (1782–1809), the first king of Rattanakosin. The kingdom maintained its freedom by giving up some territories and by virtue of other agreements. King Rama III (1824–1851) revived the relationship with the West and also started trading with the Chinese. King Mongkut, Rama IV (1851–1868), well-

known among the Westerners in 'The King and I', was popular among the Thais when he saved the country from Western colonisation by establishing treaties with a European power and leading the country to social and economic transformation (tourismthailand.org).

When challenged by the imperial threat, the Siamese rulers saw the need to reinvent the image of the country as being more civilised. King Chulalongkorn, Rama V (1869–1910) carried on his father's legacy by eradicating slavery and improving the country's welfare and administration. It is during this time that the king went on a European tour from 1897 to 1907, during which he represented himself as a ruler of a civilised Asian nation. It is during this period of time that the internal binaries within Thailand seemed to be accelerated when the Thai ruling class embraced the colonial mindset.

The State used ideological apparatuses to instil desirable ideologies amongst Thai citizens. The dominant ideologies were invented by Siamese elites under Western influences during the so-called 'semi-colonial' period when Siam was trying to be 'siwilai' (transliterated from the word 'civilised'). This pushed the antecedent Thai culture and rural Thai culture to the status of a barbaric culture and marginalised those that were not thought of as 'siwilai'. This process resulted in widening the gaps between the various social classes in Thailand (Winichakul, 2000a, 2000b, Aphornsuvan, 2009).

Another significant historical relationship with foreign countries was forged during the Vietnam War (around 1970 to 1980) when the country had turned into a 'Rest and Recreation' (R & R or 'I & I' to many U.S. soldiers). It became an oft-visited destination for American and other Western soldiers, specifically Pattaya, which was close to the U.S. navy base. The period marked the beginning of the proliferation of the association of Thailand as a hub for sex tourism, and the legacy continued after the war ended (Truong, 1990, Bishop & Robinson 1999).

### 1.5.2 External oppositions: Thailand/ the Other

Consistent with the Western identification of *self* through the Orient as an inferior form of *others* in 1.3.1, the Us-Them binary also plays a significant role in forming Thai identities. Through ‘negative identification’, Thais have learnt to define who they are by defining what they are not (Winichakul, 1994, p. 5). Chachavalpongpun (2005) also adds that ‘...because the prime objective of the negative identification was to identify Thainess, it would not matter whether otherness could be clearly defined, as long as it served as a contradictory subject to Thai nationhood’ (2005, p. 41). The identification of self through others is also treated as a natural thing:

In Thailand today, there is a widespread assumption that there is such a thing as *a common Thai nature or identity: khwanpenthai (Thainess)*. It is believed *to have existed for a long time, and all Thais are supposed to be well aware of its virtue*. The essence of Thainess has been *well preserved up to the present time* despite the fact that Siam has been transformed greatly toward modernisation in the past hundred years (1994, p. 3, emphasis added).

The essence of "Thainess" is, therefore, a result of identifying the distinctions between themselves and Others. The sense of self is treated as normative and fixated in the Thai mindset, regardless of social or temporal changes. In *Coming to Terms with the West* (2010), the relationship between Thailand and the West entails “a paradoxical set of desires: how to catch up with the West without ‘kissing the asses of the farang’ (*tam konfarang*); how to be like the West yet also to remain different; how not to love the West despite its attractions; and how not to hate it despite its obnoxious dominance” (p. 135). The Western influence, to the Thais, becomes both a threat and a desirable role model. To deal with this type of relationship, binaries oppositions are employed as epistemological means to conceptualise the relationship between Thailand and the West in dominant public discourse:

<b>West</b>	<b>Thai</b>
Other	Self
Worldly/ material	Spiritual, religious, moral
Outside/ outer	Inside/ Inner
Decadent	Pure
Public, work	Private, family life

**Table 1.1: oppositions conceptualising the relationship between Thailand and the West**

The table summarises the oppositions, or bifurcation, that constructs the Thai sense of self in relation to their perceptions of the West. The oppositions are considered as 'an intellectual strategy' to make sense of the West. Therefore, they are newly coined words to represent the West without regard to the reality, history, culture, and politics of the West (Winichakul 2010, p. 139).

The perception of the West in Thailand is parallel to the idea of the Orient as a Western creation as the Thais define their own qualities through a form of negative identification with the West. The process is treated as natural, 'an inert fact of nature' as Said points out in *Orientalism* (2003, p.4). The West, as construed by the Thais, is also reduced to a mere concept that, to some extent, disregards reality or historical background. However, the Us-Them dichotomy is not limited to the Thais' relationship with the foreign others only. It also encompasses internal oppositions between classes in Thailand.

### **1.5.3 Internal oppositions: Upper/ Lower-class and Thai/ Isan people**

The internal oppositions deal primarily with the social class structure within Thai society. Historically, Thai classes were defined according to Sakdina marks, assigned by the king, who was positioned at the top of the pyramid of social power. The Sakdina systems, literally translated as 'power over field' or 'dignity marks' categorised Thai people into *chaos* (aristocrats, nobility, royalty, or the ruling elites), *khunnang*, (government officials or bureaucrats), *phrai* (commoners) and *that* (slaves), respectively (Loos 2006: 37; Ockey 2004, p. 1; Reynolds 1994: 153).

As maintained by Reynolds (1994), *Sakdina* became attached to a negative connotation after the mid-1940's when it was linked with the 'old-fashioned thinking archaic institutions, patron-clientelism, bureaucratic corruption, and class difference' (i.e., the wealthy and powerful *sakdina* class vs the poor, powerless, and low-status classes) ( p. 151–152). At present, classes in Thailand could be categorised according to a variety of concepts:

It now includes a large range of concepts, such as wealth (*thana*), social status (*sathanathangsangkhom*), levels (*radap*), hierarchy (*radapchan*), hi-so (slang abbreviation of the English phrase 'high society') and lo-so (slang for 'low society'), high/middle/low society (*sangkhom sung/klang/tam* or *lang*), poor people (*khon chon*) and rich people (*khonruay*), and country people (*bannok*) and city people (*khon/chao krung* or *mueang*) (Vorng 2017, p. 22).

Vorng (2017) points out that these categories are not a clear-cut categorisation of social structure. Their various connotations could be contextual and based on individual conceptions. She also adds that 'educational prestige' seems to be a comparatively strong class determiner (p. 28). The most evident class distinction within Thailand can be the one between Bangkok and Isan (also *Isaan*, referring to the North-eastern part of Thailand and people from the area), representing the hierarchical connection between the city (Bangkok) and the countryside (Bannok).

The discourse of Isan as Others has been prominent in Thailand (McCargo & Hongladarom 2004; Vorng, 2017; Hess-swain, 2006 & 201; Farelly, 2016; Alexander & McCargo, 2014; Draper & Kamnuansilpa 2018). The stereotypical images of the region and its people gravitate around their close connection to Lao, e.g. their physical appearances and local diet. They are also usually perceived as poor, uneducated, and on television, they usually play the role of 'farmers, prostitutes, taxi drivers, servants or labourers'. These stereotypes affect the way the younger generation of Isan forms their identities in response to the Bangkokians' perceptions of their region. In response to the question about who they are, the answers are articulated with 'Isan-pride stereotypes', e.g. rural life with collective mindsets. When being challenged

about these traits of the Isan, they realise that they are also reliant on stereotypical binaries between urban and rural (Hesse-Swain 2006, p. 263).

The Isan people also represent the negative qualities that the Thais are not identified with. Chaipraditkul (2013) studies the standard forms of Thai beauties that have been influenced by Western norms of beauty and go on to conclude that they occupy a superior position in Thai society. Among other norms associated with beauty, whiteness is a significant one which stigmatises people based and classifies them as under *loser/ winner* binaries which results in discrimination based on race and social class. This point is supported by Hesse-Swain (2006) by pointing out the absence of Isan features in media in comparison to *Loogkreung* (half Western-half Thai) whose one attractive feature is to have fair skin.

The relationship between skin tone with the concept of women empowerment and social status is not limited to Thai society (Eric P, Hyun, Russell, Junko, and Shalini Bahl 2008, Pan 2013, Shroff, Diedrichs, & Craddock, 2018). In Thailand, Isan women are held up as examples to underscore the relationship between skin colour and the resulting social stigma. The generalisations include that they work in the sex industry, have rural origins and are dark-skin toned, which is considered undesirable in Thai society. As Thai men prefer Thai women with fair skin and those who are financially well-off, Isan women normally seek Western men to marry to ensure financial stability (Esara 2009).

Apart from the negative qualities of Isan women, a further distinction between Bangkok and Isan has been associated with the representation of what is termed as HI/LOW space in that high-class shopping centres are exclusively for people from Bangkok, where the working class is excluded. The social oppositions are also determined by other factors such as language, skin colour, educational level, and financial level:

Concomitantly, the many symbols of the city and urbanity, such as the Central dialect, pale skin, education, wealth, and lifestyle are placed in a higher position — *thi sung*—in relation to all things associated with the rural countryside, such as dark



skin, manual labor, dialects, and lack of wealth, all of which are categorised as low or *thi tam*. (Vorng 2017, p. 113)

The everyday conflicts between social classes have been closely associated with the representation of space. For instance, the year 2005 marks the beginning of the political conflict between the Thai elites and the urban middle class who are predominantly from Bangkok. This protest is between PAD or *Panthamit*: the yellow-shirted 'People's Alliance for Democracy' and the 'United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship' (UDD) or, popularly known as the 'Red Shirts', united by the urban and the rural working class, many of whom are from the impoverished Isan region (Vorng, 2017, p. 2–3).

The Central World Plaza shopping mall representing 'modern consumer capitalism' was vandalised by an arson attack during one of the most recent class wars, named as the May 2010 Red Shirt Protests. The class turmoil is believed to be a prime example of the response of the working class toward their exclusion from the country's economic development (Vorng, 2017, p. 115).

The frustration of those belonging to the Red Shirt organisation is a direct result of the restrictions they faced to social progress and personal development. Their reasons for taking part in the protests are also expressed through 'a language of capitalism, consumption and new desires' for example, a desire for motorbikes and modern gadgets. They perceive these commodities as 'tools for connection, technologies of economic, physical and informational mobility. However, their desire for the capitalist form of consumption is attacked by the Bangkok conservatives as 'an emblem of the "un-genuine" nature of Isan's political demands or as a divergence and disruption from the "traditional self-reliance of village life"'. They are also rejected by 'the Thai Marxist scholars' for their lack of education and sophistication (Sopranzetti 2012, p. 362 - 363). To the Bangkok elites, the social ambition of the Red Shirt is viewed as a disturbance to their designated place in the society or "'low" or *thi tam*' as pointed out by Vorng (2017 p. 113). Their illiteracy also denies them their voice and undermines their role in the crowds of educated protestors. Though Thai social mobility is not

strict, 'motivation to rise is low and weakened by Thai education' due to their 'self-constraint and self-limitation' (Boesch and Philips 1965 in Evers 1966). It is the Thais' awareness of their place in the social hierarchy that keeps them in their place. However, Evers (1966) suggested that social mobility is a result of urbanisation from the influence of the West. One of the reasons for social mobility is due to the concept of Sakdina being replaced by rankings in governmental services and Western academic degrees. Nevertheless, the fact that scholarships to study in foreign countries is restricted to the bureaucratic elites, still limits opportunities for other Thais to move up in the social hierarchy.

In a more current study about Thai social classes, Funatsu and Kagoya (2003) investigate the stereotypes related to the Thai middle classes. The results show that education plays a vital role in the rise of the new class system. Stereotypes are also formed by the migration from rural to urban areas. The Thai middle class is, therefore, a combination of people from various social origins, but who share a relatively similar educational background. The two studies conducted from different periods of time (1966 and 2003) provides a similar result that though education may allow people to move up in their social hierarchy, their origin is still very much considered as an integral part of their identities. Therefore, the class distinctions have always been part of the Thai system since the Sakdina era, when people's positions were assigned by birthright. Though the system was abolished, traces of social inequalities still prevail along with other factors; for instance, variations related to educational and financial levels that go on to determine Thai people's places within their own society.

The discourse about those in rural areas as others has become one of their prominent features. This is similar to the same manner in which Thais define 'Thainess' through the negative identification of the Westerners. The class distinctions have been reproduced in media and literature by labelling rural Thais with a system of negative qualities; namely as poor, uneducated, and unattractive. The class distinction that was exacerbated during the colonial era has resulted in part of the cause of the social upheaval that changed the face of Thai politics in modern days.

All in all, political chaos intensifies Thai class conflicts, specifically between the *Isan/Bangkok* dichotomies that have been around since ancient times. It is a marker that points to how Thais think about the social and political inequalities of their society. The urban-rural dichotomies represent an unequal degree of privileges in that some have more access to resources than others. Also, in reference to the Siwilai project, the binaries include the normalised ideologies constructed by the elites, that lead to the inclusion of those deemed acting with supposed acceptable behaviours and excluding those who do not. This process is considered significant to the investigation of Thailand in this study.

### **1.6 Purpose of the study**

This study aims at examining the representation of Thailand within the realm of tourism, including personal views of the country on matters of cross-cultural relationships. This aspect is chosen for two reasons. Firstly, it is more than likely that Thailand is discursively represented in somewhat different ways in various fields of relevant discourse. Thus, it is analytically useful to restrict the study to tourism rather than including, for example, sports or politics.

Secondly, tourism has always been considered a major source of income for Thailand. It is estimated to contribute around 9 or 10% of Thailand's GDP in comparison to the figure of 6.5% about ten years ago. In comparison with the first and second quarters of 2017, the number of tourists visiting Thailand has increased by 15.4% (10.61 million) during the first quarter of 2018 and 10.91% (8.87 million) during the second quarter of 2018. Domestic tourists are included in these figures but are considered less significant as they tend to spend less, and their trips are shorter in comparison to foreign tourists (<http://www.thaiwebsites.com>). Since the number of foreign visitors increases every year in spite of the country's political turmoil or occurrence of natural disasters, tourism could be

treated as one of the permanent and significant types of relationship between Thailand and the West.

More generally, as maintained by Fursich (2002), the number of products related to tourism in the media; for instance, travel programs on televisions, newspapers and magazines have increased significantly in recent decades. Additionally, travel media allows people to learn about other cultures and countries. As a result, it has become a significant apparatus for the construction of national identities and in influencing the perception of other countries.

In the context of tourism, as a study that investigates Western construction of Thai identities in travel websites, the websites could be perceived as Westerners promoting Thailand to prospective Western tourists. It would be beneficial to investigate what aspects of Thailand are highlighted or valued in this context, and vice versa. In addition, when represented in oppositional forms with an underlined Us-Them binary, the representation of Thailand also reveals traces of Western identities.

In theoretical terms, the aim is to relate to the utility of linguistic oppositions as a way of identifying and finding out more about representations of cultural difference. The syntactic triggers proposed by Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2008, 2013) are applied in tourism discourse, specifically in the Thai contexts. The purpose is to aid and enhance the efficiency in bringing to light the application of the oppositional pairs in the representation of Thailand. The use of linguistics in the representation of Thailand should also allow two distinct dimensions of representation. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, one such representation is a process of providing meaning through selection (Hall 1997). The writers could select specific aspects to represent the country, as an example, the manner in which exotic beaches are portrayed or the behaviour of Thai women in a relationship. When examined against the backdrop of linguistic oppositions, it is noted that Westerners also embark on a process of representing their home experience, for example, the mundane life at home or the behaviour of Western females that they are accustomed to. The aim is to demonstrate that linguistic oppositions play a significant role in the selective representation of Thailand and that investigating such oppositions is a

productive way to investigate the portrayal of Thailand. Though the study focuses on travel discourse related to Thailand and on its relationship to broader discourses of Orientalism (Said2003, McLeod 2012), this is potentially an approach that could have a more general application for researchers investigating other cultural contexts and forms of discourse.

## **1.7 Data**

The section elaborates the section 1.2, which discusses Fairclough's three-dimensional framework (2001), to explain how this study could fall within the area of Critical Discourse Analysis. The study focuses on two sources of web-based written data; Stickmanbangkok.com and Lonelyplanet.com, both of which are broadly accepted as websites that promote tourism. The choice of data is influenced by Halliday's concepts of *field*, *tenor*, and *mode* (1985) which draw attention to the systematic relationship between 'the social environment' and 'the functional organisation of language' (Halliday 1985: 11). These three features influence the functions of language in certain contexts. According to Hasan (1985) and Halliday (2014), *field*, *tenor*, and *mode* are realised in linguistics through *ideational* or *experiential*, *interpersonal*, and *textual* metafunctions. The first, *ideational* or *experiential*, refers to the representation of experiences, for example, content or information about Thailand on the travel websites (*Field*). The *interpersonal* is about attitude or emotions embedded in language use for interaction or communication between the readers or the readers on the websites (*Tenor*). Lastly, *textual* is the way text is structured in a specific order that makes sense and is appropriate to the specific audience (*Mode*); for example, the way websites are structured to represent information about Thailand.

### **1.7.1 Field**

The first feature of language is the 'field' which is essentially what the text is about. For Halliday (1985), the field is 'what is happening to the nature of social action that is taking place: what is it that the participants are engaged in?' (p. 12). What is shared at the level of

field is that all of the texts are about Thailand and specifically, what it is like to visit or occasionally, to live in Thailand. More information about the websites is given below.

### 1.7.1.1 Lonelyplanet.com

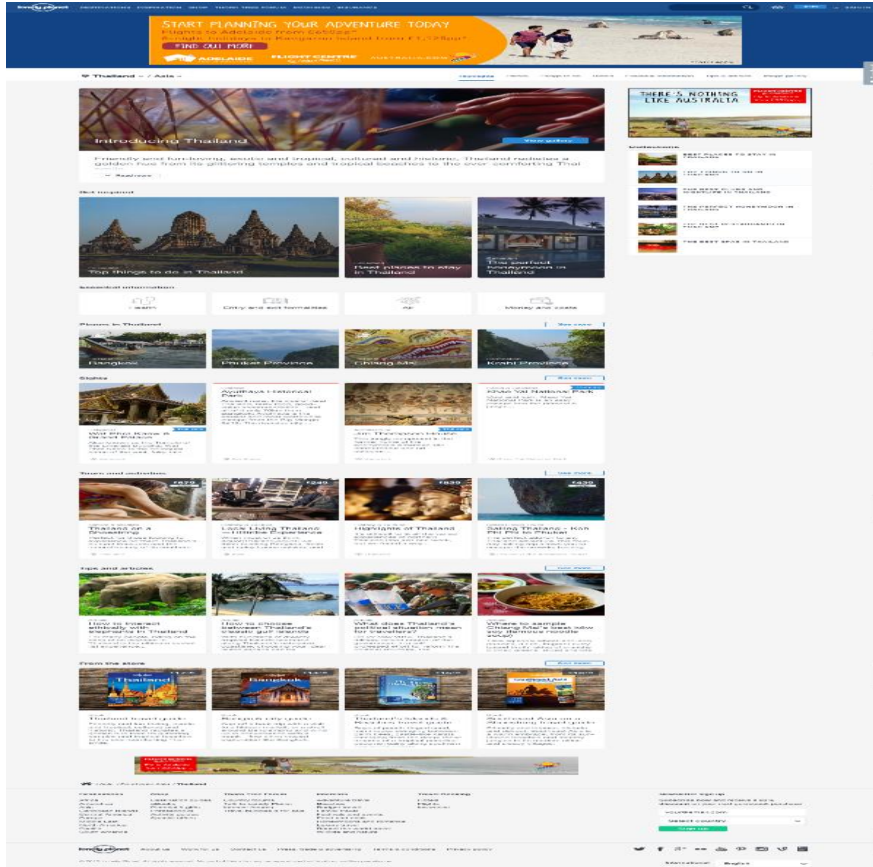


Figure 1.1: Lonelyplanet.com

Lonely Planet was founded in 1972, by Tony and Maureen Wheeler after their first trip across Asia. It began with their first handmade guidebook to print in a digital format, credible information from experienced travellers worldwide. Online, it is an award-winning website, providing multimodal forms of information. It features videos, links for travel insurance, hotels and flights (Lonelyplanet.com). It is considered the most popular for their accessibility, value, and consistency (Tailanga et al. 2014).

The website had changed since 2014 when the data was collected and the caption in figure 1 was taken. Therefore, the information saved in Word document could be different from what currently appears online. Since the focus is specifically on the Lonely Planet discourse, the

this study only includes the section written and labelled by 'Lonelyplanet.com'. The sections included in this study comprise Section 1 features *Highlights, Places and Things to Do*. Section 2 features *Essential Information*. Section 3 features *Tips & Articles*. Due to the nature of the website, the information-stream could be endless because of hyperlinks. Therefore, only the first layer of each category is included in this study. For example, the sections included in *Essential Information* are *At a Glance, Money and Costs, Visas, When to Go and Weather, Getting to Thailand, Health and Safety*, and *Advice for Travellers*. The links that may have led further than these topics were not included. The data taken from Lonely Planet is as listed below:

<b>Sections</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Word counts</b>
1 Highlights, places and things to do	Introducing top sights and activities in Thailand	9,885
2 Essential Information	Providing necessary information for travelling to Thailand, e.g. etiquettes and safety	9,641
3 Tips & articles	Collections of tips and articles about Thailand	3,668
<b>Total</b>		<b>23,194</b>

**Table 1.2: summary of data from Lonelyplanet.com**

### 1.7.1.2 Stickmanbangkok.com

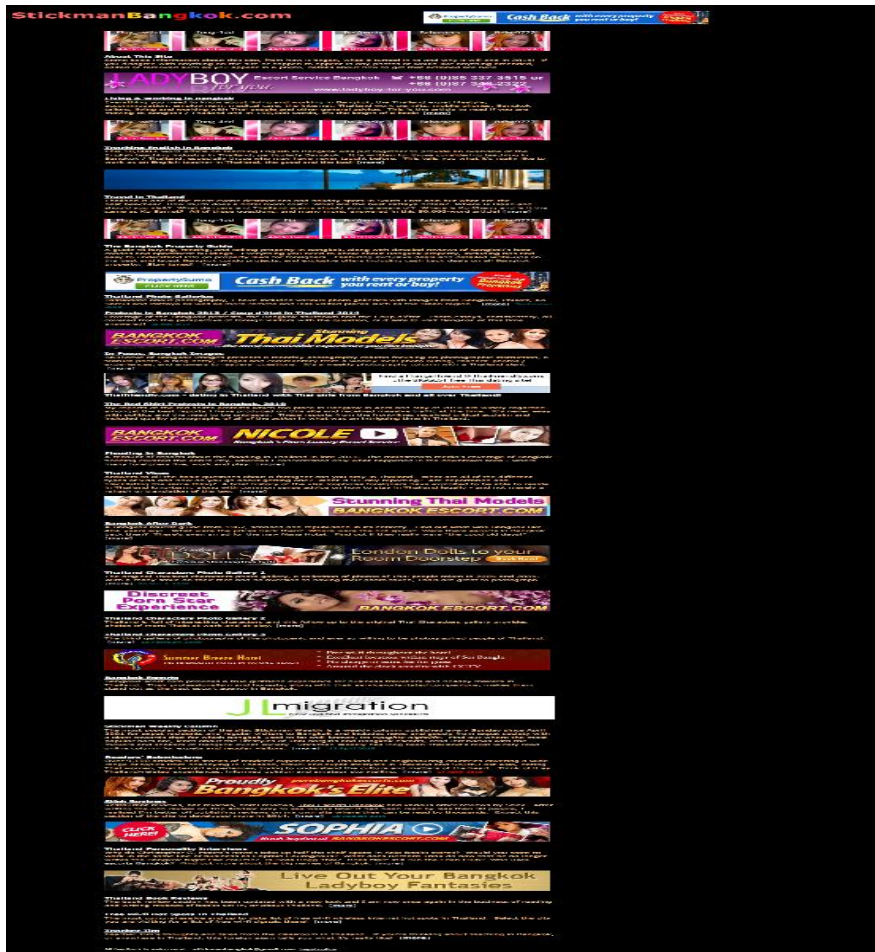


Figure 1.2: Stickmanbangkok.com

Stickmanbangkok.com started in 1998 as a personal website of an Englishman who calls himself *Stickman* to tell his family about his life in Thailand. The website grows, according to Stickman, due to 'my take on expat life in Thailand' which includes gossips on expat communities and nightlife in Bangkok. In *Stickman's Weekly Column*, there are over 9,300 articles about personal experiences in the *Readers' Submissions* section. Among others, the website also includes sections about *Living and Working in Thailand* and also has another specific section about *teaching in Thailand*. Two sections, *Travel in Thailand* and *Readers' Submissions*, are chosen for the textual analysis.

For the data selection, five articles from the *Readers' Submission* are randomly selected using a website called *www.random.org*. At the stage of data collection, Stickman devoted a section



called *Green Star Submission* for those that are considered the best of all based on his opinion. The choice to specifically select the *Green Star* article is to narrow the choices down to around 20 of all 9,300 articles. The approval from Stickman also means that the articles should possess the qualities that are suitable for the study, e.g. the articles might have impressed him in a specific way, they might also have appropriate length and number of words.

However, the *Green Star* section was later eliminated, and all submissions are arranged in chronological order. This change does not affect the study because the data was already saved. Besides, being included in the Readers' Submission is already an indication that the articles are approved and considered worthy enough to be published. Therefore, the quality of the content should not be too different from those included in the original *Green Star Submissions*. What should be taken into consideration is the influence of the main website; how the sexism that is prevalent in the main website could affect the writers' view on Thailand and its people.

The data is elaborated in the list below:

<b>Stickmanbangkok.com</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Word counts</b>
Travel in Thailand	The most comparable to Lonelyplanet.com, providing general information about travelling in Thailand, e.g. recommended places and tips on safety	43,498
Readers' Submissions	Including the user-generated content. Therefore, to some extent, it represents individuals' opinions and provides more personal perspectives about Thailand. The	35,116

	investigation includes five submissions with the first three written by Westerners and the last two by Thai people.	
RS1: You Save My Marriage (YSMM)	A story about a guy who falls in love with a bargirl (Da), but his wife saves him from this problem.	3,969
RS2: For Jiraporn (FJ)	A grieving husband going back to Arizona after being taken advantage of by his late wife” family, only to find himself feeling alienated in his home country.	6,702
RS3: Why I Never Married a Thai (WINMT)	An American guy giving reasons for not wanting to be married with a Thai girl.	19,194
RS4: What Farangs Don’t Get about Thai Women (WFDG)	A Thai guy giving advice about dating Thai women.	2,089
RS5: What We Think are Mistakes Farangs Make with Thai Women (WWTM)	A Thai woman giving opinions about what went wrong in the relationship with Thai women.	3,162
<b>Total</b>		<b>78,614</b>

**Table 1.3: summary of data from Stickmanbangkok.com**

In the matter of *field*, both websites provide information about Thailand for tourism promotional purposes. These concepts, therefore, reflect the shared views about the country. Stickman also points out the relationship between his website and the content of Lonelyplanet.com:

While I hope to provide some useful information, if you are planning on staying for anything more than a short holiday in Thailand, you should consider picking up a guidebook, such as the excellent Lonely Planet Guide To Thailand. Like all publications, it's not without its faults, but in my humble opinion it's still the best Thailand guidebook.

The excerpt above could be an indication that to a certain extent, Stickman also relies on Lonelyplanet.com as a comprehensive source of information about Thailand.

*Field* highlights how texts differ in terms of topic and the two websites are dramatically different in some areas. It should be established here that Stickmanbangkok.com is 'sex' oriented. First of all, the readers are bombarded with flashing banners showing women in revealing outfits. The advertisements are for bars, escort service, or medical treatment for erectile dysfunction. The relationship between text and intended readers will be discussed in the following section, *tenor*. However, these banners are considered visual supports for the claim that stickmanbangkok.com incorporate subject about *sex*, in comparison to Lonelyplanet.com, which does not allow such advertisement.

Within the scope of *field*, the websites are also different in terms of formality or expertise (Halliday 1985: 11). The types of texts used in this study could also be differentiated based on the degree of formality. In the discourse related to tourism, Lonelyplanet.com, as a corporate website, offers content that could be considered more standardised and formal in comparison to Stickmanbangkok.com, which is more of a personal website operated by the website owner. The standard of Lonelyplanet.com may be exemplified with an incident in 2012 when a forum called Thorn Tree forum, owned by Lonelyplanet.com for sharing experiences and exchanging information was shut down due to 'instances of inappropriate

language and themes' (independent.co.uk). On 26<sup>th</sup> December 2012, the users of Thorn tree forum were greeted with '[t]he forum will only return when we are 100 per cent confident that the right moderation systems are in place to ensure there's no repeat of such language/themes'. There was speculation that the problem was connected to paedophilia, but the spokesperson denied it. All in all, the incident points out the scale of control that the website has over its content.

On the subject of rules and regulations of the website, Stickman states clearly in the introduction of the Readers' Submission section that he does not accept content about sexuality, 'One type of submission that is NOT welcome is sex report. Reports detailing activities between the sheets will not be published here' (emphasis in original). However, he devotes a section called, 'Stickman Weekly Column' to elaborate the nightlife activity:

The most popular section of the site, Stickman Weekly is a weekly column published every Sunday since April 2001 for expat residents and regular visitors to Bangkok and includes news and gossip from expat society with a slant towards that for which Bangkok used to be well-known, its *naughty nightlife*....(emphasis in original).

While the content related to sexuality is prohibited in the Readers' Submissions section, Stickman is open about the 'Stickman weekly forum' that the content is primarily concerned with 'naughty nightlife'. Also, as mentioned earlier, Stickman allows advertisements related to bars and escort services on his website, which could give some indication about the type of readers that frequent Stickmanbangkok's website.

To summarise, in the discussion of *the field*, both Lonelyplanet.com and Stickmanbangkok.com provide areas to investigate linguistic oppositions in tourism discourse. However, the subject about sexuality which seems to be prevalent in Stickmanbangkok.com as expressed in the form of advertisement (banners and types of products) and Stickmanweekly column, though it is contradictory to his prohibition of the sex-related topic in the Readers' Submission. Overall, it is the sexual matters that distinguish the

two websites. Therefore, the genres of the two websites will be taken into account in the analysis.

### **1.7.2 Tenor**

The *tenor* signifies the relationship between writer and reader. It could be related to Jaffe's *Stance* (2012) which refers to the way speakers position themselves in the communication in relation to the expressive, referential, interactional and social insinuation in their linguistic use. Both Lonelyplanet.com and Stickmanbangkok.com offer informative and persuasive information about Thailand. However, they differ in terms of the types of services they provide on their websites. As a corporate website, Lonelyplanet.com provides multimodal services. It offers links to buy guidebooks to destinations, to book tickets and hotels, or advertises travel agents and so on. It also provides information in the form of videos.

In comparison, Stickmanbangkok.com appears to be one dimensional in the way he provides information. However, to a certain extent, the Readers' Submissions Section seems to show the relationship between the website and its readers. The section has grown steadily since it started in 2001. A new article, with at least an 800-word count, is published almost daily. The readers' participation could indicate the readers' loyalty to the website. Lonely Planet also provides a Thorn Tree forum as mentioned earlier as an avenue for exchanging information. Yet, the section appears to be in the form of a Q&A section. Unlike Readers' Submissions of Stickmanbankok.com, where the writers intentionally write more than 800 words to share their experiences.

### **1.7.3 Mode**

Finally, *the mode* is the way the text is constructed. In this study, the rhetorical mode should be taken into consideration. For instance, as a form of discourse on tourism, both websites write about Thailand to persuade readers to come to Thailand. In the Readers' Submissions section, the texts appear to be written to inform or possibly even to entertain. Most importantly, all data is drawn from the websites. Stickmanbangkok.com is a user-generated

one, with some editorial work while Lonelyplanet.com is a corporate website with a universal standard.

## **1.8 Thesis structure**

Chapter 2 is the first part of the literature review introducing oppositions approached at the micro-level. This refers to types and characteristics of oppositions with the focus on canonical and non-canonical oppositions. The chapter outlines the work of Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013) on conceptual opposition and show how it is useful in this research. Chapter 3 introduces oppositions at macro-level, including oppositions that prevail on the cultural level, namely those in society, postcolonialism, tourism discourse, and gender study (e.g. Said 2003, McLeod 2012, Harrison, 2014). Chapter 4 provides a more comprehensive description of the data used, including the theoretical frameworks used in this study. It also introduces the role of conceptual oppositions and triggers in interpreting oppositions. The chapter also introduces three categories; FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY utilised as a framework for the discussion of conceptual oppositions in this study. Chapters 5 and 6 is an analysis of oppositions in the discourse related to tourism, with a specific focus on Lonelyplanet.com and Stickmanbangkok.com, respectively. In chapter 7, the construction of oppositions by Westerners in Readers' Submissions is investigated with an application of the same triggers and themes mentioned in chapter 5 and 6. Chapter 8 portrays the Thais' views on the relationship between Thais and Westerners. Chapter 9 provides a conclusion to the overall analysis and discussion of the thesis.

## CHAPTER 2: LINGUISTIC OPPOSITIONS

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to define the definitions and categories of linguistic oppositions. It also discusses the nature of oppositions, with an emphasis on the debate on whether they are conceptual or lexical. The section leads to an elaboration of canonical and non-canonical forms of oppositions, specifically grounded on the work of Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013).

The significance of this chapter is that it prepares the readers for the discussion of cultural oppositions in chapter 3. More importantly, it outlines the process in which textual oppositions may be investigated, interpreted, and then linked to the broader cultural oppositions pertaining to Thailand.

### 2.2 Defining opposition

This section follows up the discussion of canonical and non-canonical oppositions in 1.2, and it seeks to elaborate this semantic relationship through its definitions. To Jeffries (2014), opposites, also known as ‘antonyms’ or ‘binaries’, refers to pairs of lexemes that are opposite in meaning, for example *hot* and *cold*, *big* and *little*, *light* and *dark*. Opposites also exist in the form of phrases and clauses. There are two major types of opposites. The first one is called *canonical opposites*. Language users can comprehend them as opposites without any context, like the words listed above. This is because of an agreement in each linguistic society and culture that some words such as *hot* and *cold* in English can be opposites to each other. The other major type of opposite is non-canonical opposites, referring to pairs with opposite relation constructed in contexts. They could be in traditional lexical forms, or in forms of

phrases, or sentences (Davies 2013, Jeffries 2014). Jeffries's and Davies's primary interest is the opposition that is mainly constructed in context. Davies (2013) elaborates different terms used to define the opposite relation based on various natures of studies. For instance, 'antonymy', 'opposition', 'complementariness', 'contrast', and 'contrariety' are used in the linguistic-based study. In non-linguistic studies, the terms 'polarisation', 'dichotomy', 'difference', 'otherness', tend to be adopted in non-linguistic studies. The problem, he suggests, is that these terms are not perfect synonyms and cannot be used interchangeably. He points out the different use of terms in the titles of books on this subject – Mettinger's *Aspects of Semantic Opposition in English* (1994) and Jones' *Antonyms* (2002) to exemplify the confusing use of the terms (p. 21). He concludes that to avoid confusion, the term *opposition* is used in his study about 'any textual instance where individual words, phrases and clauses are being treated in an oppositional manner' (2013, p.23).

## **2.3 Categorisation of oppositions**

Though opposition is used by Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013) as a general term, they also identify a range of different categories of opposition. Jeffries (2014) outlines the following five types of opposition, based on their different *logical properties*. My account will draw prominently on Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013).

### **2.3.1 Mutual exclusivity**

It is also known as *complementary* in linguistic studies and *binaries* when applied in theories about cultures (Jeffries 2014, p. 19). According to Cruse (2011), this is considered the most fundamental form of opposition. He also mentions that on a conceptual level, the two opposites are divided into 'two mutually exclusive departments, with no possibility of "sitting on the fence. This means that one subject cannot belong to both compartments at the same time' (p.154). Saeed (1997) also adds another characteristic of opposition, which is the implication of the other pair of the opposite. For example, if one pair is negative, the other



must be positive. If one is *dead*, it cannot be *alive* (Saeed 1997, p. 66). Therefore, the opposites *dead* and *alive* are in complementary opposition to one another.

According to Jeffries (2014), this type of semantic relation echoes ‘the principle of the excluded middle’ making it a ‘stereotypical opposite’ (p.19). She exemplifies it with gender binaries in that the conceptual oppositions between *men* and *women* historically do not include such gender variations as hermaphrodites or transgenders. In Davies (2013), this relation is elaborated with Lyons (1977) who refer to this opposition as a *non-gradable opposite*. Similarly, the *man* and *woman* cannot be considered gradable as there is no such thing as a level of maleness or femaleness. Davies (2013) also argues that it is possible in the area of social construction of gender and transsexuality. Davies (2013) also points out the ideological significance of *complementary* when it is used with the concepts of *good/ bad* in George Bush’s announcement after the 9/ 11 attack that ‘You are either with **us** or you are with the **terrorists**’ (emphasis in original). The statement implicates construction of *us/ them* binary associated with good/ bad evaluation in which the readers need to decide whether they are with *us* (good) or *terrorists* (bad) with no middle ground.

The type is also evident in the way people define themselves through negative identification of others. In 1.3.1, the process is manifested in colonial discourse in which the colonisers define themselves through their sub-standard colonised. In 1.4.2, Thai people also identify themselves through the West, both as a threat and a desirable form of civilisation. The form of self-identification also disregards the basic human qualities that they share, such as the capability to learn. However, their views on others are complementary, a group of *us* and *them* with nothing in common.

### **2.3.2 Gradability**

Oppositions of this kind are called ‘polar antonyms’ in Cruse (2011) and ‘gradable antonyms’ in Lyons (1977), and include opposites like *rich/ poor*, *fast/ slow*, *young/ old*, *beautiful/ ugly*, etc. This semantic relation usually occurs in the comparative and superlative degrees such as

*long, longer and longest*. Contrary to complementary, one negative term does not mean that the other is positive. To Jeffries (2014), a gradable opposition can be treated as mutually exclusive. For instance, an opposition, *easy/difficult*, when a ‘bald negative’ is mentioned: in ‘This homework is not easy’. In this context, the utterance should be interpreted that the homework is difficult unless the user adds ‘but it’s not difficult either’ (p. 20). She points out that Cruise calls this type of semantic relation, *gradable complementaries* which she believes merely complicates her categories. For this reason, she introduces Rosch’s idea of the ‘prototype theory’ (1993, 1998 in Jeffries 2014) and ‘hypothesize prototypical examples’ e.g. ‘*pure*’ *complementaries* and ‘*pure*’ *gradable antonyms* to be used as ‘reference points’: “semanticists would then be able to plot the range of usage of individual cases against these reference points (p. 20).

This point is also mentioned in Davies (2013) as he quotes Lyon’s remark on the use of gradable oppositions in comparative sentences that ‘the use of gradable antonym always involves grading, implicitly or explicitly’ (1997, p. 273 in Davies 2014, p. 25). Davies (2013) gives an example, ‘my car is big’ to point out that by mentioning only one opposite, there is already an implication that it is ‘not small’. He sees a significance of context of the utterance in that ‘big car’ could be smaller than ‘Land Rover’, but in this context, the inference could be made that the car is ‘big’ based on the speaker’s comparison of other cars (p. 25). The reference of these examples is to point out the inclusion of context and prototypes in the use of what already appears to be conventional oppositions.

### **2.3.3 Mutual dependence**

Also known as *converses*, Jeffries (2014) points out that this type of opposition may not be as conventional as the other opposite relation, it is indispensable ‘in considering different ways of constructing our view of the world’ (p.21). They include kinds of relationships like *husband/ wife, above/ below and borrow/ lend*. Jeffries (2014) mentions that it can be important because of its ability to show a double perspective on a single set of events constructed by oppositions. For instance, if someone is lending, there must be someone doing

the borrowing. If there is a husband, it is logical to assume that there is also a wife. Saeed (1997) states that in a way they could be a kind of synonym because by saying ‘my office is above the library’ is practically paraphrasing that ‘the library is below my office’ (p. 67). The mention of one opposite also implies the other. For instance, by saying that ‘Jack is a brilliant parent’ involves a presupposition of Jack’s children. This characteristic of mutual dependence that is associated with implication is one of my main interest because in reality, at times what is left unsaid could be more important than an explicit statement. The implication also underlines characteristics of some triggers used in my study. This point will be elaborated in chapter 4.

### **2.3.4 Reversibility**

Reverses usually describe movement such as *push/pull, come/go, go/return, ascend/descend* (Saeeds, 1997, p. 67). Cruse (1986) adds that they are parts of directional opposites and that it is the direction from start to finish that matters, not the process in between. This also includes a more abstract pair concerning changes (transitive or intransitive) in opposite directions between two states: *tie/untie, dress/undressed, roll/unroll, mount/dismount*. He also adds that the process seems to have little significance here. For example, a ribbon can be tied in different ways, but it is the starting point ‘being untied’ and the finishing point ‘being tied’ (and vice versa) that matter. The significance of directional oppositions should also be mentioned, especially the deictic element of oppositions. Davies (2013) points out how pronoun ‘We’ and ‘Us’/ ‘They’ and ‘Them’ are used by the newspaper to align the readers with their ideological viewpoints or to move them away from some that they disagree with. For instance, in Bush's statements, ‘you are either with us or with the terrorists’ (p. 28).

Deixis is manipulated to encourage listeners to agree with US foreign policy, through the use of first and second pronouns and an implied third person. The listeners who include members of the Congress, but more importantly US citizens and those of other English speaking countries, are addressed as ‘you’, but asked to make a choice between joining Bush and falling under the remit of ‘us’, or moving in the other ‘direction’ and supporting ‘terrorists’ (implied ‘them’). Sticking to the

directional analogy, the Bush appeal assumes that on a ( metaphorical) path between ‘ us’ and ‘ terrorists’, the addressee (you) has no option of remaining situated at any points in the middle ground of this path, but has to be located at one end or the other (Davies 2013, p.28).

To Davies (2013), the significance of reverses or directional oppositions appears to be on its metaphorical usage. The application of deictic function in a metaphoric representation of ‘us’/ ‘them’ binary could have ‘profound implications’ (p.29).

To further this point, I have introduced four main types of oppositions: mutual exclusivity, gradability, mutual dependence, and reversibility. To Jeffries (2014), the significance is that they can be manipulated and challenged, due to their fluidity and people's lack of their awareness, in some contexts by ‘those who wish to challenge the *status quo*’ or for personal benefits (p. 21-22). Davies (2013) also points out the possible manipulation of the oppositions for ideological purposes. The mutual exclusivity is used in news text with the pronoun we/ us and they/ them, either to aligning readers with the point of view of newspaper or to distance those who disagree with their opinions. Much of this involves the artificial categorisation and Polarisation of groups and events into simple ‘good’ and ‘bad’, the representation of the world - according to Coe et al (2004, p. 234) – ‘as a place of polar opposites’ which consists of ‘no shades of grey’ (cited in Davies, 2013 p.5).

#### **2.4 Opposition as conceptual relation**

The approach to opposition that I am adopting here, based on the conceptual work of Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013), differs from the more structural approach which had previously dominated linguistic thought about opposition. Traditional studies of antonymy have been associated with structuralist perspective inspired by Saussure (1959) about the difference between *system of language (langue)* and *language in use (parole)*. The implication is that a word is not free from its linguistic system but gains its meaning from other words in the same lexical field. Viewed from this perspective, contexts do not play a role in linguistic meaning,

and meaning is seen as residing in words. The view on antonymy from this perspective is concerned with antonyms in lexical authorities and the good/ bad antonyms (See Paradis & Willners 2011 and Davies 2013, p.33-42 for more elaborated details). Other studies see opposition as a conceptual phenomenon (Davies, 2013, Jeffries 2014, Croft and Cruise, 2004, Murphy, 2003, Murphy and Andrew 1993, Jones et al. 2012). Murphy (2003) maintains that antonymy is defined as Relation by Contrast-Lexical Contrast (RC-LC): 'A lexical contrast set includes only word concepts that have all the same contextually relevant properties but one' (p. 170). Context plays an important role in this theory of antonymy as meaning emerge from the use of language and it gives meaning of similarities and differences to the opposite pairs (Murphy, 2003: 171).

To elaborate, to explain mutual exclusivity conceptually, Murphy (2003) points out that antonymy is a semantic relation that is applied when two words or other constructions are concomitantly 'minimally and maximally different from one another': they occupy the same conceptual domain but at the opposite end from each other. Since the pair is equivalent in all areas, but one, it is 'maximally similar'. On the other hand, considering its position at the end of the pole from each other, its relation is perceived as 'maximally different' (Murphy 2003, p. 43-45). For gradability, the opposite pair move away from each other in the conceptual domain in varying degrees.

Jeffries (2014) elaborates oppositions as cognitive phenomenon with a discussion that they share the same basis with metaphors. She elaborates this point with a cognitive concept called *image-schemas* (Johnson 1978 & Lakoff 1987, 1989). They are general outlined patterns of a preconceptual nature that occur while people perform daily tasks and interact with other social members. *Image-schemas* allow people to structure these experiences and their consciousness. This concept is used to explain a basic metaphor, e.g. LIFE IS A JOURNEY. People understand this metaphor because they relate *the journey* which is considered a physical experience to *life* which is a more abstract one. Jeffries (2014) says that there is a possibility to understand oppositions with the same explanation because it is also preconceptual in nature.

People accumulate knowledge of oppositions through experiences which is the same way they do with metaphors. Then they use the knowledge of conventional oppositions stored in their mind to explain how people make sense of unconventional ones. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state that people think in a metaphorical way. Therefore, it is quite acceptable that they could be framed to conceptualise the opposition *good/ bad* while approaching media text especially the political ones in the same way that they can easily understand basic metaphor, e.g. TIME IS MONEY (Jeffries 2014, p.124). Another cognitive concept that explains the way people understand oppositions in the reading process is called *the mental representation* or *mental spaces* (Fauconnier (1985) (cited in Jeffries, 2014, p. 116).

*Mental representation* is a pattern of pre-existing knowledge in people's mind that is used through linguistic interaction to understand a new concept and in turn, become a permanent set of knowledge in the users' minds. While interacting with groups of people or carrying out activities in different places, people already have patterns in their minds of how they should behave in these situations and these patterns are developed through linguistic expressions. There is also a possibility that conventional opposition is a kind of mental representation that the readers already have. As a consequence, they draw on this knowledge to interpret unconventional oppositions they encounter. During this linguistic interaction, unconventional oppositions that are constructed in this context establish a short-term relationship between the text producers and recipients. This results in a new mental representation in both parties. In other words, unconventional oppositions can now become conventional ones.

The *mental representation* is also used in the area of narrative comprehension. Similar to common knowledge, readers have mental models of whatever happens in the text they read. The kind of mental representation that is produced during the reading process is also called a *contextual frame* (Emmott, 1997) and *the text world* (Werth, 1999) which is developed from *the possible world theory* (Ryan, 1991) (cited in Jeffries, 2014, p. 118). These concepts are employed to explain the reading process in cognitive aspects. The main focus of this procedure is to link the linguistic texts to the mental knowledge or mental representation gained during

the reading process. Text can create a world linguistically because of the ability of language to reference the actual and hypothetical world with deixis, modality, transitivity and nominalisation, etc. The triggers of oppositions, both conventional and unconventional ones, could be another type of linguistic tool to construct text world. The results of her study in the novel opening section such as the one from *Harry Potter* is a clear example that readers need to have a conceptual knowledge in their mind in order to understand the text world which is divided into *magic* and *muggle*. This division connotes the opposition of *good/ bad* world. In Jeffries's data, the *good/ bad* opposition also exists in the non-fiction world especially in the emotional state of the response to 9/ 11. Additionally, in the world of women's magazine, the opposition is presented in the form of *healthy/ unhealthy*, *natural/ unnatural*, etc. which is a sub-category of *good/ bad* opposition.

These cognitive theories explain the possible consequences of texts on readers. According to Jeffries (2014), Critical Discourse Analysis has been criticised for the lack of evidence to prove how the simple act of describing people has such manipulative effects on readers' ideologies. For example, Widdowson (1995) argues, among other things, that CDA is too ready to assume that linguistic meanings are imposed on readers of texts in a straightforward way. To them, readers cannot be that 'vulnerable'. However, Jeffries points out the ideological effects of texts with a concept called a '*principle of minimal departure*' (Ryan 1991) (cited in Jeffries, 2014, p.129). It explains that readers understand the possible worlds in texts because they think these worlds are similar to the actual world in all respect unless they are told otherwise. Therefore, when people apply the principle of minimal departure while reading the news about the invasion of Iraq, they read it as if it were true, let alone the fact that they already expect the news to deliver the truth. Readers are acquired to suspend their actual world, and they are willing to do the same with their scepticism that occurs while reading. As a result, they are inclined to accept any meanings that are not significantly different from their real world. This is a possible explanation to reveal how texts can have ideological and

manipulative effects on the readers and also how people interpret unconventional oppositions in texts because they are seen as characteristics of the readers' actual world.

As maintained by Jeffries (2014), the opposition is constructed in text and readers depend on triggers for interpretation. She also brings in cognitive concepts to explain its nature, possible effects and relation with readers. The opposition in texts is also discussed in the work of Davies (2013) which explores the ideological construction of opposition between groups of people in news text.

## 2.5 Non-canonical oppositions

Most of the examples that I have discussed so far have been canonical oppositions. However, following Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013), the emphasis of this study is also on non-canonical oppositions, oppositional pairs of lexemes, phrases or sentences in which opposite relations are contextually constructed, for example the opposition between *horses* and *zebras*.

Dr Theodore Woodward at the University of Maryland School of Medicine coined the oppositional term, *horses/zebras*, in "when you hear the sound of hooves, think **horses**, *not zebras*" (My emphasis). The saying is widely used in medical context to refer to horses (prevalent in Maryland) as a common explanation of the symptoms while zebra refers to an exotic medical diagnosis. The reference of *horses/zebras* is to teach the medical interns to avoid misdiagnosis by assuming rare and uncommon clarification (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>). The reference of the term makes sense in the medical field, while to others the contrastive relation between **zebra/ horse** could be illogical. However, readers can draw on the background knowledge that horses are common in the area. Hence, they can infer from that, that the opposition is related to the concept of commonness in medical diagnosis. The association of oppositions constructed in text and their relation to the conceptual oppositions is my primary interest in the study.



For non-canonical opposition, the opposition relation only occurs in a certain context (Jeffries, 2014, p. 1). Therefore, it is also called contextual opposition. As pointed out earlier, the canonical opposition is lexical and can be checked in the dictionary. The non-canonical, on the other hand, could be in different forms: words, phrases or sentences. Therefore, it is almost impossible to see such forms of opposition listed in the dictionary. For instance, in ‘ the issue had gone beyond a row between **Copenhagen** and **the Muslim world** and now centred on **Western free speech** versus **taboos in Islam** (Mirror 3<sup>rd</sup> in Jeffries 2014, p.100, emphasis in original), both pair of opposites, **Copenhagen/ the Muslim world**, and **Western free speech/ taboos in Islam**, are unlikely to be found in traditional dictionary for their non-canonical forms and semantic contrast that only makes sense in this specific context. Thus, they need to rely on more canonical form of opposition at the conceptual level in order to make sense of unconventional oppositions. For example, referring to the unconventional opposition, **horse/ zebra**, people can make sense of it by aligning them to the concept of COMMON/ UNCOMMON on the conceptual level.

### **2.5.1 Jeffries in Opposition in Discourse (2014)**

In Jeffries (2014), the analysis includes both forms and functions of opposites found in literary work including poems and novel openings. Her work also expands into the political and social area such as British General Election Reporting, the female body in magazines and the conflicts caused by Danish cartoons in a Danish newspaper in 2006.

As mentioned earlier, there are two major types of opposites, canonical and non-canonical oppositions. The latter type depends on context for interpretation. For example, a child and a Cadillac can be treated as opposites, but readers need context to understand how this pair of opposites is constructed. There needs to be something in the textual surrounding that triggers people to read the words as opposites. Such triggers might be either syntactic or semantic. In addition, there must be a semantic element that enables readers to think of conventional opposites at a higher level. This kind of opposition is referred to as *the superordinate opposites* (or conceptual opposition). Besides these triggers, conventional opposites might

exist alongside the unconventional ones. Jeffries elaborates this point with the following example.

She wanted *a child*. He craved *a Cadillac*. (Jeffries, 2014, p. 112-3)

Firstly, readers notice a parallel structure (S+V+O) that is a syntactic trigger of this invented utterance. As a result, they expect both grammatical objects to be opposites. Next, there is a pair of conventional opposites, the pronouns *She/He*, in the subject position of both sentences. Besides, the verbs of these sentences are semantically similar because they are the near synonyms even though *to crave* is a stronger form of *to want*.

These three elements (the parallel structure, the conventional opposites in the form of subject pronouns, and the semantically similar verbs) create an environment of opposition. This example also involves a form of *conventional implicature* (Grice 1975) (cited in Jeffries, 2014, p. 114), where the writer flouts the maxim of quantity because he/ she does not provide enough information, so the readers have to rely on the two parallel structures and other clues in order to understand the message. Furthermore, the maxim of relation is also flouted because the second object is not what the readers expect to see. As a result, the readers have to infer to elements that can be treated as a pair of opposites in this context.

This is where their background knowledge is included in interpretation and the best opposite nature of *a child/ a Cadillac* is the fact that they are *animate/ inanimate*. This is the superordinate opposition, and it leads to the proposition that a child is related to emotional value and a Cadillac is to a monetary one. Therefore, this sentence could be interpreted that she wants an intimate relationship with another human being (a child), while he longs for material goods (a Cadillac). The example shows that in the text, two words that are semantically irrelevant can be made into a pair of unconventional opposites with the use of triggers. Besides the fact that they are textually constructed, cognitive theories could explain the nature of the opposition and how its use in the text might affect readers.

### **2.5.2 Davies in Opposition in News Discourse: the Ideological Construction of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ in British Press (2008)**

Davies investigates a discursive construction and possibility of an ideological consequence of binary oppositions as well as its use in the news report in UK national daily newspaper about two major anti-government demonstrations in 2002 and 2003. The former one was organised by the Countryside Alliance and the latter one by the Stop the War Coalition.

Davies (2008) explores the construction of oppositions in news media which simply categorises and polarises groups and events into good/ bad. He points out the involvement of pronouns ‘We/ Us’ and ‘They/ Them’ which are the fundamental form of conventional opposition in the construction of ideologies in the news media. It is mentioned at the beginning of the paper that unconventional opposition can be understood because of the existence of the conventional opposites in the same context. Therefore, the usage of these pronouns makes it easier for readers to treat groups of people as ‘Us’ and ‘Them’.

However, the pronouns are not the sole tool for constructing an opposition between *Us* and *Them*, and there is a chance that they are not explicitly used in the text. The other important tool to ideologically construct *Us* and *Them* in the text is called syntactic frames or triggers. He defines syntactic frames as a formulaic structure that houses both pairs of opposites systematically connected by conjunctions such as ‘*X not Y*’, ‘*X rather than Y*’, and ‘*X and Y*’ (Davies, 2008, p.89). For example, he uses the report of the Countryside Alliance demonstration against the ban on fox-hunting, Sept 22, 2002, in London from Daily Mail (UK) as an example of how a syntactic framework (*X contrast with Y*) plays a role in creating opposition in the news media.

SAVE OUR COUNTRYSIDE-Revolt of the secret people: John Mortimer on how  
New Labour’s intolerance forced the countryside army into action (Headline)

The country people came to London to join in a well-organised, well-behaved march through the streets. They *contrasted* dramatically with the crowds who sat down for CND, or marched

against the Vietnam war, in the days when the amplified voices of Michael Foot and Tony Benn filled Trafalgar Square and sent Left wing pulses racing (Davies, 2008, p. 130).

From the example above, the sense of opposition is started at the headline "SAVE *OUR* COUNTRYSIDE". The possessive adjective, *our*, indicates that the country people are one of us. Therefore, *we* are the good demonstrators who 'join a well-organised, well-behaved march through the streets'. On the other hand, because of the syntactic framework using an explicit contrast marker *contrast with (X contrast with Y)*, readers presuppose that the other group is not. Hence, the opposition between *our group* and *the crowds who sat down for CND, or marched against the Vietnam war* is created. As a result, there are two exclusive groups of demonstrators: the country people who are well-organised, well-behaved and quiet versus the crowds who sat down for CND or marched against the Vietnam war who are badly organised, misbehaved and amplified. This implies a superordinate opposition, calm (good)/ noisy (bad). In this context, the columnist John Mortimer reassures the readers that the march from the country people is legitimate because it is very different from other protests (Davies, 2008, p. 130).

## **2.6 Prototype and conceptual oppositions**

I have discussed the difference between canonical and non-canonical opposition, and briefly mentioned the importance of triggers in signalling opposition. Another concept that is important from the cognitive perspective is the idea of the prototype. The prototype refers to the fact that some members of a certain categorisation are considered more or less central than the others. According to Saeed (1997), in a category such as FURNITURE, some members are considered central to the group, e.g. a chair. The ones that are less central, such as a lamp, are, therefore, peripheral members of the group (p.37). The primary interest in prototypes about the opposition is usually concerned with an attempt to find out good or better pairs of antonyms. Following the work of Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013), my focus on prototypes

is more about finding the interpretation of non-canonical opposition, which can be achieved by referring to prototypes or a more conventional pair of opposition on a conceptual level. The example of the interpretation of unconventional oppositions in a conceptual plane will be mentioned below.

## 2.7 Oppositions and Plane(s) of Equivalence (PoE) and Plane(s) of Difference (PoD)

Following Davies (2013), a plane of equivalence (PoE) is the conceptual domain that both pairs of oppositions share elements that make them compatible as a pair of oppositions, e.g. **drinking tea/ going to war** is both a kind of social relationship. Some pairs might co-exist in only one plane of equivalence, but other pairs might be found in more than one plane. Every PoE is accompanied by a plane of difference (PoD), which refers to a domain that the pairs are considered to be different. As previously mentioned, the canonical conceptual oppositions are also needed in order to recognise the meaning of unconventional oppositions. The following examples are taken from Davies (2013) to show how the prototypes of **tea/war** can be **PEACE/WAR**, **PERSONAL/IMPERSONAL**, and **SMALL/LARGE**:

“Make **tea**, *not war*” proclaimed another, over the picture of the Prime Minister with a gun in his hand and a teapot on his head (Davies, 2013, p. 112).

For the opposition **tea/war**, the readers should recognise that war is part of a pair of eminent conventional oppositions: **PEACE/WAR**. Now we must draw a connection between tea and war. In this context, tea is an activity that people perform in their leisure at a peaceful time, which is wholly contrasted with the act of war. It could be said that **drinking tea** and **going to war** are both STATES OF SOCIAL RELATIONS which should be considered on the same plane of equivalence with this pairing. After that, it is important to find out the domain that makes them different. Drinking tea is an activity that people do with friends and they enter a war with enemies. Therefore, the plane of difference could be *DEGREES OF ANTAGONISM*:

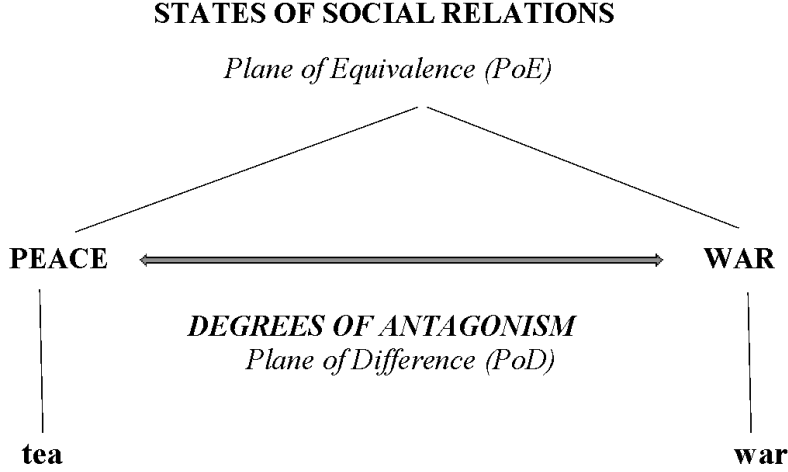


Figure 2.1: diagrammatic representation of relationship between the lexical items (tea/war) and canonical conceptual oppositions on which they are based

Given that drinking tea is what people do with whom they have close relationship with, it also makes sense for a level of intimacy to be a plane of difference. Therefore, what the opposition, tea/war, shares in the conceptual domain could be the type of human relationship. In this case, the conceptual oppositions are no longer **PEACE/WAR**, but rather **PERSONAL** (because drinking tea is an activity that people do with friends) and **IMPERSONAL** (because people fight in wars with enemies):

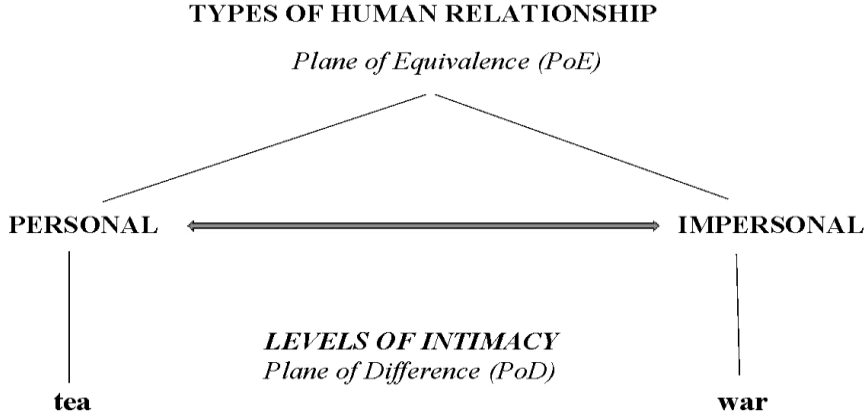
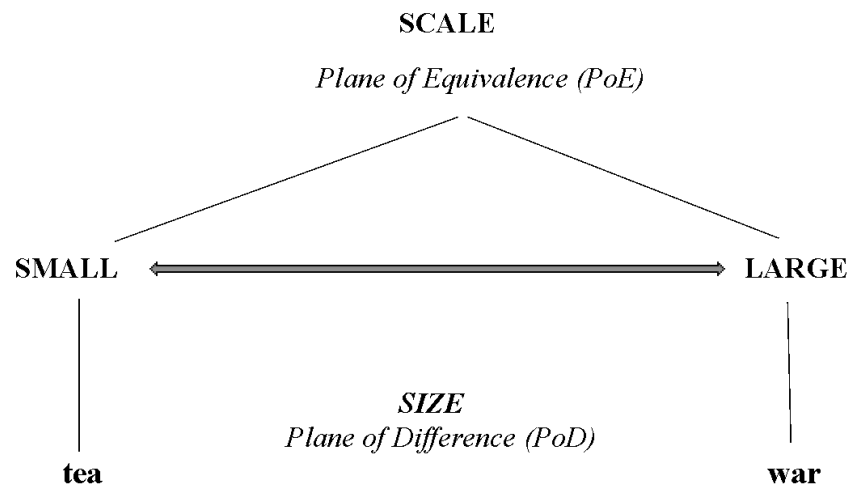


Figure 2.2: diagrammatic representation of PoE and PoD for tea/war (PERSONAL/ IMPERSONAL)

Another way in which to make tea and war a pair in opposition is to think of it in terms of the scale of the activity. In this case, drinking is considerably smaller than the war. Thus, this can lead to a conceptual opposition: **SMALL/LARGE**. Therefore, they share the domain of **SCALE** (PoE), but they are different in *SIZE* (PoD):



**Figure 2.3: diagrammatic representation of PoE and PoD for tea/war (SMALL/LARGE)**

In summary, the readers need to refer to their stored canonical oppositions, e.g. **WAR/PEACE**, in order to understand the unconventional pair: **tea/war**. Yet, it can be seen from the examples that tea/war can also be represented by the concept of **PERSONAL/IMPERSONAL**, and **SMALL/LARGE**, but it is hard to be recognised immediately. Therefore, the plane of equivalence and plane of difference are needed to draw the readers to these oppositions in the conceptual domains. Since it can be noticed from these examples that tea is preferred to war, the concepts of **GOOD/BAD** and **DESIRABLE/UNDESIRABLE** are also applicable (Davies, 2013, pp. 112–114).

Conceptual oppositions or prototypes are considered as one of the most significant parts of my study as it serves as a link between individually constructed oppositions in the texts about

Thailand and between pre-existing cultural oppositions. This relationship between textual and cultural opposition is elaborated in more detail in chapter 4.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

The chapter discusses two forms of opposition, the *canonical opposition* or *antonyms* and the *non-canonical oppositions*. Both will be significant in my investigation of cultural oppositions constructed between Thailand and the West. The cognitive perspective developed by Jeffries and developed by Davies is especially well-suited to his kind of investigation, since it places emphasis on the contextual nature of opposition, and on the way in which opposition extends beyond individual words, and their ‘dictionary’-type meanings. Simply looking for antonyms is unlikely to be as revealing of the forms of opposition constructed in my texts. Therefore, there is merit to expand the use of oppositions, especially when including the field of non-canonical oppositions in Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013), in the study of cultural oppositions. Further, Jeffries’ and Davies’ approach requires that we look to see how language use relates to more abstract conceptual categories – planes of equivalence and difference, prototypes, and other concepts that are not explicitly articulated in the text. It will therefore be useful to know more about how relations between Thailand and the West might be conceptualised in higher order terms. This is the focus of the next chapter, on cultural oppositions.



## CHAPTER 3: CULTURAL OPPOSITIONS

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### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discusses forms of opposition, both *canonical* and *non-canonical*. The investigation at the micro-level is to detect and link these linguistic binaries, as evidenced in the representation of Thailand, to more canonical forms of oppositions at the conceptual level. The linguistic examination includes two forms of oppositions: *external opposition*, which refers specifically to the relationship between Thailand and its Other, and *internal opposition*, which refer specifically to oppositions between the classes within Thailand.

This chapter investigates cultural oppositions at the macro-level. It continues to elaborate Said's Orientalism (2003), previously discussed in 1.4.2. The six stereotypes identified in Orientalism (Said 2003, McLeod 2012) are briefly introduced in 3.2. More details about each stereotype are explained in the rest of the chapter. Cultural oppositions are further categorised into three main sections. Firstly, section 3.3 discusses the roles of imaginative binaries that exist in the representation of space. Then, in section 3.4, the discussion focuses on tourism and facets of Orientalism in the industry. The section also explores previous studies about tourism, Orientalism and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Lastly, section 3.5 is devoted to aspects of Orientalism that are gendered, including other related forms of gender oppositions.

### 3.2 Stereotypes of Orientalism (McLeod, 2012)

This section introduces the stereotypical relationship between the West and the Orient that exists in the discourse of Orientalism. The stereotypes will provide an overall picture of the macro-level of oppositions and serve as a guideline on the study. They are by no means separated, and at times overlapped in the discussion of cultural oppositions. Hence, when in

use, a stereotype may be used individually in the discussion, but some may be combined to make a point. The stereotypes of Orientalism, as listed by McLeod (2012), and as mentioned in Chapter 1 are summarised in Table 1.

<b>Stereotypes of Orientalism</b>	<b>Description</b>
3.2.1 The Orient is timeless.	The Orientalism points out the temporal oppositions between the West and the Orient. The latter remains the same as they were in the past. Its unchanged condition results in their barbaric status compared to the civilised West.
3.2.2 The Orient is strange.	To the West, their unfamiliarity towards anything Oriental in nature is based on their understanding of Western logic and reality. In this sense, the Orient is a land of exoticism, fantasy and peculiarity.
3.2.3 Orientalism makes assumptions about people.	The Westerners have the stereotypical images of the Orient in their mind. It includes a generalisation that the Arabs are violent and that the Chinese are mysterious. Orientals are not perceived as individuals. They assume that all Orientals are the same.
3.2.4 Orientalism makes assumptions about gender.	Female sexuality is a prominent trait of the Orient in Orientalism. The women are frequently portrayed with nudity, as sexually active and associated with immorality. On the other hand, the Oriental men are inadequate in their masculinity. They are ridiculed by the Westerners for their outlandish dressing styles, that on occasions emphasise their association with femininity.

3.2.5 The Orient is feminine.	The association of the Orient with femininity and the West with masculinity is also achieved at the spatial dimension. It goes beyond the representation of the Oriental people as feminine to the portrayal of the whole Oriental area as feminine. The West is associated with vocabulary that portray them as having strong traits of masculinity.
3.2.6 The Orient is degenerate.	The orientals are associated with negative stereotypes, such as being envious, careless, dishonest, indecisive, lazy, violent, and cowardly. These traits symbolise backwardness, which provides a justification for Western invasion as the Orientals should be saved 'from themselves' by the civilised West.

**Table 3.1: summary of Orientalist stereotypes as outlined by McLeod (2012)**

McLeod (2012) emphasises the stereotypes of Orientalism with a considerable element of peculiarity associated with the Orient. The differences appear to go against the grain of the Western sense of logic and normality and is rife with negativities and inferiorities: 'Occident is rational, sensible and familiar, then the Orient is irrational, extraordinary, bizarre. Such perceived strangeness often fascinated and horrified those in the West in equal measure' (p. 53).

The application of stereotypes related to the Orient and Orientals are not static. Though Said (2003) maintains that the Westerners deliberately use Orientalism to maintain their higher position in their power hierarchy; according to Homi Bhabha (1990), the portrayal of the Orient in Orientalism is ambivalent and may not always be negative since its connotations are malleable and circumstantial. For instance, the Orient could be adversely portrayed as backward, but it may simultaneously be represented by its exoticism and beauty. Due to the ambivalence of Orientalism, the stereotypes are significant in colonial discourse as a means for the Westerners to learn about themselves by attributing undesirable qualities to the Orientals. Stereotypes are considered fluid and subject to change over time. Hence, they need to be repeatedly used to maintain the superior position of the Westerners in the hierarchy.

Therefore, the stereotypes maintain the position of the colonised as others, which in turn makes them easier to comprehend (Bhabha, 1990).

### 3.3 Oppositions and the representation of space

For Hall (1998), representation ‘implies the active work of selecting and representing of structuring and shaping: not merely the transmitting of an already-existing meaning, but the more labor of making things mean’ (p. 64). Representation, therefore, is a selection of some meanings out of several other suppressed ones. It is a process of selection, not the reflection of reality. Said (1978) uses a ‘house’ as a metaphoric representation of space in the following quote taken from the second part of the first chapter, *Imaginative Geography and its Representations: Orientalizing the Oriental*:

*The objective space of a house—its corners, corridors, cellar, rooms—is far less important than what poetically it is endowed with, which is usually a quality with an imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel; thus a house may be haunted or homelike, or prisonlike or magical. So space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here (Orientalism 2003, p. 55, emphasis added).*

From the excerpt, Said’s construction of opposition, *objective space/what poetically it is endowed with* (poetics of space), could possibly reflect the purpose of my study and go on to underscore that the physical spaces are irrelevant without the perception and imagination that the people are inclined to ascribe to it. Therefore, the representation of Thailand, the objective space, may not be alienated from values that come about from the experiences or imagination that some people perceive as appropriate to Thailand. The poetic process gives life to space. Therefore, it could be ‘haunted’, ‘homelike’, ‘prisonlike’, or ‘magical’ depending on the imagination that one has towards space.

The geographic imaginaries are also binary as they are embedded in the sense of familiarity, 'our space', which is demarcated from the others, 'their space'. In *Orientalism* (2003), this sense of 'belonging' and 'non-belonging' is the manner whereby imperial identities were formed; through their understanding of what belongs, and vice versa. Said's *Imaginative Geographies* coincides with Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (2006), which describes a nation as a social invention.

To Anderson (2006), nationalism is imagined by those who see themselves as belonging to a community invented by the mutual connections among people who may know or not know one another. Language plays a crucial role in the process as it unites people with the *imagined* community: a sense of nationalism is achieved when people from different parts of the nation speak the same language, read the same books, and abide by the same law. The sense of *Us* is, then constructed, against those who do not share the same language and values.

The continual repetition of a certain type of representation could eventually turn into a stereotype. In 1.4.3.4, though being portrayed and perceived as exotic, Thailand is well-known for its pervasive sex industry. When this stereotype of Thailand exists in other forms of media, the country becomes familiar to the Westerners and specifically for the sex related industry. Referring once again to Said's metaphoric representation of a house, Thailand, namely in international media, could be viewed as a house of prostitutes.

### **3.4 Tourism**

The section explores the cultural oppositions that are related to the matter of tourism. It starts with the discussion of how some aspects of *Orientalism* (2003) are coincided with the essence of tourism as proposed by Urry (2011) and Thorbek and Pattanaik (2002). The section (3.4.1) is considered an extension to the discussion of tourism in 1.4.3 focussing on how the concept is related to Said's *Orientalism* (2003).

### **3.4.1 Tourism and Orientalism**

According to Said's Orientalism, the Oriental space is believed to be fixed, unchanged and timeless. When travelling to Oriental places, the Westerners were theoretically travelling back through time to places where the Western concept of progress had not reached. The Orient, therefore, symbolises the lack of enlightenment, progress, and civilisation (McLeod 2012, p. 96).

As maintained by Urry (2011), tourism involves different experiences that people encounter at home. It enables them to learn, not only about different ways of life in other parts of the world, but also to investigate the normality at home. Therefore, the notion that the Orient is different, in time and in physical appearance (e.g. levels of development), underscores the reason for travelling.

To illustrate, the portrayal of Thailand in the Western media encompasses a combination of the various stereotypes of Orientalism. Thorbek and Pattanaik (2002) elaborate that the sex scenes in Patpong are often depicted with the elements that to the Westerners are strange, such as opium usage, peculiar types of food, tattoos sported by people, and the tuk-tuk (a form of transport), which could be a symbolic representation of eccentric Thailand. The images are reproduced as part of an assortment of marketing strategies, which portray Thailand as exotic so that the tourist is given the opportunity to travel to an unfamiliar place, away from his familiarity back home.

### **3.4.2 Self-Orientalism**

The primary distinction between the West and the Orient is associated with the lack of development in the Orient. This negative connotation in fact, portrays the Orient in a positive light for tourism purposes as it is evident from the concept of Self-Orientalism. The process is a reconstruction of the relationship in discourse related to the Orient in which the Orient creates, reinforces and reproduces its images according to the stereotypes of Orientalism

(Dirlik 1996; Ong 1998; Zhang 2006 in Yan and Santos 2009, Wongbiasaj 2001, Feighery 2012, Wei et al 2018, Ooi 2005, Liu 2017, Suter 2014).

Self-Orientalism exists in several discourses. One that is identified is in a critical discourse analysis of advertisements made by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) published in Time and Newsweek from 1995 to 1998. It suggests that the East, Thailand in this case, is defined as embracing exoticism, glamour, mystery, and promise. In this study, Thailand is presented as an object of desire. The binary opposition, which was criticised for placing the East in the negative side of the opposition, is now adopted in favour of Thailand by Thai people themselves (Wongbiasaj 2001). Yan and Santos (2009), in a critical analysis of a tourism promotional video, *China, Forever*, reveals two specific practices that conform to the stereotypes of Orientalism. One is that the representation of the country as being associated with the past, mystery and femininity and the other, with the subjugation of a contemporary China to the Western power over modernism. Self-Orientalism is, therefore, conducted for monetary purposes as the country identifies the financial prospects of exploiting for their benefit, the discourse of the Other. Feighery (2012) conducts a similar study on a film for Oman tourism promotion which also reveals conformity to the Orientalist script, providing yet another piece of evidence of a country's contribution to the Orientalist discourse related to tourism. Also, in a study about the three national museums of Singapore, Ooi (2005) points out that the attempts were made to include more Asian features to represent the country as it was considered too modern and Westernised for many Western visitors.

Self-Orientalism is also applied to a negotiation in local- tourist relationship (Wei et al. (2018). The study focuses on the Mosuo, the area that is known for its apparently primitive nature, influenced by the Lugu Lake. The land is exoticised and eroticised, among others, for their unique marital system known as walking marriage or 'random sex encounter' (p. 97). The reputation of the area lead to an assumption of the locals' promiscuity. In this context, self-orientalism is adopted by the locals in a form of humour to ease the tension caused by the stereotypes. For instance, they go along with the tourists and fulfil their expectations about

the backwardness of the locals, e.g. by pretending to not know what a cellphone is. Self-Orientalism is considered a way to challenge the existing local-tourist power relation by subtly ridiculing the tourists' ignorance and stereotypical expectation of the area.

Self-Orientalism also exists in the ethno-cultural identities. Liu (2017), points out how Chinese Australian professionals engage in self-Orientalism by adopting Chinese stereotypes for the benefit of their careers with Westerners. The process of self-Orientalism also exists in Japanese girls shōjo manga, but with Orientalist stereotypes imposed upon the West. Suter's study (2014) investigates the traces of Orientalism, self-Orientalism, and Occidentalism through linguistic and visual representation in comics. The study reveals how the West embraces exoticism through evoking fantasies as means to escape social normalcy. Suter (2014) points out that the construction of the Western Other with overt sexuality and femininity is parallel with Said's discourse of Orientalism presenting the Western portrayal of the Orient.

To this point, self-orientalism is exhibited in different ways: some are about tourism, ethnicity, or cultural identities. Nevertheless, they are framed by the same concept of Orientalism in which there is an unequal power relation between *Us* and *Them*. The discussion on this form of relation is continued in the following section, 3.4.3.

### **3.4.3 Tourism and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

The section examines studies about tourism conducted within the CDA framework. The thesis categorises these studies based on the following concepts; 1. POVERTY and AUTHENTICITY, 2. EXPECTATION and AUTHENTICITY, and 3. GOOD/ BAD.

#### **3.4.3.1 POVERTY and AUTHENTICITY**

Firstly, studies suggest that in tourism, the AUTHENTICITY of developing countries is tied to POVERTY. Travellers from developed countries see themselves as contributors to the economy of the area. The belief leads to the internal distinctions within the tourist community: those who visit the more impoverished area see themselves as more sophisticated or profound



than those who seek Western comforts (Calkin 2014, Muldoon & Mair 2016, Butler 2010, Bernardi 2019, Mostafanezhad and Promburom 2016, Salazar 2006).

To begin with, Calkin's study (2014) on the volunteer tourist program (VTP), teens travelling to undeveloped countries during gap years, reveals the similarities between this form of travelling to the colonising mission: the volunteers see themselves as those who bring about development and spread Western knowledge to the area. The study uses Mary Louise Pratt's framework (1992), investigating the 'imperial encounters' in the 'contact zone' (in Calkin 2014, p. 32, citation in original), to ascertain the normalisation, encoding process, and legitimisation of the intervention made by the volunteers. Following Calkin (2014), the representation of the host community is represented with nature, inviting travellers to embark on a journey. The poverty is romanticised and highlighted to signify necessity for help from the volunteers. The visual and linguistic elements work together and coherently to identify the authenticity of the area with the idea of *exotic* other with economic scarcity. Travelling is portrayed as a moral obligation. For instance, in the representation of Thailand, the volunteers are suggested to opt-out visiting beaches or other popular tourist attractions but highlight the significance or urgently need of their practice as a volunteer instead. The hierarchy of travellers has emerged in which the volunteers see themselves as a more cultured type.

Similarly, Muldoon and Mair (2016) study the 'slum tourism' using Foucault's critical discourse analysis in 18 travel blogs and 36 blogs posting from 2013-2014. With an emphasis on the power relation between the host and the tourists, the study shows that the travel blogs attract the readers through colonial lenses: they posit themselves at the position of power, for its gaze in which the poor are dehumanised into animal in a zoo. The locals are also generalised for being all the same: they all welcome the tourists to their home. The linguistic evidence, including the use of 'must' and 'cannot' also conveys the necessity to contribute to the slum community. Slum tourism is, therefore, considered a more profound experience. Likewise, Butler's (2010) study on township tours in post-apartheid South Africa also involves the moral obligation to visit the area. The construction of poverty in public discourse and

tourism is represented as ethical and morally necessary, making this form of tourism different from conventional tourism.

#### **3.4.3.2 EXPECTATION and AUTHENTICITY**

The second category of the studies is concerned with the concept of AUTHENTICITY and EXPECTATION (Bernardi 2019, Mostafanezhad and Promburom 2016, Salazar 2006). To start with, Bernardi (2019) focuses on the authenticity of the Sami, one of the indigenous populations of such European countries as Russia, Sweden, Norway, and Finland in eight tourism Swedish websites. Her approach to CDA is based on *retroduction* through which she identifies eight themes that emerge during the analysis of text and pictures in the websites to map connections between the conceptualisation of authenticity, the marketing for tourism, and the cultural heritage of the Sami. Using Fairclough's methodology (2001, p. 125 in Bernardi 2019), the study aims at identifying *abstract* patterns that are underlying the social structure behind the daily *concrete* practice. To elaborate, tourism marketing is conducted within more *abstract* structures. However, it is more *concrete* in how marketing materials are produced and consumed by tourists. The themes that are conceptualised the reality of the Sami in her study are also studied as part of the same discourse in other studies. To illustrate, the mention of nature as part of the Sami culture in text, videos, or pictures is included in theme 1: *Connection to nature/ harmony with nature/ harmony with nature/ peacefulness*. The title is then followed with references of studies that mention the pristine nature in tourism. Her work is then connected to the same discourse as mentioned in other studies, considering the link between micro (her study) and macro (previous studies and literature about Sami) discourses about the area. Besides, the representation of the Sami with the PAST (in more than half of the data) is also similar to the romanticised representation of the Sami in literature. The stereotypes (themes) are believed to be the result of the social structures that affect the marketing strategies based on Us/ Them binary and AUTHENTICITY. Therefore, the themes are essential in marketing as part of social order, e.g. a need to include the aspects of the Sami that the tourists can recognise such as clothing or reindeer. The analysis of texts and images

also reveal that both Sami and non-Sami structure their market strategies in similar manners. The commercialisation of the stereotypes of the Sami could be both *advantageous* and a *threat*. For instance, the tourists' expectation of Sami's traditional way of life can be contrasted with their contemporary ways of life. It is problematic since the images, found in these themes, are widely adopted even though the Sami tradition is evolving, as seen in daily manifestations.

Mostafanezhad and Promburom's study (2016) is also associated with the AUTHENTICITY and the tourists' expectation towards Thailand. Based on 40 structured interviews with Chinese tourists and northern Thai residents, the study is concerned with a discourse analysis of Thailand and English language media that report on the relationship between a movie, *Lost in Thailand* and the growth of Chinese film-induced tourists in Thailand. It suggests that the tourists re-enact the stereotypes of Thailand as portrayed in the film, based on the modern Thai-Chinese relationship in politics and economy. The reality about Thailand is perceived through the tourists' personal relationship with the Thais, when they travel, and what they expect about the place (the stereotypes). For instance, the interview shows that the expectation that Thailand should be traditional is challenged because it is more modern in real life. On the other hand, some widely used stereotypes in tourism campaign, namely a Thai smile, is reinforced by the friendliness of Thai people. Their perceptions about Thailand are, therefore, incessantly negotiated. The discourse about Thailand in films consist of a collection of tourism imaginaries about the place, moderated by historical and contemporary culture as well as political and economic relations that link geopolitical imaginaries *of* place with tourist experiences *in* place.

Salazar (2006) investigates the local reproduction of the universal discourses in the way tour guide portrays the authenticity of their country through nature and cultural legacy. The researcher draws on Fairclough's notion of discourse (2003 in Salazar 2006): the world is represented as the way it is along with the way people imagine about it. The tour guides follow the templates they learn at school, namely what to pay attention to and what to elaborate. On the other hand, they are also creative when interacting with the tourists. They use languages

with specific properties, e.g. instance, unspecified message producer, monologue, euphoria, and tautology. The researcher points out Cohen's (1985:16) concepts of 'keying' referring to the use of authenticity in the representation of the made-up tourist attractions. One of the keys is the representation of the area as *paradise*, achieved through linguistic markers, e.g. authentic, dream, escape, genuine, imagination, primitive, sensual, and wild. The students are aware of the ideological representation of their home in media, e.g. newspaper, televisions, and films (among others) in which they are represented as others. However, the study shows that tour guide willingly takes part in this discourse by using *us/them* binary in their interaction with the tourists to indicate two logics instantaneously: they construct differences while subverting the differences that already exist. Due to the demand for authenticity in global marketing, the tour guides are obliged to conform to their role as a local, even if they are not essentially the real native of the area.

#### **3.4.3.3 GOOD/ BAD**

The last group of studies are concerned with the underlying GOOD/ BAD conceptual binary (Wynne-Hughes 2012, Landy 2017, Khodadadi & O'Donnell 2017). Wynne-Hughes's study (2012) is concerned with binary oppositions focusing on discourses about anti-terrorism and western perspective tourism in the representations of Egypt in the *Rough Guide* and *Lonely Planet*. The portrayal of Egypt as an attractive tourist attraction while accounting for its terrorism background is conducted through inventing a specific form of *risk*. The process includes the construction of *good* and *bad* Muslims within the country depending on their particular relationship with the West. The *bad* Muslims are considered a *risk*: they are a threat to both the Western tourists and their fundamental Western values, e.g. liberty and democracy. The construction of *risk* in this manner justifies the exclusion of *bad* Muslim in the area specifically devoted to the safety of the Western visitors. However, In the guidebooks, both types of Muslims are not clearly identified, giving rise to the idea that all Egyptians are considered dangerous to the Westerners. Therefore, the study contends that the representations of Egypt through this form of oppositions, *civilised/ barbaric others*, constitute the terrorism

discourse and reinforce the war on Terror, which is prevalent during post- 9/11. In terms of tourism, the area dedicated to Western tourists offers authentic experiences. For instance, tourists are invited to re-enact colonial experiences which are different from mainstream tourism. Guidebooks play a role in upholding the position of Egypt as an object of tourist gaze and the power of the tourists as the gaze performers. Moreover, they maintain that the risk is manageable, and the danger is romanticised to attract tourists to mitigate the dangers of the country caused by terrorists and political chaos.

Similarly, Landy (2017) investigates the representation of 'City of David' in Silwan, the original site of Jerusalem. The study examines the tourists' and tour operators' narration of the place by gathering information in the area, interviewing the tourists, and analysing comments on TripAdvisor. The study also involves the search for authenticity through the othering process. It examines how tourism and Zionist have been employed to justify and reinforce the colonial process of Israeli on Silwan. In tourism discourse, the Israeli settlers associate the Palestinians with a threat. They are also considered illegal, denied the existence, and treated as others both linguistically and spatially. The study shows that the area is represented through the colonial lens: the Palestinian are portrayed with Zionist discourse, as dangerous and backwards. As a result, the area is portrayed as authentic since it is associated with the past. The GOOD/ BAD binary is adopted when the locals also construct an opposition between the 'safe' space for the tourist, referring to space specifically for the Jewish (GOOD), away from the dangerous Palestinian (BAD). Linguistic elements and Landscapes work together to illustrate the danger and otherness of the latter. Physically, specific paths have been constructed above and underground, designated to tourists who will be safe from the Palestinians. Linguistically, they are referred to as being 'over there' or 'on the far slope' which portray them as others and dangerous.

Finally, Khodadadi & O'Donnell (2017) studies different discursive realities about Iran in news reports and tourism discourse. To begin with, the study uses Foucauldian discourse analysis (1972) to investigate news report on Iran. It works on various forms of media

(newspaper, blogs, interviews) to find the recurrent components across these different types of texts: Foucault sees the formation of discourse as 'system of dispersion' because they systematically spread over very numerous site (1972, p.41 emphasis in original). Discourses are, then, the area that a particular form of reality is persistently constructed. The study reveals three dominant discourses (or themes) that emerged. Firstly, Iran-as-Polity includes negative aspects of Iran, e.g. terrorism and nuclear. Secondly, Iran-as-Persia refers to the representation of Iran in blogs and interviews with unimaginable historical and geographical attractions. Lastly, Iran-as-society includes the surprise or what goes against the expectation of the tourists when they realise after their trips that Iran is modern, that people are friendly, and that Islam is non-extreme. The hospitality of Iran people is also contrasted to the 'Iran-as-polity'. Therefore, the discursive construction of 'authentic' Iran can be extremely varied.

To conclude, the section discusses studies on various genres, but are located within the field of Critical Discourse Analysis. Though the studies are specifically about or aim at investigating oppositions, several conceptual oppositions appear to emerge in their study; POVERTY and AUTHENTICITY (Calkin 2014, Muldoon & Mair 2016, Butler 2010, Bernardi 2019, Mostafanezhad and Promburom 2016, Salazar 2006), EXPECTATION and AUTHENTICITY ( Bernardi 2019, Mostafanezhad and Promburom 2016, Salazar 2006), and GOOD/ BAD ( Wynne-Hughes 2012, Landy 2017, Khodadadi & O'Donnell 2017).

### **3.5 Gender oppositions**

The section is devoted to the aspects about gender oppositions and Orientalism (2003). It starts with gender stereotypes which explain the basic distinctions between men and women (3.5.1). Then the following section examines the Orientalist stereotypes (McLeod 2012) that are specifically about gender.

### **3.5.1 Gender stereotypes**

Fundamentally, gender stereotypes are based on the ground of the distinctions between sex and gender. Societies form gender dichotomies, then assign specific places and roles to men and women. Through socialisation, gender is constructed and reproduced, while sex is purely a biologically given. Therefore, people know their places through the socialization process which inspires their gender identities, behavior and social interaction. Gender is, therefore, socially constructed and is related to power since people were assigned masculine and feminine traits that belong to certain hierarchies in the society (De Beauvoir 1972; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003; Garcia, Reiber, Massey, and Merriwether 2012 Jeffries 2002, Cornell 1978).

The gender stereotypes are binary in nature. According to Budgeon (2014), even though it is subject to change due to the feminist movement that could challenge the hegemonic gender relations, the structure of gender remains binary. Gender needs to be complementary, though multidimensional, to preserve the gender hierarchy and guide people's gender perception to maintain social order. It is not impossible to change, adjust, or avoid the hegemonic masculinity, but it is still not possible to say that the female empowerment that enables women to have more power in the society could 'rework gender hierarchy. She maintains that regardless of the complexity of gender, including the fluidity of gender these days, e.g. homosexuality, gay or lesbians, the binary form remains necessary in the comprehension and preservation of gender hierarchy (p. 331).

The gender stereotype is also concerned with "the sexual script theory", which see human sexuality as being controlled by "culturally prescribed scripts, or templates for behaviour." The script also determines gender normality in that the normal kind of sex is heterosexual and that men are "socially active and assertive, while favouring nonrelational sex." Women, on the other hand, are portrayed as "sexually passive and seeking relational sex" (Garcia, Reiber, Massey, & Merriwether, 2012, Simon & Gagnon, 2003). The biological distinctions between men and women facilitate the naturalisation of socially constructed gender stereotypes. The

construction of these gender labels could be varied in different societies, times and places and could be developed into something 'hegemonic' and 'normal' (Laurie, et al. 2014, p. 3–4).

Gender normalcy can affect an attempt to deal with issues that are related to sex industry. As mentioned in 1.4.3.2, Sanders-McDonagh (2017) points out that due to the sexual scripts that control proper-gendered behaviours, when women participate in what is deemed to be male-centric activities, e.g. prostitution, their involvement is seen as romance or a harmless act in comparison to their male counterparts. This is due to the generalisation that women do not or should not pay for sex. It is problematic when female tourists in sex business is overlooked since they are also active contributors to the reproduction of Thailand (and the Netherlands) as a sex destination that female tourists *should* visit during their holiday (p. 138, emphasis in original). Therefore, the limit in gender diversities make it harder to understand the problems and related social issues. The following section discusses the socially assigned values of women, NORMAL/ ABNORMAL or GOOD/ BAD, that could be psychologically explained with a conceptual opposition, MADONNA/ WHORE.

### **3.5.2 MADONNA/ WHORE**

Historically, it was through journeys in the 19th century the 'other' women are discovered, exoticised, and objectified. The women, as maintained by Lalvani (1995), "for a narcissistic gaze (eroticism) or views her as potentially threatening to the western male psyche" (p. 269). To the Westerners, the Oriental women are, then, inviting and threatening at the same time. The conflicting feeling towards the Oriental women could be elaborated with a conceptual binary, MADONNA/ WHORE, which centres around the virginity of women. The association of the binary with the notion of virginity appears to make it relatable to a binary between Madonna and Whore, which stems from the Virgin Mary and Eve binary. The conceptual binary, Virgin Mary/Eve, paves the way to Sigmund Freud's Madonna/Whore which refers to men's psychological issues concerned with their desire to be with the whore whom they disrespect, but find women that they respect the Madonna to be undesirable Death by Eve, life by Mary (St. Jerome) (Tumanov 2011, Landau, et al. 2006). Virginity has therefore long



been a part of the distinction between good and bad women and that that binary is complementary. The Other women that were viewed as a threat could also be a result of the stereotype of the Orient that the female is overtly sexual and immoral; something that does not fit into the sexual script, but fascinating and intimidating all together. To this point, the focus has been on the gender stereotypes and their influence on the social normativity. The following section explores the concepts further by focusing on the gender stereotypes that are entrenched in the Orientalist discourse (2003).

### **3.5.3 Gender oppositions in Orientalism (2003)**

Orientalism includes the notion that the West conforms to the gender standard which the Orient fails to comply. In 3.2.4 '*Orientalism makes assumptions about gender*', McLeod (2012) tells us that Orientalism constructs gender oppositions between 'the effeminate Oriental male' and 'the sexually lascivious exotic Oriental females' (p. 54). In Orientalism, Oriental men are not masculine enough and women are overtly depicted in a sexual manner, e.g., naked or extremely exposed. This association is considered negative according to the Western norm:

The Oriental is deemed as failing to live up to received, the standards of proper gender codes: men, by Western colonialist standards, were meant to be active courageous, strong; by the same token, women were meant to be passive, moral, chaste. But Oriental men and women do not comply with these gender roles: their gender identity is regarded as transgressive (McLeod 2012, p. 54).

From the excerpt above, the gender codes are a sign of civilization. Failing to conform is, therefore, an indication of backwardness, another stereotype of Orientalism. This shows the political power in which the gender codes are made by the Westerners, then applied to the Orientals. Along the same lines, in 3.2.5: '*the Orient is feminine*' gender stereotypes are ascribed with a specific vocabulary to address the spatial representation associated with gender in Orientalism: the Western space is ascribed with *masculine* and the Orient with *feminine* qualities.

... the Orient is 'penetrated' by the traveller whose 'passions' it rouses, it is 'possessed', 'ravished', 'embraced' – and ultimately 'domesticated' by the muscular coloniser". While female Orientals are described with "passive, submissive, exotic, luxurious, sexually mysterious and tempting, the Western male is associated with "the discourses of heroic, brawny masculinity..." (McLeod 2012, p. 55).

The reference of 'traveler' indicates the tourism context, but the example is also applied to other forms of relationship, namely the Western colonialism in which the invasion was for saving the Oriental from their inferiority. The tourism mentioned in the excerpt could be further discussed with the prostitution in Thailand. As pointed out in the section 1.4.3.4 prostitution has become one of infamous images about Thailand which, to an extent, makes the business a symbolic representation of the nation, both in the Thai and Western representation of the country. In this type of discourse, though Thailand is portrayed as having something for everyone, prostitution appears to overshadow other qualities.

Pritchard and Morgan's critical study (2000) also coincides with the stereotype that the Orient is feminised (3.2.5). Following Kinnaird and Hall (1994, 1996) and Cohen (1995), their emphasis is on the construction of sexualised landscape of Asia-Pacific, the Caribbean, and the Arctic. She maintains that the process privileges the male gaze and dismisses the perspectives of female tourists. The lack of diversity in the advertisement also results in the reproduction of not only the established stereotypes in gender and sexuality but also the racial relations that are not equal. According to Anderson (1996), tourism discourses (like their precursors, colonialism and imperialism) privilege the gaze of the "master subject": white, male, heterosexual, and bourgeois (p. 198 in Pritchard and Morgan 2000, p. 899, emphasis in original). Hence, since the process of representation is discursively constructed in an unequal manner, some national identities are privileged and reproduced over other qualities. This includes the ones produced by their host nations. For instance, in official advertisements issued by their government, Thailand, Vietnam, and India adopt linguistic features that feminise the qualities of their countries. The process is entwined with a discourse of sexism and racism and upholds Said's (1991) discourse on the Orient (Pritchard and Morgan 2000).

In political discourse, Khalid (2011) using a concept called 'gender orientalism' (p.15) to analyse visual representation in the War on Terror. Said's notion about the feminised Orient (2003) is also applied in Khalid's study (2011): the War on Terror are also involved with various oppositions that posit the West against the East, 'good vs evil, civilised vs barbaric, rational vs irrational, progressive vs backwards' (p. 15). The visual representation includes the use of veils as symbolic representation oppression against Muslim women. One of the examples is on the cover image of the November 2001 edition of *Time* magazine featuring Afgan women without burqas that represent the concepts that are originated from the West, e.g. liberation, freedom, civilisation, and gender equality.

Sexism appears to surpass the Orientalist discourse in Khalid's study (2011). For example, in the representation of the rescue of Jessica Lynch, though being called a heroine for fighting in the Iraqi war, her representation still follows the sexual script that honours the action of male soldiers who rescue this helpless woman. The gender stereotype is also applied to the portrayal of Lynndie England, who abused Iraqi male prisoner. Her behaviour is considered unacceptable as it challenges the stereotypes of feminine qualities (Brittain 85, 89 in Khalid 2011). The stereotypes of Orientalism in both studies point out the reproduction of the power of Western knowledge which also manipulate the Other in different context. The following section moves on to the area of nationalism to explore the association of gender and spatial representation.

#### **3.5.4 Selected Female Images and Nationalism**

To McDowell (2004), national identities are created through gendered language, images and artefacts in the same way as Anderson's *Imagined Community* (2006). The ideal qualities, or dominant ideologies, are also contextual and purposefully selected, e.g. to justify the colonial invasion. For instance, considering the British representation of Ireland during the British invasion, Ireland is represented as *Erin* who is portrayed as a young and beautiful woman. However, she is weak, so she requires to get married with her manly and strong neighbor who can protect and control her. Matthew Arnold repeats the feminised image of Ireland that

represents the country as being dependent during the second half of the century by reproducing theories about the Irish in which the Celts are characterised as artistic and charming, but impractical and unreliable. To counter the feminine images of Ireland proposed by Britain, the Irish nationalist constructs a character named *Gael* to assert masculine traits and to masculinate the nation.

The situation also existed in Thailand as part of the *siwilai project* to deal with the Western threat during the colonial period. The project was conducted primarily during the reign of Mongkut, Chulalongkorn, and Vajiravudh, by obliterating the negative traits that could damage the image of Siam as well as by highlighting the more desirable ones through the representation of female images. The high value they place on virginity that started in the late nineteenth-century has continued and become the symbolic representation of the Thai nation in the present days (Harrison 2014).

According to Kham Phaka (2003; in Harrison 2014), the notion of virginity is not only viewed as an ideal quality of Thai women at the micro-level, but also valued on the macro level to celebrate the escape from Western colonialism when the Thais perceived their country as a virgin space. This belief has carried on as part of the nationalist discourse. One of the examples is an ideological campaign on Valentine's Day (symbolic representation of Western influence) encouraging Thai women to preserve their virginity, especially on this day.

This part of the discourse about the *ideal* women was proposed by the Thai aristocracy. Aeusrivongse (2004) argues that the preservation of virginity is something of a past and has lost its value these days. It is, in fact, now more of a Western idea that values the preservation of virginity. He refers to the reign of King Chulalongkorn, Rama V, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century when the Thai upper class was sent to study abroad and adopted this mentality. The fact that the belief about virginity originated from the West has been forgotten, and the Thais have seen it as a vital part of their cultural legacy. The association of female virginity with the national identity also explains the negative connotation that is deeply rooted with prostitution.

The Thais' perceptions on the values of virginity at the national level also highlight the stigma suffered by prostitutes. In *Sex and Borders* (2002), Jeffrey points out that the geographical borders should be perceived with a combination of the bodies and minds of those who inhabit within the bordered as well. To Jeffrey, 'Without this deeper inscription, a line on a map is meaningless. 'Nation', therefore, rests on the construction of national identities'(xxi). As a result, the control of women, as producers of the nation's population, is crucial to the cause of nationalists. On the other hand, prostitutes, whose work violates the gendered code of the society by having sex for reasons other than reproduction along with their promiscuity, are punished by being marginalised or by being treated as Others in the society. The prevalence of prostitutes is viewed as a threat to the the nation (Jeffries 2002, xxi).

The inclusion of prostitution in the discourse of nationalism as the threat to the purity of the nation is also associated with a combination of several stereotypes of Orientalism concerned with assumptions about gender (3.3.4), the Orient's femininity (3.3.5), and its degeneracy (3.3.6). The critics that are concerned with the failure to solve the problem of widespread prostitution also portray the country as 'inert and unchanging' compared to the developed West (ix). Apart from prostitution, polygamy which has long been part of the Thai tradition, even though it was outlawed in 1935 as prostitution was in 1960, is what renders the country uncivilized to the West. The elaboration of the Western concern over the matters of polygamy is from the description of Anna Leonowens (1850). The portrayal includes the maltreatment of women in the harem. To the Westerners, polygamy was an indication of 'a lack of the kind of (gentle) manly virtues associated with Western governance' (p. 7). This representation also justifies Western colonialism.

### **3.5.5 GOOD/ BAD women in Thailand**

Apart from the notion of nationalism, the qualities of good women in Thailand are intermingling with other qualities, such as the notion of class. To start with, I draw on the representation of two types of Thai women in the canonical work of Krukritin's early 1950s novel, *Four Reigns*, which revolves around an indispensable value of the royal family to the

nation. He gave credit to the royal institution for bringing peace, order, stability and prosperity to the Thai nation. His nationalist discourse is achieved through the construction of a main character, Mae Ploy (Mae means mother), that embodies his idea of an ideal representation of 'Thainess'. She could be, on the other hand, concurrently symbolic of someone that stands up against the values of the flourishing sex industry, which caused major concern to the Thai elites. Kukrit wrote a short novel in 1954, portraying his perception of prostitutes with a character named Phanni while Mae Ploy is represented with desirable qualities (being a mother, elite, traditional, conservative, and devoted to the royalism).

For Phanni, Jeffrey (2002) argues that it is not her life as a prostitute, but her greed that is the focus of this story. Her background, poor and rural, appears to point out already that she is 'other' and 'marginal' in Krukrit's version of 'Thainess'. She is abused at the space of the rich (though he is the one that seduced her), but treated well at the brothel. Her death serves as a punishment for demanding changes beyond her position in the social hierarchy: she violates the 'know-thy-place' mentioned in section 3.5 (Sattayanurak 2005). Therefore, the representation of *Mae Ploy* and *Phanni* reflect the values of 'Thainess' based on not just their sexuality, but their social class as well.

There appears to be a pattern of stereotypical negative qualities of women: when one is mentioned, others are implied. They include being prostitute, poor, and uneducated. Harrison (2017) maintains that Thailand is still struggling with a dichotomy between its stereotype as 'a thriving hub of internal sex tourism' and its attempt to define Thainess with ' "good" Thai women – a model of sexual propriety, demure physicality and aesthetic perfection'. She adopts a *utopian/ dystopian* binary to elaborate the two versions of Thai women: a 'disturbing' one constructed by the Thai elites and a 'monstrous-feminine' proposed by Thai feminists and street protestors during the political chaos 'to resist the elites and patriarchal discourses of control' (p. 64).

Her study centres around the representation of *Yingluck*, the former Prime Minister of Thailand. During her position as a prime minister, she was attacked with racist and sexist

slurs. An example that made headline is from a businessman, "but the fact is, *uneducated* or *lazy* and *stupid northern women* will happily do work that *normal women will not do*, like *prostitution...*" (p.69, emphasis added). The accusation is completely false, but for the purposes of my study, it shows that remarks about the class system and reference of her being a 'prostitute' (which Yingluck is clearly not) is added into almost by default the definition of the portrayal of bad women regardless of the place, time or context.

Prostitution is also an outcome of Thai tradition, which relies on the roles of daughters as breadwinners: based on Buddhist beliefs, the sons can repay their parents' gratitude through ordination (to send their parents to heaven). Their image as *good* women helps relieve her stigma that comes with prostitution and allows them to reposition themselves in the community (Suwanphattana 1998, Mensendiek 1997). Viewed from these perspectives, the common perception of *good* and *bad* women may not be easily applied.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The chapter provides the background on cultural oppositions necessary for the understanding of the study of linguistic oppositions in the representation of Thailand. The first section is about Orientalism (Said 2003), specifically McLeod's (2012) six stereotypes which serve as guideline for the comparison of the representation of Thailand in linguistic (micro) and cultural (macro) oppositions. In later chapters, these stereotypes will be referred to as a means by which the Orientalism of the discourse in Lonelyplanet.com and Stickmanbangkok.com can be assessed. The section 3.4 is devoted to the cultural oppositions in tourism. The discussion focuses on the Orientalist stereotypes that the Orient is *strange* and *timeless* (Said 2003) which coincide with Urry's *Tourist Gaze* (2011) as one of the reasons for travelling. The focus is also on the notion of Self-Orientalism e.g. in Chinese tourism promotion, *China Forever* (Yan and Santos 2009). Additionally, it includes studies about tourism conducted within the CDA framework which point out the underlying patterns of such conceptual

binaries as DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, EXPECTATION/ REALITY, and PAST/ PRESENT. The last section (3.5) is about gender oppositions. Among others, it discusses the distinctions between sex and gender ( de Beauvoir, 1972) and gender stereotypes of Orientalism (Said 2003). Pritchard and Morgan's study (2000) also discusses the concepts of male gaze, previously introduced in Chapter 1 and the sexualised landscape that supports the stereotype that the Orient is feminised (3.25). The utilisation of the gendered aspects of Orientalism is also examined in Khalid's study on the War on Terror (2011). Finally, the chapter explores the Orientalist stereotypes in symbolic representation of women in nationalist discourse (McDowell 2004, Harrison 2014). One of the desirable qualities of Thai women as deemed by Thais is related to the concept of virginity which influence the national construction of *ideal* image of Thai women. This notion is considered another evidence of how women are controlled and objectified by the state and patriarchal power.



## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY: IDENTIFYING AND CATEGORISING OPPOSITIONS

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#### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter two discussed aspects of linguistic opposition, namely its omnipresence in human thought and language, and the conceptual nature of linguistic opposition. Chapter three extended opposition into the cultural domains which are considered macro oppositions in this study. It elaborated the cultural perceptions of Self and Other in the East/ West relation, specifically within the ambit of post-colonial discourse. The binary opposition also involves the perception of Thailand in the media, namely in connection with the sex industry and prostitution. Chapter three also discussed the oppositions constructed internally within Thailand. This chapter explains the process of a linguistic examination of oppositions constructed in the representation of Thailand.

The purpose of this study is to make a connection between the micro oppositions (constructed in *text*) and macro oppositions (constructed between different *cultures*). This chapter elaborates how that process can be achieved. It begins with a description of the tools used to examine the textual oppositions. The research draws upon primarily the syntactic frames used in the work of Davies (2013), also inspired by Jones' (2002) and Mettinger's (1994), and structural and lexical triggers by Jeffries (2014). The following section describes how the non-canonical oppositions are interpreted through their association with more canonical oppositions at the conceptual level. The section is an elaboration of section 2.7 about Davies' *Planes of Equivalence and Difference*. The chapter ends with an explanation of three concepts, FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY, served as main categories for conceptual oppositions in the study. The process primes and concurrently draws the readers to the analysis chapters which explore textual oppositions found in Lonelyplanet.com,

Stickmanbangkok.com and in the forum of Readers' Submissions written by Westerners and Thais. The data itself was introduced in Chapter one, so this chapter focuses on the methods to identify and analyse the oppositions in that data.

#### 4.2 Identification of textual oppositions

The section explains the significance of the syntactic frames and how they are utilised to identify linguistic oppositions. It begins with example 1 from Lonely Planet which illustrates the identification of linguistic oppositions using the Concessive oppositions, **X but Y**.

1. It may be **the beaches** that bring you to Thailand, *but* it's **the food** that will lure you back for seconds.

The opposite relation of the unconventional opposition, **the beaches/ the food**, is triggered with a Concessive opposition, *but*. Without it, the relationship between the two sentences appear to be equal: *people go to Thailand for the beaches* and *they come back for the food*. With '*but*', the differences appear to be constructed based on the varying degree of appreciation of the place: liking the country enough to come back (because of the food) seems to indicate how the tourists appreciate the country more than coming for the first time (because of the beaches). The example illustrates that when the syntactic frame is taken into consideration, it is possible to unveil the opposite relation, namely between the **beaches** and the **food** in this example.

The application of syntactic frames in studies about oppositions is not new. However, much work on opposition and synonymy focuses on lexical aspects in which oppositions constructed within contexts are mostly disregarded (Mettinger 1994, Jones 2002). This study, on the other hand, relies on contexts to interpret the oppositions. For this reason, it is vital to detect the oppositions manually to understand the context in which the opposite relations occur. To illustrate, the process starts by reading the whole text thoroughly to understand the overall tone of each text. Then the text is examined line by line with each syntactic frame (Davies

2013, Jeffries 2014) in mind. Even though it could be possible to use keywords of the syntactic frames to identify the oppositions in text, due to the nature of the study, it should be more useful to go through the text manually for several reasons.

To begin with, one of the primary purposes of the study is to apply the syntactic frames (Davies 2008, 2013 and Jeffries 2014) to investigate the textual oppositions that could occur in the representation of Thailand. Then the roles of the oppositions in the construction of Us/Them binaries are examined, including their relevance to the Orientalist discourse. By doing this manually, it is possible to discover new triggers that could add to the original lists proposed by Davies (2008, 2013) and Jeffries (2014). Since the opposite relation is also about the writer-reader relationship, Hyland's Engagement marker (2005) should be a possible candidate for the identification of opposition. For instance, in the following example, Stickman uses Engagement Marker to implicate a shared understanding about Thailand within the Western community:

2. What a lot of the folks hiring motorbikes do is to ask to hang on to your passport as security. **My strong recommendation is that you do not give it to them and if hiring a bike, it may be best to not let them know where you stay... Yes, I know this is wrong, but sometimes you have to fight fire with fire.**

In the excerpt above, Stickman advises his readers to be careful with the Thais' supposed fraudulence in the car renting business. His suggestion, "My strong recommendation", suggests the gravity of the problem and that it is necessary to take precaution. An Engagement Marker that follows, 'Yes, I know this is wrong...', is an answer without a question. This appears to create a shared sense of Western community through the expected question concerning the unethical incident. The abstract reader-writer relationship also contributes to the honesty of Western society in which the quality, as mentioned in the example above, does not always apply in Thailand.

It could be argued that some readers could also be Thai. However, considering the context of the example, e.g. the mention of 'your passport', could be an indication that the addressee of this message is foreigners travelling in Thailand. For this reason, it is significant to conduct the research manually in order to take an overall context and other oppositions, triggered by Engagement marker, into consideration. A second reason for the manual identification of oppositions is because some forms of oppositions cannot be predetermined:

3. 'In my mind, though, I am one of the lucky ones who had the fortune to meet real Thais before the (idiot-sex-tourist) language/knowledge issue became a problem.'

In 3, the writer refers to the *authentic* version of Thailand that exist in the past, implicating oppositions between **real/ unreal** Thais and Thai people in the **past/ present**. The reference of *real*, *before*, *lucky* and *fortune* implicate that Thailand in the *past* is the authentic and better version of Thailand. In other words, these triggers work together to construct two versions of Thailand in which the one associated with the past appears to be better. Since these triggers cannot be predetermined, the manual identification of oppositions seems to be indispensable.

Taking the above reasons on board, a qualitative, text-based approach is appropriate for the purpose of this study. The purpose is not to find out the number or frequency of the oppositions, but to examine the application of the pre-existing syntactic frames (Davies 2008, 2013 and Jeffries 2014) into the study focusing on Thai context. The concern is more on the forms, functions, and intermingling of oppositions in context. Therefore, it is necessary to be thorough and explore the whole text. For this reason, the corpus approach, a computerised kind of approach that explore a language on a large-scale and works best with searchable words or strings as its focus, does not adequately serve the purpose of the study because it is more about statistical analysis and hypothesis testing (McEnery and Hardie 2012). The approach could benefit tremendously in future projects. Among others is a top-down analysis in which the prominent concept oppositions that emerge from this study, e.g. DEVELOPED/

UNDEVELOPED, AUTHENTIC/ INAUTHENTIC, PAST/ PRESENT, are explored to see how and how often these concepts are manifested through textual oppositions. Besides, this study aims to provide a detailed discussion of the oppositions and their possible relation to the cultural oppositions. Hence, there is not enough time and space for an elaborated quantitative analysis. An overall picture of the process for collecting, conceptualising, and categorising the textual oppositions is provided in table 4.1:

No	Opposites	Trigger (s)	Context	Conceptual opposition (s)	Comments	CC
1	friendly/ exotic	Semantic trigger: friendly/ exotic	<p>One of the world's most popular and delicious cuisines. Beautiful beaches and islands.</p> <p><b>Friendly</b>, charming people. Warm weather all year round. Reasonable prices for most everything. Colourful, enchanting temples.</p> <p>An <b>exotic</b> culture preserved through the ages by a country <u>that has never been colonised</u>. Where is this? Thailand, of course!</p>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	<p>The semantic properties of the 'exotic' set Thailand apart from the Western culture. The opposition between the East and the West is emphasized with "that has never been colonised" making Thailand even more different from the West.</p>	F A

2	Visitors return/ first-time visitors	Semantic trigger: return/ first -time	<b>Visitors return</b> year after year and as the word spreads, <b>first-time visitors</b> come flooding in.	EXPERIENCED/ INEXPERIENCED		F A
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**Table 4.1: table used for identifying oppositions**

The format in the table 4.1 is for all seven texts from Lonelyplanet.com, Stickmanbangkok.com, and all five Readers' Submissions. Due to the space limit, only one table from Lonelyplanet.com is listed in the appendix. Since the purpose of the table is to help organise the thought and provide an understanding of the use of triggers in text, it should be sufficient to include only one table in this thesis.

The table is for data collection of extracts drawn from Stickmanbangkok.com. The first column, *No*, is for the numerical order of opposites. The second column, *Opposites* is for an opposite taken directly from the example in context. The third column is for trigger (s) mentioned alongside its categories. The following column, *context*, is for examples taken to provide context for the selected opposites. Next, the column labelled *Conceptual opposition (s)* is my interpretation of the textual opposite. It is possible for an opposite to be associated with more than one conceptual opposition. The column that follows, *Comments*, are my remarks on the opposites. The last column, *CC*, refers to four types of conceptual categories: FAMILIARITY (FA), DEVELOPMENT (DV), DEGENERACY (DG), and Miscellaneous (MI). The last category refers to the opposites that do not belong to any of these categories. More detail of the data collection process is in the reproduction of these tables in the Appendix. The following section explain each trigger in more detail.

### 4.3 Triggers

The use of syntactic patterns in studies of antonymy is prevalent in the corpus-based field for a wide range of antonym extraction (Mettinger 1994, Jones 2002, Jones et al. 2007, Lobanova et al. 2010, Paradis and Willners 2007). As detailed in 4.2 above, it is the work of Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013) that the thesis draws upon, instead of the corpus approach. Firstly, they aim at manually discovering non-canonical oppositions using lexical and syntactic triggers. Secondly, their work is more sensitive to context, and to the possibility of oppositions occurring in texts in unpredictable ways. They also go beyond merely extracting antonyms, but also discuss ideological effects of the constructed oppositions in contexts.

Since the application of syntactic frames to identify textual oppositions is considered a significant process of the study, it should be worth exploring Mettinger's *Aspects of Semantic Opposition in English* (1994) and more importantly Jones's *Antonymy: A Corpus-Based Perspective* (2002) as pioneer studies in this field and briefly exploring how they are different from the Davies's (2013) and Jeffries (2014).

To begin with, their approach to oppositions are lexical oriented, so in Saussure's *langue/parole*, the opposite relation is considered *langue*. Both preselect a specific set of canonical oppositions: 350 pairs from Roget's Thesaurus and 350 from British crime novels (Mettinger 1994) and 56 pairs (including an analysis of their syntactic frames from a selected 3,000 sentences) from a 280-million-word corpus of the Independent newspaper from 1988 to 1996 (Jones 2002). In both studies, the syntactic frames are for the categorisation of forms and functions of opposite relation, including the frequency of its occurrence in each frame. For instance, the conventional oppositions, namely **hot/ cold**, **new/ old**, are often housed within such frames as **X not Y**, the *differences* between X and Y. Their emphasis is on the lexical aspects of the study, not the new meanings that could emerge from the contextual oppositions. Davies (2013) has made useful and comprehensive tables to illustrate Mettinger's and Jones's oppositions and syntactic frames (p. 47-48, and p. 50-56). The studies are valuable as they

pave the way the application of syntactic frames in the studies about opposite relations. The work of Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013) are different in the changes they made in the syntactic frames with the consideration of the types (canonical/ non-canonical oppositions), discourse functions and ideological significance of the oppositions. From these perspectives, contrasted relations are considered *parole*.

Jones's later work (2012, in Murphy et al. 2015) has expanded to the area of discursively contextual oppositions. One of the changes appears to be in *Ancillary Antonymy*, the use of a conventional pair A to highlight contrastive relation of the less conventional pair B. Davies (2013) commented on a possibility to explore constructed oppositions that Jones (2002) seems to miss. The changes made in Jones et al. (2012) includes the categorisation of Ancillary Antonymy and Co-ordinated Antonymy into Major functions. The rest are placed in Minor functions and Residual functions based on the percentage of the discursive function of antonyms in their data in newspaper discourse. The modifications appear to consider context, but the work is still lexical in their attempts to measure the degree of canonicity based on the number of times antonyms occur in the syntactic frames.

Jones and his collaborators (2015) also investigate the role of ancillary antonymy in the construction of contrastive relation. The study is a corpus-based study with an emphasis on the applicability of parallelism, semantic relation in discourse and contrastive connectors in the construction of opposite relation. One of the critical purposes of this study is to evaluate the potency of parallelism as a trigger of opposition in Davies (2008) and Jeffries (2010) (Murphy et al. 2015). More details about the study will be discussed in the discussion on parallelism (4.3.2.5). It is mentioned at this point to show the transition of Jones's interest in oppositions from purely lexical into the area of conceptual or constructed opposition. The changes could reveal the significance of constructive oppositions in the study of semantic relation.



The syntactic frames used in this thesis are a combination of both Davies' (2013) and Jeffries' (2014), applied with some modifications which are mostly to do with labelling to suit the study. Two other forms of triggers derived from Labov's *Comparator* (1972) and Hyland's *Engagement Markers* (2005) are also added to the list. For a detailed description of the syntactic frames, see Jeffries (2014, p. 29-55) and Davies (2013, p. 43 -91). Table 1 is a comparison of triggers outlined by Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013).

<b>Jeffries (2014)</b>	<b>Davies (2013)</b>
<p><b>1 Structural triggers of opposition</b></p> <p>1.1 Negation and related triggers</p> <p>1.2 Parallel structures</p> <p>1.3 Coordination</p> <p>1.4 Comparatives</p> <p><b>2 Lexical triggers of opposition</b></p> <p>2.1 Explicit mention of oppositional relation</p> <p>2.2 Influence of conventional opposites in context</p>	<p>1 Negated opposition</p> <p>2 Replacive opposition</p> <p>3 Comparative opposition</p> <p>4 Concessive opposition</p> <p>5 Transitional opposition</p> <p>6 Explicit opposition</p> <p>7 Parallelism</p> <p>8 Jones's 'ancillary antonymy'</p> <p>9 Binarised oppositions</p>

**Table 4.2: summary of triggers proposed by Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013)**

One of the main distinctions between triggers proposed by Davies (2013) and Jeffries (2014) is that Jeffries makes a distinction between lexical and structural triggers. In Volume II of his PhD thesis, Davies (2008) provides his data collection table in which there are two separate columns for semantic and syntactic triggers but point out that semantic triggers occur much less than he originally anticipated (p. 40). The triggers used in this study are listed in Table 2 and will be discussed in more details below.

T y p e	Triggers	Examples of patterns
1. Lexical triggers	1.1 semantic triggers	e.g. X/ Y (separated by opposite semantic properties e.g. canonical forms of oppositions)
	1.2 Influence of conventional opposites in context	e.g. X/ Y (influencing opposite relation of X/ Y)
	1.3 Explicit opposition	e.g. (a huge) different between X and Y
	1.4 Auto-Evocation	e.g. semantic feature of X influence opposite relation with Y (not lexicalized)
	1.5 Transitional opposition	e.g. X turn into Y
2. Structural triggers of opposition	2.1 Negated opposition	e.g. X not Y, including Labov's comparator (X = expectation)/ Y (reality)
	2.2 Comparative opposition	e.g. more X than Y
	2.3 Replacive opposition	e.g. X instead of Y
	2.4 Concessive opposition	e.g. X but Y, X. However, Y
	2.5 Paralellism	e.g. There is X. There is Y.
	2.6 Engagement Markers	Focusing on communication between writers and readers through the use of pronoun e.g. you, questions, and imperatives

**Table 4.3: summary of triggers used in this study**

Table 4.3 summarises the version of triggers used in this study. The study follows Jeffries (2014) by separating the triggers into lexical and structural forms of triggers. The reason is it appears to facilitate the comprehension and explanation of the triggers. The following is the description of the triggers used in this study.

#### **4.3.1 Lexical triggers of opposition**

The section elaborates my selection of lexical triggers suitable for my data collection. They are a combination of triggers proposed by Davies (2013) and Jeffries (2014).

##### **4.3.1.1 Semantic trigger**

Davies (2008) describes *Semantic triggers*, which he devotes a column to in his data collection, as triggers which denote the oppositions that are considered ‘already semantically prime because they were deemed as canonical and therefore likely to be treated as oppositions out of context’ (p. 40). It is the semantic features of the pair that determine their opposite relation, as canonical antonyms. Since both canonical and non-canonical forms of oppositions are significant in the representation of Thailand, the semantic triggers are applied to cases where opposite pairs are conventional or have semantic properties close to canonical ones. Their application is noticeable in cases where opposite pairs are recognised, regardless of the lack of other triggers:

4. ‘Thailand is a tropical getaway for *the hedonist* and *the hermit*, *the prince* and *the pauper*’ (LP, HPT5).

The semantic triggers are applied to an inclusion of *hedonist/ hermit* and *prince/ pauper* in the data collection of this study because of their contrastive semantic properties, especially in prince and pauper that has semantic properties close to rich and poor.

#### 4.3.1.2 Influence of conventional opposites in context

As Jeffries (2014) points out, non-canonical oppositions are at times constructed alongside pairs of conventional or relative opposition. She explains the role of conventional opposition in context which influences a non-canonical opposite relation:

5. There was a real battle in this election campaign, but it had not much to do with that between the parties. It was a struggle between *packaging* and *content*, between *politicians as soap powder* and *parties as vehicles for informed debate* (Jeffries 2014, p. 52, emphasis in original).

Jeffries (2014) maintains that the comparatively conventional opposition, *packaging/ content*, facilitate the comprehension of contextually constructed pair, *politicians as soap powder* and *parties as vehicles for informed debate* (p. 52). In other words, this type of trigger occurs when a conventional opposition pair A influence the non-canonical opposite status of pair B in the same context. In Davies (2013), this trigger is called *Jones's 'ancillary antonymy'* (p. 83-85).

#### 4.3.1.3 Explicit opposition

Davies (2013) describes this type of trigger as ones that '*explicitly* draw attention to their contrastive function'. He also pointed out that the opposite relation occurs 'between whole scenarios rather than just individual words', namely in 'X contrast(ed) with Y' or 'X opposite/opposed to Y' (p. 77, emphasis in original):

6. Dozens of causes were presented. The **professionally-produced placards of the protest groups with their fierce messages –'Blair and Bush -Wanted for Murder' – contrasted with cobbled-together banners. 'Notts country supporters say Make Love Not War'**, said one. (Sunday Mirror, 16 February 2003: 2 in Davies 2013, p.77).

The opposite relation of ‘**placard**’/ ‘**banner**’ and ‘**professionally-produced**’/ ‘**cobbled-together**’ is constructed with Explicit trigger, *contrasted with*. Though Davies (2013) pointed out that the trigger is utilised in structural form. In this study, the triggers also exist in lexical form. Jeffries (2014) points out in her examples the use of the trigger in lexical or phrasal forms to explicitly trigger the opposite relation. One of them is the following:

7. The ‘radical centre’ is the verbal ground where he has finally located the party. He insists it is not an *oxymoron*.... For the centre was the only place you could build a consensus. How, then, could it be truly radical? (Guardian 1<sup>st</sup> May 1997 Interview in Jeffries 2014, p. 50, emphasis in original).

Jeffries (2014) portrays the use of *Oxymoron* to lexically trigger an opposite relation between ‘**radical**’ and ‘**centre**’. Explicit opposition is included in this section because of its lexical forms. Besides, it could also facilitates the explanation of Auto-evocation in the following section, considering a stark contrast between the two triggers.

#### **4.3.1.4 Auto-evocation**

Jeffries (2014) refers to Auto-evocation with extreme contrast to *Explicit opposition* (p.52). In this case, the oppositions are invoked by the existence of merely one conventional opposite in the given context. It also involves linguistic presupposition and modal verbs that can presuppose the oppositional relation. The understanding of the oppositions constructed by this trigger depend on the ‘readers’ background knowledge about the unlexicalised opposite. She points out the similarity using auto-evocation to trigger an opposite relation to when the readers draw on familiar collocates to understand new words. Jeffries also compares this process to flouting *Grice’s maxim of Quantity* (1975), ‘by providing too little information’, but by doing so, invoking a conventional relationship of oppositions (p. 52). The application of Auto-evocation could be explained with the following example:

8. It is called the suburbs now, but when *black* people lived there it was called the Bottom. (Morrison 1982:1 in Jeffries 2014, p. 53, emphasis in original).

Jeffries (2014) points out the application of deictic *when*, denoting time in the past, to be a close contrast to *now*. The opposition prepares the readers to associate the opposite relation of the phrase, ‘*black people*’, and *now*. Drawing upon a pragmatic presupposition, the readers could draw a conclusion that white people live here now. She also calls attention to a constructed opposition, *Suburbs/ Bottom*, in which *Bottom* carries all negative connotations. To Jeffries (2014), the existence of white people in context, though not expressed explicitly, is conceivable due to these textual oppositions.

This form of trigger is placed under *the Influence of Conventional opposites in context* in Jeffries (2014). However, it appears to be prevalent in this study: several oppositions are constructed with only one opposite explicitly mentioned. Therefore, in this thesis, *Influence of Conventional opposites in context* (1.2) is applicable to cases where a conventional pair triggers an opposite relation of another contextual opposition. Auto-evocation (1.4) is the use of one term to trigger the other opposite of the same pair.

#### 4.3.1.5 Transitional opposition

Jeffries (2014) treats it as part of the *Explicit mention of oppositional relation*. It includes verb form ‘whose semantics set up some kind of contrast’, namely *compare, change, transform* (p.49). Davies (2013) points out that in Jones (2002) the trigger often involves temporal changes from past to present or present to future and that Mettinger (1994) calls it ‘mutation’; for instance, in the example ‘**Love turns to hate** more easily than you think’ ( p. 54 in Davies 2013, p. 76, emphasis in original). The following example is taken from my example:

9. Some of **the Thais in the tourist industry** have *become* **jaded dealing with foreigners** day in day out and all of the cultural nuances that go with it. (STB, SP27)

The transitional opposition, *become*, triggers two forms of opposition. One is that the opposition is a temporal one between **past** that they used to be **nicer (not jaded)** and *present* that they are **jaded**. It also constructs an opposition between two states of the Thais, being

**nicer (not jaded)** when not in the tourist industry and **being jaded** when they have to deal with foreigners day in day out.

To this point, the lexical oppositions include *Semantic triggers*, *Influence of Conventional opposites in context*, *Explicit opposition*, *Auto-evocation* and *Transitional opposition*. Section two includes triggers in structural forms.

#### **4.3.2 Structural triggers of opposition**

This section focuses on triggers in syntactic forms. As mentioned earlier, the triggers are provisional and there are chances that they could be applied in the same context. As mentioned earlier, more detailed explanations of these triggers are to be found in Davies (2013, p. 43 - 91) and Jeffries (2014, p. 29-55).

##### **4.3.2.1 Negated opposition**

The general pattern is X *not* Y. Jeffries (2014) maintains that this type of trigger is ‘the likeliest candidate for the prototypical triggers of textual opposite’ (p. 35). Also, as Davies (2013) points out, it is ‘arguably the “purest” form of antonymy, its primary function being to generate a sharper contrast between the two words by making explicit their inherent antonymity’ (Jones 2002, p. 88, in Davies 2013). The application of both terms could be redundant as ‘not Y’ is self-evident e.g. being *dead* is an implication of being not *alive*. However, this is only in the case of the complementary opposition, as in the gradable opposition, *hot/ cold*, *not hot* does not necessarily create an immediate implication that it is *cold* and with the context provided, the temperature could be lukewarm (p. 35). However, the use of the term could be for rhetorical purposes as Davies (2013) points out the use of X not Y patterns in the reported speech by the news editor (p. 59).

10. You acknowledge the good deed the parents have done raising your woman, and from the marriage onwards, **you’ll be in charge taking care of her only, not her family** (RST: WWTM 14).

In the example, Negated opposition, *not*, triggers an opposition taking care of her only/ (taking care of) not her family. In reality, she is always part of her family; the opposition should be a gradable one. However, the use of Negated opposition appears to make **her/ her family**, mutually exclusive. The example of Negated opposition is kept short because it will also be cited in other examples in this chapter. Another form of negation that is included in this study is what is called Labov's comparators (1972):

The use of negatives in accounts of past events is not at all obvious, since negation is not something that happens, rather it expresses the defeat of an expectation that something would happen. Negative sentences draw upon a cognitive background considerably richer than the set of events which were observed. They provide a way of evaluating events by replacing them against the background of other events which might have happened, but which did not (Labov 1972, p. 380-381)

The emphasis on an inclusion of comparators is that it constructs an opposition between *reality* (what is said or mentioned in text) and *expectation* (what is left unsaid but implies an expectation of its existence). It is considered a tool to investigate the shared or given knowledge about the Thailand that exists, and represented through the concept of expectation, prior to their trip to Thailand. The use of Labov's comparator is in the narrative style that investigates what is not told (Karttunen 2008) of young second language learners (Mason 2008). Jeffries (2014) points out a similar explanation for this particular form in Werth's 'Text World Theory' (1999): negation enable readers to imagine things that are not happening and their association schema theory refers to patterns of experiences that are repeated in real life which allow people to make sense of their surroundings (Hidalgo-Downing 2000, p. 116 in Jeffries 2014, p. 37). An example of Labov's comparator is below:

11. ...I had almost **no knowledge of the country back then** and I certainly *didn't know anything about the Vietnam Era R&R thing* that was going on and for which the country would become infamous. (RSW, WINMT, W:INT3)

Labov's comparator is in a form of, *no* (knowledge) and *not* (knowing anything about the Vietnam era R&R). The writer only mentions what he does not know. However, an opposition



between reality and expectation is set up: his denial of the knowledge (reality) and expectation that everyone should know about the reputation of Thailand and its sex industry (partly started during Vietnam war).

#### 4.3.2.2 Comparative opposition

Davies (2013) defines the comparative trigger, e.g. ‘more X than Y’, with Jones’s definition of ‘comparative antonymy’ that it is ‘the co-occurrence of an antonymous pair within a framework that places those words in a comparative context or measures one antonym against the other’ (2002, p. 76 in Davies 2013, p. 68). The example below is taken from my data:

12. **Thai women**, especially **the younger generation**, are showing more skin these days. That means **almost everyone** is *now dressing like a bar girl* and **you** can wear *spaghetti strap tops and navel-bearing shirts without offending Thais’ modesty streak*. *But* to be on the safe side, cover up if you’re going deep **into rural communities**. And certainly cover up if visiting **temples**. (LP, EI124)

The opposition between **Thai women** and **bargirls** is also constructed in Lonelyplanet.com. To begin with, the first opposition is the one between the **old generation** and **young generation** created by the comparative trigger, *-er* and *more*. Another pair of opposition is constructed by Auto Evocation, *almost*, indicating that there are still a small number of people who do not dress like a bargirl. Therefore, this is also an opposition between **Thai girls who do not dress like a bargirl** and **those who do**. They are differentiated based on their conservativeness expressed through dressing styles.

#### 4.3.2.3 Replacive opposition

Davies (2013) refers to the pattern ‘X *rather [than]* Y. The implication of this trigger is taken from Quirk et al.’s (1972) that it ‘expresses an alternative to what has proceeded [it] and that conjuncts such as ‘rather’ ‘indicate that the proposed alternative is preferable’ (1972, p. 671-2 in Davies 2013, p.65). The reference of choices is what makes it different from Jones (2002) who considers it as part of the ‘Comparative antonym’ (p. 65) and Jeffries (2014) who includes

it in *Negation and Related Triggers* (p. 39-40). In this study, it also appears to be fruitful to have a specific section for this pattern for the same reason.

13. One, two, three, four. We don't want your bloody *war* (we'd **rather have** a nice cup of *tea*) ( Sunday Mirror, 23 September 2003: 5 in Davies 2013, p.65).

Tea is represented as an alternative to war and it is a preferable one between the two because it is the one that the protesters chose. Since they are equal alternatives, they are viewed as mutually exclusive, not exactly gradable comparisons. Moreover, since tea and war are unconventionally constructed, it is not likely to think of any gradable scale between the war and tea.

#### **4.3.2.4 Concessive opposition**

The example includes *X but Y*, *X, However, Y*, *Despite X, Y*, etc. This type of opposition also involves the concept of expectation. Davies (2013) describes it with Quirk et al. (1972) and Leech (2006):

Quirk et al. (1972) call the 'concessive conjunct'... 'imply a contrast between two circumstances; i.e. that in the light of the circumstance in the dependent clause, that in the main clause is surprising' (1972: 745). Elsewhere they claim that concessives 'signal the unexpected, surprising nature of what is being said in view of what was said before that' (1972: 674). Leech (2006: 24) defines a concessive as 'an adverbial clause or other adverbial which expresses a contrast of meaning or implication of "unexpectedness" in its relation to the matrix clauses of the sentence of which it is part' (in Davies 2013, p. 71).

Davies (2013) concludes that Concessive opposition generally includes the opposite relation underlying with some implicit expectations. He also points out qualities of Halliday's *given/new* information (2014) in section 3.2. In this context, Quirk et al. (1972) propose that the main clause provides information that is contextually unexpected which can have ideological repercussions (in Davies 2013, p. 72). Jones also recognises the given/ new relationship in the use of *while* (Davies 2013, p. 74). The use of the Concessive opposition is discussed below:

14. The Thai capital is *less about* **tourist attractions** - *although* there are many, **but more about** **the vibe** (STB, BA34).

In this case, the gradable opposition, **tourist attractions/ the vibe**, is triggered by an accompaniment of comparative opposition, *less... than* and *more... than*. The Concessive trigger, *although*, beats the expectation that regardless of the high number of tourist attractions, the vibe is still more interesting than tourist attractions in Thailand.

#### 4.3.2.5 Parallelism

Parallelism has been listed as one of the syntactic frames in major studies on oppositions. It is created by a repetition of linguistic structure, either at lexical or syntactic levels, in which one lexical term is foregrounded. Then the readers are obligated to find a term that is, to some extent, related to it (Jones, 2002, 2012, Davies 2008, 2013 and Jeffries 2010, 2014). Jeffries (2010) uses this form to introduce the unconventional opposition, *blacks / British*, and how its opposite relation is constructed:

15. Labour says he's *black*. Tories say he's *British*.

The parallel structure is **X says Y is Z**. The words *black* is the foregrounded one and readers can relate it to the *British* because they are posited in the same position, Z. The interpretation of **black/ British** is facilitated by the coexistence of conventional opposites, **Labour / Conservative (Tories)** and the repetition of the pronoun, *he* (Jeffries, 2010, p. 2). The example reveals the cooperation of several triggers in the generation of **black/ British**. Besides, the readers also require some contextual background in British politics to associate **Tories** with *conservative*.

Another example from Jeffries (2014) also points out cases that Parallelism requires semantic properties, and other triggers, e.g. Negation, in the construction of oppositions in contexts. She introduces an association of *pragmatic presupposition* (Simpson 1993, p. 127-8) or *conventional implicature* (Grice 1975, p. 44-45) to explain how readers make sense of

Parallelism (Jeffries 2014, p. 43). Besides these triggers, conventional opposites might exist alongside the unconventional ones. Jeffries elaborates this point with the following example.

16. She wanted *a child*. He craved *a Cadillac*. (Jeffries, 2010, p. 112-3)

In this context, the Parallelism constructs opposite relation between a *child* and a *Cadillac*. Firstly, readers notice a parallel structure (S+V+O) which is considered a syntactic trigger of this constructed utterance. Next, there is an influence of a pair of conventional opposites, the pronouns *She/He*, in the subject position of both sentences. Also, the verbs of these sentences are semantically similar because they are the near synonyms even though *to crave* is a stronger kind of desire than *to want*. These three elements (the parallel structure, the conventional opposites in the subject pronouns, and the semantically similar verbs) create an environment of opposition. This example also involves a form of *conventional implicature* (Grice 1975) (cited in Jeffries, 2010, p. 112): the writer flouts the maxim of quantity because *he/she* does not provide enough information. Hence, the readers rely on the two parallel structures and other clues in order to understand the message.

Furthermore, Grice's (1975) maxim of relation is also flouted because the second object is not what the readers expect to see. As a result, the readers have to infer to elements that can be treated as a pair of opposites in this context. This is where their background knowledge is included in interpretation, and the best opposite nature of *a child/ a Cadillac* is the fact that they are *animate/ inanimate*. This is the superordinate opposition, and it leads to the proposition that a child is related to emotional value and a Cadillac is to a monetary one.

Therefore, this sentence could be interpreted that she wants an intimate relationship with another human being (a child), while he longs for material goods (a Cadillac). The example shows that with the use of triggers, the opposite relation can be realised from two semantically irrelevant words. Besides the fact that they are textually constructed, cognitive theories could explain the nature of opposition and how its use in text might affect readers. The opposite

relations that are constructed in the following example taken from this study appears to be constructed by a combination of other triggers:

17. It is also the main area for much of Bangkok's farang oriented naughty nightlife industry which is predominantly in the area from Sukhumvit Soi 1 to soi 23. If that **excites you**, then this is a **good area to stay**, *but* if it **abhors you**, you may want to *stay away* from **Sukhumvit**.

(STB)

The opposition, a **(good) area to stay/ Sukhumvit**, is constructed with a combination of a Parallel structure and Concessive opposition in *if X, but if Y*. There is also a semantic trigger of a near antonym, **excites/ abhors**, which is considered a near synonym of **like/ dislike** and **good/ stay away** in *a good area to stay* and *stay away* from Sukhumvit. In this context, the writer points out the association of Sukhumvit area with 'naughty nightlife industry' at the sentence prior to the opposition. Therefore, the unconventional opposition, a **good area to stay/ Sukhumvit**, could be an indexical of GOOD/ BAD conceptual binary. However, the GOOD and BAD are subjective depending on whether the readers are into the bar life or not.

The construction of an unconventional opposition, a **good area to stay/ Sukhumvit**, does not limit to the help from Parallelism, *if X, but if Y*, but also from other linguistic triggers such as semantic trigger in **excites/ abhors** and **good/ stay away**, and Concessive opposition, *but*. This coincides with Jeffries's remark (2004) that Parallelism is used alongside the Negation at times. From this example, the Negation is expressed semantically in the use of 'abhor' and 'stay away'.

To Davies (2008, 2013) and Jeffries (2010, 2014), the relationship of the opposite pairs that fall within the Parallelism could be based on their similarities or differences. Therefore, at times this frame does not trigger oppositions but are used for rhetorical effects. Davies (2008, 2013) points out that 'the *three-part list*' which is frequently used in political speech involves

the repetitive structure of the lexis but does not trigger the opposite relation. Besides, the *three-part* cannot be considered oppositions considering the binary nature of opposition. This point can be illustrated with Davies' example taken from the BBC website:

18. *Let the people* pass judgement on 10 years of broken promises, *let people* decide who's really making the arguments about the future of our country. *Let people* decide who can make the changes that we really need in our country.

In 18, David Cameron, the former leader of Conservative Party, gave this speech to ask the former Prime Minister Gordon Brown from the Labour Party to allow people to make a decision about the leader of the country. The list contains the repetition of 'Let the people' + verb, 'let people' + verb, and 'let people' + verb. The Parallelism does not produce any opposite relation but appears to provide rhetorical effect for the speech successfully. Similar patterns can be found in this study in which the repetition of lexis is evident, but the linguistic relation is not contrasted.

<b>Example 19.</b>			
<i>Some families</i>	<i>will</i>	<i>just barely tolerate you after their daughter has died,</i>	
<i>some</i>	<i>will</i>	<i>get hostile and try to force you out of the family,</i>	
<i>some</i>	<i>will</i>	<i>even get violent to get their way.</i>	
<b>Example 20.</b>			
I	hated	the family	for what they had done to me.
I	hated	their naked greed;	

I	hated	my wife	for dying and leaving me to face the greed of her family.
I	hated	God	for allowing my wife to die a horrible death.
I	hated	life.	
I	hated	that I was not the one to die and to have my wife live.	
At that moment I was ready to do something horrible, to myself or to Jiraporn's uncle and greedy relatives.			
<b>Example 21.</b>			
I counted 38 pill bottles by the kitchen sink. <i>Phyllis and Steve</i> were medicated to the gills.			
Pills to		stop aches,	
Pills to		stop cholesterol,	

pills to	stop heart angina,
pills to	make you shit,
pills to	stop you from shitting,
pills to	<i>sleep,</i>
pills to	<i>wake up,</i>
pills to	<i>make you happy,</i>
pills to	<i>stop the side effects of other pills.</i>
There was no way I was going to <i>become</i> a geriatric pill junkie.	

**Table 4.4: examples of parallelism found in this study**

At the textual level, the parallel forms in examples 19-21 taken from *For Jiraporn* do not seem to generate any opposite relation, especially when it is in non-binary forms. However, the forms are used for rhetorical effects and appear to achieve the writer's goal to point out the intense Us/ Them binaries; *the writer/ Thais* (his wife's family) and *the writer/ the Westerners* (his family in the West). The sense of othering could be understood from the background knowledge about *the writer's hostility towards the Thai families* (1), *his aversion towards what happens in his life* (2), and *his feelings of alienation from his Western family* (3). Some lexical triggers may contribute to the opposite relation, e.g. **their/ force you out** in (1) and **the family, their/ my wife** and **I/ me** in (2). Within the parallel form, semantic features, e.g. *make you/ stop you*, and *to sleep/ to wake up*, also seem to highlight the number of pills that his western family takes. Besides, the Transitional opposition in the concluding sentence of example 21 '*Phyllis and Steve* were medicated to the gills. There was no way I was going to *become* a geriatric pill junkie' appear to be effective in pointing out the absurdity of the Western lifestyle. All in all, considering the examples 19-21, the Parallelism does not seem to construct the oppositions directly but relies on other semantic features to highlight the contrastive relation.



In 15-17, the parallel form is at times used alongside other forms of opposite triggers, and 18-21 are cases that Parallelism does not generate non-canonical relation but are used for rhetorical effects. The dependency on other forms of syntactic frames is a topic of interest in Murphy et al. (2015). One of the objectives of the study is to confirm the efficacy of the Parallel form as a trigger for contrastive relation (Murphy 2006, Davies 2008, Jeffries 2010 in Murphy 2015). It focuses on *Ancillary Antonymy*; the application of a more conventional opposition (pair A) to reinforce the contrastive relation in a less conventional one (pair B) (Jones 2002, 2012). This syntactic frame is equivalent to 4.3.1.2 *Influence of conventional opposites in context* in this study. Their study investigates the role of Parallelism, contrastive triggers and semantic relation in the construction of contrastive relation. One of the examples includes the *easy to V, hard to V* pattern in 'Customer service is easy to say. It's very hard to do' (COCA MAG 1991). The result shows that the Parallelism can work together with other opposite triggers. However, the parallel form that shares a high degree of lexical, phonic, or grammatical is less likely to depend on other contrastive triggers, namely *but*, to generate oppositions. Similarly, the semantic Parallelism that includes the 'NYM relation'; antonymy, co-hyponymy, synonymy, also requires less context or other contrastive triggers to sustain their opposite relation. All in all, the study reveals that the Parallelism can function effectively on its own in *Ancillary Antonymy*.

#### **4.3.2.6 Engagement marker**

Engagement marker refers to devices that draw readers' attention by the use of pronouns, namely *you, your, or inclusive we*. It also includes a rhetorical engagement of readers into the discourse by using questions, imperatives or such modals as *should* or *must* (Hyland 2005). Hyland's Engagement marker can enable an examination of binary oppositions between what could be considered a *Western* against *Thai* community. Originally, the plan is to include the pronoun *you* with the semantic triggers of *auto-evocation*. However, it appears to be problematic as not all *you* constructs were worthwhile oppositions. To have a separate section for Hyland's Engagement marker (2005), it is possible to investigate the use of imperatives

and questions which some also reveal as shared knowledge that exists among the Western community. For instance, in a case that ‘yes’ is used without a question in ‘Yep, you got it, the Western woman pays him!’ (STB, KST 13), it implies a sense of community and normality that prostitutes are usually women. This is also an implication of gender stereotypes that sex workers are female only. The following exemplifies the use of Engagement marker:

22. *Please also be aware that Thai women do not necessarily believe in the concept of "free sex", something they see as an entirely *Western concept*.*

(STB, SP59)

Engagement marker is in the form of an imperative, *Please also be aware that*, which implicates that the action required a degree of precaution. This example is treated as an opposition between the **West**, in which the concept of ‘free sex’ could be more acceptable, and **Thailand**, which is considered a more conservative society. A binary opposition between Thailand and the West is constructed here implicitly based on the expectation of the Western writer that his Western readers might not know about this aspect of Thailand.

To this point, the discussion of the structural triggers includes *the Negated opposition, Comparative opposition, Replacive opposition, Concessive opposition, Transitional opposition, Parallelism* and *Engagement marker*.

#### **4.4 Conceptual opposition**

This is one of the most significant levels of this study. Firstly, conceptual oppositions are employed to understand constructed oppositions in contexts. Davies (2013) emphasises the role of conceptual oppositions in relation to textual oppositions that ‘all oppositions, regardless of their conventionality, ultimately rely on conceptual relationships of equivalence and difference (p. 84-85). Conceptual oppositions are also significant in the work of Jeffries (2014) and Davies (2013). Jeffries (2014) works on several genres of data namely poems,

election campaigns and the portrayal of the Female Body in women's magazines. For instance, it is in her textual construction of women's bodies in women's magazines (Jeffries 2007 cited in Jeffries 2014) that she found the three distinguished super ordinate conventional opposites; NORMAL/ ABNORMAL, NATURAL/ UNNATURAL, and GOOD/ BAD.

Davies (2013) shows that in the news media, the writers use unconventional oppositions to 'stigmatize certain groups of protesters in favour of others' and oppositions are part of othering process. He synthesises some of the common themes that were frequently repeated in the news report on two protest marches. This processed is called 'ideological cohesion' in his study (p. 179). Then he examines how constructed oppositions are integral to these. In his study, the protestors are organised through opposition: the stigmatisation of 'experienced' protestors by focusing on the ordinary protestors, portraying diversity through opposition and representing the class divide by highlighting the clothes they wore which represented their social class. All in all, themes are the result of the key conceptual oppositions such as US/ THEM, GOOD/ BAD, ORDINARY/ EXTREME, and LEGITIMATE/ ILLEGITIMATE. This systematic use of binaries that serve similar functions for both sets of protestors by reference to the higher level conceptual binary oppositions that the examples represent.

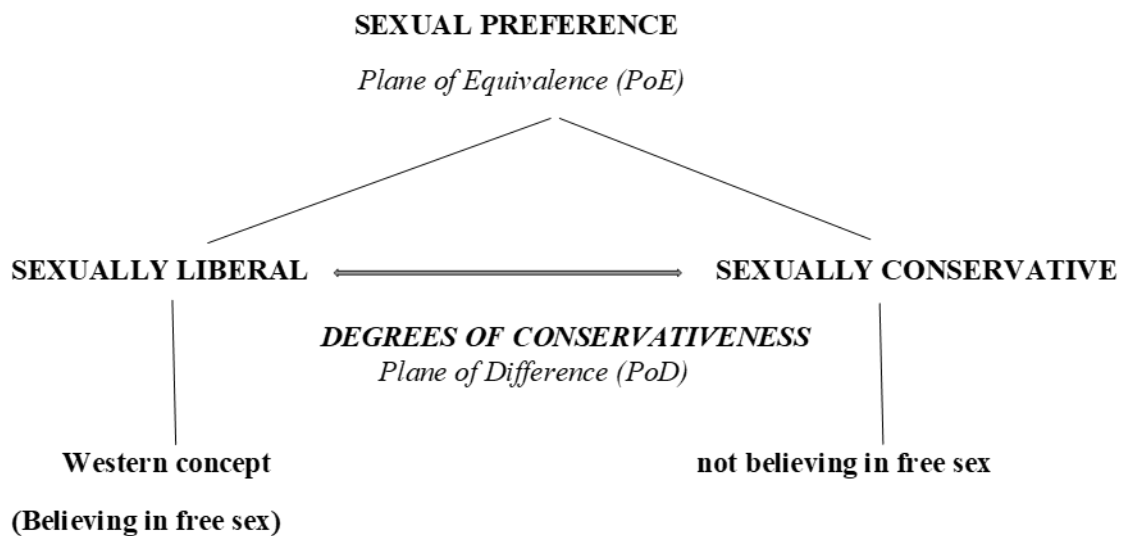
Another important role of conceptual opposition is that it serves as a link to explore cultural oppositions. This process is one of the main areas of focus in my study, which could be achieved through the examination of conceptual oppositions. For example, one of the stereotypes of the Orient in Orientalism (Said 2003) is that it is timeless:

23. A Westerner travelling to Oriental lands was not just moving into space from one location to the other, potentially they were also moving back in time, out of history, to an earlier, pre-modern world. Hence, in Orientalism, the Orient is presented as a timeless place, changeless and static, cut off from the progress of Western history (McLeod; 2012, p. 52).

The description of the stereotype could be conceptualised with conceptual binaries, PAST/ PRESENT and DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED. The conceptual oppositions enable the examination of traces of Orientalism (Said 2003) within the domain of time and development in my data. This process will be elaborated in detail in chapter 9. At this point, the concept of Plane(s) of Equivalence (PoE) and Plane(s) of Difference (PoD) is reintroduced in this section using examples from my data: it is elaborated in more detail in 2.7.1. This is to illustrate how non-canonical oppositions can be linked to conceptual oppositions:

24. Please also be aware that Thai women do *not necessarily* believe in *the concept of "free sex"*, something they see as an entirely Western concept.

(STB, SP59)



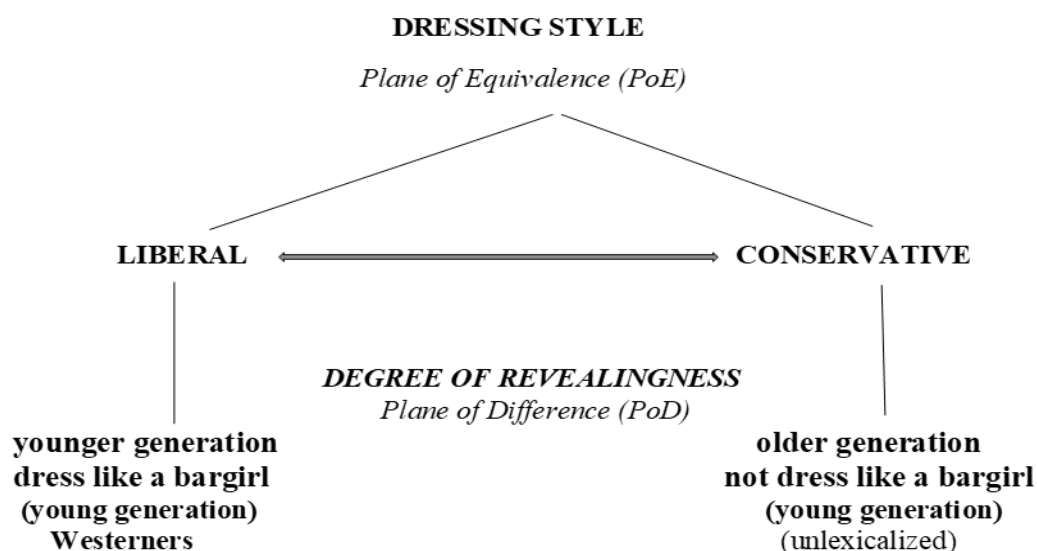
**Figure 4.1: diagrammatic representation of relationship between believing in free sex/ not believing in free sex connected by sexual preference and canonical oppositions on which they are based**

Figure 4.1 illustrates the oppositional relationship between two types of Thai women based on their belief in *free sex*. From example 24, the concept of *free sex* is considered as an entirely Western concept. With the adverb, *entirely*, the concept is completely related to the West, and the opposition is turned into complementary (it should be gradable). In this context, those who

believe in *free sex* are more or less related to the Western side of the opposition. Since, *Free sex* is a modern concept, the a closely equivalent adjective for this concept could be **liberal**. It is therefore possible to relate to the other pair with opposite semantic feature, **conservative**. In this context, believing in *free sex* or not are equivalent on the Plane of Equivalence (PoE) as **SEXUAL PREFERENCE**. Since Thai women who do not believe in *free sex* are considered conservative and the ones who do could be liberal, they are differentiated on the Plane of Difference (PoD) as **DEGREE OF CONSERVATIVENESS**. Therefore, their relationship could be conceptualised with a conceptual opposition, **SEXUALLY CONSERVATIVE/ SEXUALLY LIBERAL**. Example 15 is also about the notion of conservative expressed through the way women dress.

25. **Thai women, especially the younger generation**, are showing more skin these days. That means *almost* everyone is *now* **dressing like a bar girl** and **you can wear spaghetti strap tops and navel-bearing shirts** *without offending Thais' modesty streak*. *But* to be on the safe side, cover up if you're going deep into rural communities. And certainly cover up if visiting temples.

(LP, EI 124)



**Figure 4.2: a diagrammatic representation of the relation of oppositions created with dressing style**

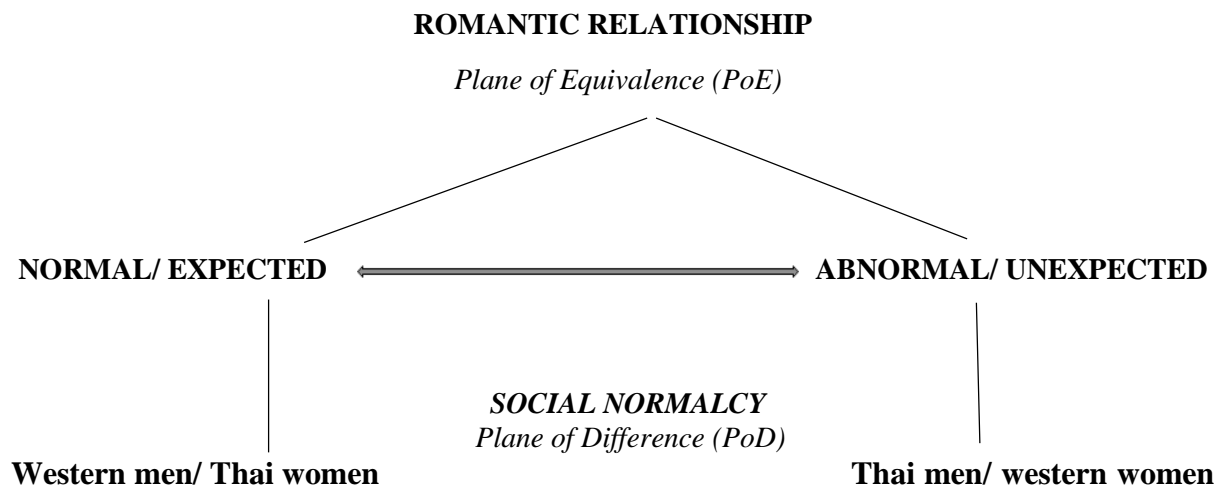
The opposition between two types of Thai women is a gradable opposition based on the plane of equivalence (PoE), DRESSING STYLE and plane of difference (PoD), *DEGREE OF THE REVEALINGNESS*. Another pair of opposition is constructed by Auto Evocation, *almost*, in ‘everyone is now dressing like a bar girl’. It indicates that even though a lot of Thai women dress like a bargirl, there is still a small number who do not. Therefore, this is also an opposition between Thai girls who do not dress like a bargirl and those who do. This is an opposition between two types of Thai girls (supposedly) in the same generation shared by their dressing style (PoE) but are differentiated on DRESSING STYLE (PoD).

It is possible to assume that dressing like a bargirl is a western style of clothing because the modal *could* allow the readers, assumed to be Westerners, to wear ‘spaghetti strap tops and navel-bearing shirts’. The opposition is triggered by a Negated opposition, *without offending the Thais’ modesty streak*. Therefore, the readers can refer to the conceptual opposition: CONSERVATIVE/ LIBERAL in the figure 4.2. Again, in this case, it could be said that

bargirls are related to the Western concept of style and clothing. Example 26 is about the social view on sexual normalcy.

26. **All over Thailand** you find **Western men chasing Thai women** *but* it is a **little different on Samet**. There are a **bunch of handsome Thai boys** on the island who **chase Western females**. **Some** of these Thai guys are **just trying to bed a Western woman for the fun of it** *while* others are **in it for the money**. Yep, you got it, the Western woman pays him!

(STB, KST 13)



**Figure 4.3: Two types of relationships and their relation to NOMAL/ ABNORMAL and EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED**

Both Stickmanbangkok.com and Lonelyplanet.com construct a similar pair of opposition, which could be summed up as **NORMAL/ EXPECTED (Western men/ Thai women) / ABNORMAL/ UNEXPECTED (Thai men/ Western Women)**. The plane of equivalence could be **ACTIVITIES THAT MEN AND WOMEN INVOLVE IN** and the plane of difference could be **AN EXPECTATION OF THE READERS**. In this case, both types of relationship concern both men and women, so they are equivalent as (sexual) activities. Nevertheless, they are different in terms of the expectation of the readers. The relationship

between Western men and Thai women appear to be more normal. The expectation is viewed from an Engagement marker in, ‘Yep, you got it, the Western woman pays him!’ which implies the disbelief of the readers and shows that ‘Thai men and Western women’ in a less than conventional form of relationship.

The oppositions in the diagrams 1 to 3 elaborate how the conceptual oppositions can be systematically interpreted. However, in the analysis, it appears to be more practical to mention the interpretation of conceptual oppositions explicitly. This is due to the volume and complexity of the data. However, this process of PoE and PoD form the basis of the interpretation of the conceptual oppositions, though they may not be mentioned explicitly in the analysis chapter. The following section discusses the categorisation of my data into the concepts of FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY.

#### **4.5 Summary and categorisation of the conceptual oppositions**

I identified a wide variety of oppositions in my data in my analysis chapters as it was necessary to organise these in a certain manner. During my research, I made several attempts to organise the data in terms of broad conceptual categories. The most prominent one was to categorise the data into THAILAND/ HOME, URBAN/ RURAL, RICH/ POOR and MAN/ WOMEN. The themes provide systematic categorisation during the data collection. However, when it is time to make a link between the linguistic and cultural oppositions, I found it to be more practical to make a direct connection from the conceptual oppositions found in texts and the ones drawn from the Orientalist discourse (Said 2003). For instance, as pointed out in 4.3, one of the stereotypes about the Orient in Orientalism may be conceptualised with DEVELOPTED/ UNDEVELOPED. The textual analysis shows that these conceptual oppositions exist in the representation of Thailand in all four themes. For instance, Thailand is associated with the UNDEVELOPED in comparison with the West, in the discussion of the rural area, and in the description of Thai women in a relationship with Western men. As a



result, I simplify the process by removing the themes and categorise the oppositions into the conceptual domains of FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY. The justification for creating these three categories can be found in the Appendix.

#### 4.5.1 FAMILIARITY

The concept of FAMILIARITY represents physical, mental and temporal oppositions. The physical differences include the FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR conceptual opposition, which refers to the oppositions between exotic places in Thailand (FAMILIAR) and the readers' home or people between the in-groups (INSIDER) and the out-groups (OUTSIDER). The INSIDER/ OUTSIDER also represents internal opposition within Thailand. For instance, in 'For **travellers and Thais alike**, the **northeast is Thailand**' **forgotten backyard**' (LP, HPT 89), the example refers to the status of the northeast that is considered an outsider for both Thais and Westerners.

The mental oppositions include the sense of NORMALITY. The prevailing conceptual oppositions are LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL and NORMAL/ ABNORMAL. The last one could be involved with what the writer sees as logical or normal. For instance, in 'When **our time was up** we *returned back* to **Scotland**, and to what I thought would be **normality in our lives**, *but my brain and heart were still in that bar in Phuket* (RSW, YSMM3), the writer constructs an opposition between being normal in Scotland with direct mention of *normality*, and Thailand is where he is not in his normal self, with brain and heart still in Phuket. In the representation of places, the construction of oppositions is based on the degree of reality. This opposition is apparent in the reference to places in Thailand with *paradise* or *dream*. The oppositions are allied with the REAL/ UNREAL conceptual opposition.

#### 4.5.2 DEVELOPMENT

The focus of this section is on the oppositional relationship in which one is more developed than the other. The notion of DEVELOPMENT could refer to distinctions between places with modern infrastructure (DEVELOPED) and those which are represented more with

natural resources (UNDEVELOPED). For instance, in an example taken from Lonelyplanet.com, the UNDEVELOPED represents the rural area with ‘the Asian-style toilet’ which exists in ‘specimens in rural places...’. in the example, it is represented in contrastive to ‘the Western-style toilet is *becoming more prevalent* and appears wherever foreign tourists may be found’ (LP, EI40).

In the representation of people, the conceptual oppositions could involve the intellectual development, INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT, financial development, RICH/ POOR, etc. The value that is attached to the concept is contextual. An undeveloped area generally has negative connotation, but in tourism discourse it may be appreciated for its exoticism. Therefore, it is not always categorised within DEGENERACY. The temporal oppositions are involved with the PAST/ PRESENT conceptual opposition which could represent either places or people. It is prevalent in the representation of urban and rural areas in Thailand where the urban represents something of a past. The temporal binaries may also include the oppositions between PRESENT/ FUTURE. In the discourse related to tourism, an association with the past is positive as shown in the representation of Isan with ‘*a glimpse of the Thailand of old*’ (STB, HPT89) which also associated the area with authenticity of Thailand.

#### **4.5.3 DEGENERACY**

The category puts an emphasis on evaluative values that attach to the linguistic oppositions. The conceptual oppositions are underlined with the idea of GOOD/ BAD. For instance, the linguistic oppositions may be constructed to determine the qualities of GOOD/ BAD women. The linguistic oppositions appear to also be constructed based on the notion of social normalcy e.g. accepted gender roles in the society. For instance, being sexually conservative may be considered a desirable quality of a woman, while in the West it may not be necessary. For instance, a male Thai writer constructs both internal and external oppositions between desirable and undesirable women associated with CONSERVATIVE/ LIBERAL:

27. Point here is that **they are very conservative when it comes to courtship** and the man **really has to be the aggressor**. If **the woman is the aggressor**, then she’s

really *not* **the type of woman that I'd be interested in.** **Women libbers in *the states* are going to hate this, *but* that's still the way it is in *Thailand*.**

(RST, WFDG9)

The example is embedded with a series of oppositions which will be discussed in chapter 8. The emphasis here is that the opposition is related to DEGENERACY on two levels. One is that it points out the Thais' view on bad women, who are not conservative in courtship. The other is that it associates Thai values to the state of the past. The sense of DEGENERACY is in the writer's remark, 'Women libbers in *the States* are going to hate this', which implicates his awareness of the negativity of the concept.

#### **4.6 Initial exploration of a single text**

The section provides a qualitative analysis of an excerpt from the introductory part of Lonelyplanet.com. The purpose is to show how the oppositions work together to contribute to the tone and cohesion of the text. The analysis elsewhere focuses only on the oppositions, often extracted from the whole texts of which they are a part. The aim in this brief section is to show how those oppositions contribute to the meanings of a single text, in this case the introduction to Lonely Planet. The following section is an initial data analysis showing the application of the syntactic frames and the contribution of the oppositions to achieve the purposes of the text.

<b>Lonelyplanet.com (LP)</b>	
<b>Content: Highlight, Places, and Things to do (HPT)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p><b>Introducing Thailand</b></p> <p>Friendly and fun-loving, exotic and tropical, cultured and historic, Thailand radiates a golden hue from its glittering temples and tropical beaches to the ever-comforting Thai smile.</p>	<b>HPT 1</b>
<p><b>Fields &amp; Forests</b></p> <p>In between the cluttered cities and towns is the rural heartland, a mix of rice paddies, tropical forests and squat villages tied to the agricultural clock. In the north, the forests and fields bump up against toothy blue mountains decorated by silvery waterfalls. In the south, scraggly limestone cliffs poke out of the cultivated landscape like prehistoric skyscrapers. The usually arid northeast beams an emerald hue during the rainy season when tender green rice shoots carpet the landscape.</p>	<b>HPT 2</b>
<p><b>A Bountiful Table</b></p> <p>Adored around the world, Thai cuisine expresses fundamental aspects of Thai culture: it is generous, warm, refreshing and relaxed. Each Thai dish relies on fresh, local ingredients – pungent lemongrass, searing chillies and plump seafood. A varied national menu is built around the four fundamental flavours: spicy, sweet, salty and sour. Roving appetites go on eating tours of Bangkok noodle shacks, seafood pavilions in Phuket and Burmese market stalls in Mae Hong Son. Cooking classes reveal the simplicity behind the seemingly complicated dishes and mastering the market is an important survival skill.</p>	<b>HPT 3</b>
<p><b>Sacred Spaces</b></p> <p>The celestial world is a close confidant in this Buddhist nation and religious devotion is colourful and ubiquitous. Gleaming</p>	<b>HPT 4</b>

<p>temples and golden Buddhas frame both the rural and modern landscape. Ancient banyan trees are ceremoniously wrapped in sacred cloth to honour the resident spirits, fortune-bringing shrines decorate humble homes as well as monumental malls, while garland-festooned dashboards ward off traffic accidents. Visitors can join in on the conversation through meditation retreats in Chiang Mai, religious festivals in northeastern Thailand, underground cave shrines in Kanchanaburi and Phetchaburi and hilltop temples in northern Thailand.</p> <p><b>Sand between Your Toes</b></p> <p>With a long coastline (actually, two coastlines) and jungle-topped islands anchored in azure waters, Thailand is a tropical getaway for the hedonist and the hermit, the prince and the pauper. This paradise offers a varied menu: playing in the gentle surf of Ko Lipe, diving with whale sharks in Ko Tao, scaling the sea cliffs of Krabi, kiteboarding in Hua Hin, partying on Ko Phi Phi, recuperating at a health resort in Ko Samui and feasting on the beach wherever sand meets sea.</p>	<p><b>HPT 5</b></p>
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**Table 4.5: an excerpt of text taken from Lonelyplanet.com**

The excerpt is taken from the first section of Lonelyplanet.com. Considering the location (at the beginning or the first section of the website) and the title (Introducing Thailand), the purpose of the text should be to summarise the highlight of Thailand to promote and positively evaluate Thailand. The process is presented below in the order of themes that emerge during the analysis:

In HPT1, the idea of exoticness is prevalent in the representation of Thailand. The semantic property of the modifier 'exotic' alone seems to trigger the 'out of place' quality of the country. However, in tourism discourse, it is mentioned alongside another opposition form, e.g. friendly or familiar. This, in turn, could draw the country closer to the readers by presenting something that provides a sense of familiarity (friendly locals in the tourist destination). This

point is emphasised at the end of the sentence with the adjective 'comforting' in 'the ever-comforting Thai smiles'. The example provides an external opposition, **Thailand/ home**. From the linguistic evidence, the differences that should be expected can be categorised into three concepts: friendly and fun-loving (PEOPLE), tropical and tropical nature (NATURE), and cultured and historic (CULTURE).

In the section entitled 'Fields and Forests', the oppositions are used to illustrate the plentiful nature of Thailand. It implicates another conceptual opposition, DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED. However, the rest of the oppositions are mostly internal within Thailand, e.g. between the **cluttered cities, towns/ the rural heartland**. By referring to the rural area as 'heartland', the association of the rural part of Thailand with the authenticity of Thailand is implied. Moreover, the representation appears to revolve around the rural part of Thailand, which scattered around different parts of Thailand, e.g. in the north, south, and northeast. Considering the title, Fields & Forest, nature or rural part (UNDEVELOPED) should be considered a more authentic version of Thailand than the cluttered cities (DEVELOPED).

In HPT3, another opposition is constructed between the world and Thai cuisine. It also signifies another unfamiliarity (exotic) with an opposition between **simplified** and **complicated** in 'the simplicity behind the seemingly complicated dishes' could signify another exotic aspect of Thailand when the food is unexpectedly uncomplicated. Nonetheless, the food may be easy to make. However, it is still portrayed as extraordinary when it is evaluated in ways that appeal to the senses, e.g. *pungent* lemongrass, *searing* chillies and *plump* seafood. As elsewhere in the text, evaluative adjectives are prominent and are often in lists. For instance, food is 'spicy, sweet, salty and sour' and culture is 'generous, warm, refreshing and relaxed'.

The example appears to be taken from the cheaper types of dining in Thailand: Bangkok noodle *shacks*, seafood *pavilion*, and Burmese market *stalls*. The study also takes into consideration what is missing from the text. In this case, the absence of the *higher-end* type

of dining while the *cheaper* kind is highlighted should be an implication of the authenticity of Thailand that is gravitated more towards the POOR in the RICH/ POOR binary.

In Sacred Spaces (CULTURE), Lonely Planet suggests that spirituality is another significant aspect of Thailand; 'celestial world' and 'religious devotion'. An opposition between **humble homes** and **monumental malls** are used to unify all Thai people and to signify how Thai people can be spiritually oriented. Again, adjectival modification is used to strengthen this opposition. It is not just between 'homes' and 'malls', but between the 'humble' and the 'gleaming'.

#### 4.7 Conclusion

The chapter illustrates the lexical and structural triggers used in this study to identify instances of linguistic opposition. It largely draws upon the work of Davies (2013) and Jeffries (2014) and also discusses the significance of conceptual oppositions and how to associate the oppositions with conceptual oppositions through the process of PoE and PoD. The chapter also summaries the conceptual oppositions that represent both the external relationship between Thailand and the West and the internal distinctions between the classes within Thailand. From the analysis of overall conceptual oppositions, they could be categorised into the notion of FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY. The conceptual oppositions can also be overlapped across these three categories. The chapters 5 to 8 will elaborate how the process mentioned in this chapter is applied to analyse the representation of Thailand in Lonelyplanet.com, Stickmanbangkok.com, and the Readers' Submissions written both by Westerners and Thais.

In the last paragraph, Sand between toes, an application of oppositions; **the hedonist/ the hermit** and **the prince/ pauper**, associated with RICH/ POOR. The reference of RICH/ POOR should be an implication of how the financial status could be considered a criterion in categorising types of tourists. However, the writer also points out a wide range of experiences

that Thailand offers, e.g. 'This paradise offers a varied menu', the list of activities or experiences appear to go beyond the RICH/ POOR binary, to highlight another essential fact about Thailand that it has something for everyone regardless of their financial background.

The initial analysis of the introduction of Thailand shows that the textual oppositions are constructed both internally and externally to introduce important aspects of Thailand. These binary concepts, e.g. RICH/ POOR, DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, frame the way Thailand is portrayed throughout the website. The external opposition between Thailand and readers' home constructed with semantic features of 'exotic' indicate how Thailand is different. The oppositions also have inclusive effects, **rich/ poor**, in that Thailand offers something for everyone, regardless of their financial status. The gradable oppositions between RICH and POOR and the absence of luxury experiences (for the rich) could implicate the authenticity of the country that is associated more with poverty. Though the experiences for the rich are mentioned in the later sections, the location of this introductory section (at the beginning) is significant as a place that provides an overall impression of Thailand.

To summarise the section with Fairclough's approach to CDA (2001), at the micro level, the section examines the application of conceptual oppositions to introduce Thailand in Lonelyplanet.com. The text is embedded with evaluative adjectives, often with sensual appeal to portray the country as a special place, separated from the mundane life at home, e.g. 'the celestial world', 'Gleaming temples and golden Buddhas frame', 'its glittering temples and tropical beaches to the ever-comforting Thai smile'. The writer also appears to make heavy use of listing, e.g. a variety of activities, the non-binary quality of Thailand to inclusively all kinds of prospective tourists. The conceptual binaries, RICH/ POOR and DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, seems to be used alongside the list to simplify the experiences into familiar concepts in the context of tourism, e.g. by positioning Thailand as an 'exotic' place and yet also widely varied in its sensual appeal, for all tourists with various financial backgrounds and interests. The inclusion of financial aspects appears to reflect the meso-level of the approach since the activities in Thailand could attract prospective tourists, both rich and poor. This is



an implication that Lonelyplanet.com portray itself as a website for everyone. Lastly, the representation of Thailand, e.g. its exoticness, also conform to the Orientalist discourse at the macro level.

## CHAPTER 5: OPPOSITIONS IN LONELYPLANET.COM

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### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduces the roles of lexical and syntactic triggers in constructing linguistic oppositions, which are subsequently linked to more canonical forms of oppositions at the conceptual level. The conceptual binaries are compiled and categorised into the domains of FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY, as explained in Chapter 4. This chapter elaborates this process and focuses on the analysis related to the representation of Thailand in Lonelyplanet.com. It is structured by the three concepts mentioned above.

### 5.2 FAMILIARITY

#### 5.2.1 External oppositions

##### 5.2.1.1 FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR

A prominent relationship between Thailand and the West is represented with the notion of what is termed as UNFAMILIAR. The relationship is constructed in Lonelyplanet.com through the choice of terminology and the use of the word 'exotic,' presented by itself or in an oppositional form:

1.	Thailand is lucky. It has the looks, the temperament and the attractions <u>to capture the world's imagination for an <i>exotic</i> escape</u> . It is <b>mysterious and confounding</b> <i>but</i> <b>approachable and inviting</b> .	LP, TA34
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Example 1 is a combination of a semantic trigger of the word 'exotic' and partnered with the Concessive opposition, *but*. The term 'exotic' is mentioned early on in the introduction to

Thailand to represent Thailand as ‘an exotic escape’. The opposition between the country and the world appears to be subtly constructed at the conceptual level with the phrase ‘to capture the world's imagination for an *exotic* escape’ which appear to associate Thailand with the concept of UNREAL and the rest of the world as REAL. This is primarily due to the notion that Thailand exists in the ‘imagination’ of ‘the rest of the world’.

The writer also highlights the exotic nature of the country through the usage of another pair of opposition terminology, namely, the **mysterious and confounding/approachable and inviting**, constructed through the Concessive opposition, *but*. The term ‘escape’ seems to also suggest the move from something with a negative connotation to that of a positive one. Hence, Thailand, in this particular context is perceived as welcoming as it embodies both the quality of the UNFAMILIAR (mysterious and confounding) and FAMILIAR (approachable and inviting). The use of the word ‘exotic’ to construct the FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR conceptual opposition is also evident in the following example:

2.	<i>Friendly</i> and fun-loving, <i>exotic</i> and tropical, cultured and historic, Thailand radiates a golden hue from its glittering temples and tropical beaches to <u>the ever-comforting Thai smile</u> .	LP, HPT1
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In the example presented in 2, albeit accompanied with other modifiers, the semantic properties of **exotic** and **friendly** appear to construct the opposite quality of the pair more so, than ally the pair with the conceptual opposition, FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR. The modifier ‘friendly’ should represent the hospitality of Thai people within the country (FAMILIAR); hence, the exotic nature of Thailand should not be too intimidating. This association of people (who are friendly) with the place (that is exotic) is emphasised at the end of the sentence with the adjective ‘comforting’ in phrase ‘the ever-comforting Thai smiles’.

In contrast to example 1 which associates the concepts of FAMILIAR / UNFAMILIAR with REALITY/ FANTASY, in example 2, the perceived friendliness of the country is brought

about as a result of tourists interacting with the Thai people. This seems to strongly suggest that this perception comes about through a combination of factors; of which the tourists' personal experiences of the Thai people in Thailand as well as the tourists' own efforts in promoting Thailand play crucial roles. The following example portrays a similar use of oppositions to represent Bangkok, the capital of Thailand:

3.	<i>Same same, but different.</i> This Thailish T-shirt philosophy sums up Bangkok, a city where <i>the familiar</i> and <i>the exotic</i> collide like the flavours on a plate of pàt tai.	LP, HP55
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This example highlights the function of Influence of conventional opposition contextually. A semantic feature of the former pair of conventional opposition, **same/ different**, triggers the oppositional meaning of the latter pair of conventional opposition, **the familiar/ the exotic**. The conventionally accepted facets of Bangkok, both familiar and unfamiliar to the readers, are also exemplified with reference to 'a plate of pàt tai'. This is a Thai dish that the writer perceives as a dish that is well-known worldwide.

Regardless of the Concessive opposition *but*, the binary oppositions are all in lexical forms and seem to share semantic features. Consequently, this could possibly contribute to the FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR conceptual oppositions in the table below:

FAMILIAR	UNFAMILIAR
1. approachable and inviting	an exotic escape
	mysterious and confounding
2. friendly	exotic
3. same, same the familiar	different the exotic

**Table 5.1: oppositions associated with FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR**

The table shows how conventional oppositions contribute to the conceptual opposition, FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR. The term 'exotic' strongly suggests to readers, how Thailand is

different from the readers' home. Despite the association with the 'exotic', Thailand is still 'familiar' in some ways that still makes it welcoming. Thailand could offer the possibility of an experience different from what is home for the tourist based jointly on the degree of reality (as 'imagination' in 2) the tourist encounters in Thailand, but also by the country being presented as familiar through the utilisation of words and phrases such as 'friendly,' 'familiar,' 'approachable and inviting,' including the reference to 'a plate of pàt tai'.

#### 5.2.1.2 GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE

The relationship between Thailand and the West is based on the idea that Thailand is able to offer experiences to the tourist that are significantly different from their home country. However, a linguistically based examination reveals a particular aspect of Thailand that is well-known to the readers:

4.	<i>Despite what your dodgy uncle might have told you, having a good time in Thailand does not necessarily have to involve ping pong balls or the word 'go-go.'</i>	LP, TA38
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In example 4, the writer appears to highlight the rife nature of prostitution in Thailand through GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE. The GIVEN KNOWLEDGE refers to 'what your dodgy uncle might have told you' and (a good time in Thailand which involve) 'ping pong balls or the word "go-go"'. The NEW KNOWLEDGE is alluded to by the use of the terminology of 'a good time in Thailand'. This will be elaborated in a section about financial development further on in this Thesis.

The focus here is on the subordinate clause and the main clause. The reference to the sex industry in Thailand is elaborated in an oppositional form that is triggered by the Concessive opposition, *Despite* and Negated opposition, *not*. The conceptual binary of GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE is suggestive of another conceptual binary, EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED, in that the widespread prevalence of the thriving sex industry in Thailand is so rife that there

could be an expectation that this could be only way to have a ‘good time’ in Thailand (EXPECTED and GIVEN KNOWLEDGE).

The reference to the sex industry at the macro-level or it being deemed as shared information is suggested in the verb form in the Present Perfect Tense, ‘might have told you’, which appears to point to the fact that prostitution has been around in Thailand since the time that the ‘dodgy uncle’ visited Thailand. The verb form seems to add another conceptual binary, PAST/ PRESENT, into the example in that the GIVEN KNOWLEDGE refers to an occurrence that takes place in the past. The adverb, ‘necessarily’, that accompanies the Negated opposition, *not*, also promotes the expectation that indulgence in the sex industry is the only way people have a ‘good time’ in Thailand. The NEW KNOWLEDGE is therefore related to what is deemed UNEXPECTED, in that nowadays (PRESENT), there are other ways to have a good time in Thailand. The following example correspondingly represents Thailand through the reference of prostitution in Thailand:

5.	<b>The island’s sin city of Patong</b> is the biggest town and busiest beach. <b>It’s the ultimate gong show where beachaholics sizzle off their hangovers and go-go girls play ping pong...without paddles.</b> <i>But ultimately the island’s affinity for luxury far outshines its other stereotypes.</i>	LP, HP61
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In example 5, the writer showcases various types of activities in Patong through linguistic oppositions. To begin with, the shared knowledge (GIVEN) is evident through the direct mention of ‘its other stereotypes’ which refer to ‘the ultimate gong show where beachaholics sizzle off their hangovers and go-go girls play ping pong...without paddles’. Similar to the previous example, the GIVEN KNOWLEDGE once again suggests or indeed strongly alludes to the prevalence of the sex industry in Thailand which is mentioned in tandem to the opposite relation to the NEW INFORMATION (island’s affinity for luxury).

The opposition appears to be a comparative one in 5. Constructed with the Concessive Opposition, *But*, the verb form, *far outshines*, and the activities for the rich (NEW KNOWLEDGE) appears to be more prominent in Patong than is prostitution (GIVEN KNOWLEDGE). Nevertheless, when mentioning in the oppositional form, the reference once again to the sex industry, possibly for rhetorical purposes, appears also to emphasise the reputation of Patong to also have a thriving sex industry.

### 5.2.1.3 REAL/ UNREAL and LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL

In this section, the exotic nature of Thailand refers to what is deemed to be real or logical. The linguistic oppositions, in this context, appear to be constructed through the usage of terms such as ‘dream’ and ‘paradise’ to represent Thailand. When mentioned in the form of oppositions, the concept of HOME appears to represent the notions of REAL and LOGICAL while THAILAND is associated with what is deemed UNREAL and ILLOGICAL.

6.	<b>These dreams of a tropical paradise <i>become</i> reality along the coasts of southern Thailand.</b>	LP, HPT78
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In example 6, the opposition, **these dreams of a tropical paradise/ reality along the coasts of southern Thailand**, is a transitional one triggered by the verb, *become*. It is a change of state from being a dream (UNREAL) to one of reality (REAL). In other words, the experience of paradise (that the readers dream of) is a real possibility in Thailand. The terms ‘dreams’, ‘paradise’ and ‘reality’ could be summarised into two pairs of conventional oppositions triggered by their semantic properties: **dream/ reality** or **paradise/ reality**. The reference of ‘reality’ should associate these oppositions with the conceptual opposition REAL/ UNREAL. Example 5 reveals a similar opposition with the reference to ‘paradise’ that is turned into a version of reality applicable to Thailand:

7.	It took a team of landscape gardeners <b>to make the beach in The Beach look like a proper island paradise</b> . Why go to all that trouble when you can <b>find the real thing in the laid-back islands of the Tarutao Archipelago?</b>	LP, TA25
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The oppositions are in the phrasal form triggered by the semantic trigger of *paradise/ real*, **to make the beach in The Beach look like a proper island paradise/ find the real thing in the laid-back islands of the Tarutao Archipelago**. The mention of a famous Hollywood movie, *The Beach*, could serve as an example of the reference of shared information about Thailand in media. In this context, the movie and the notion of it being associated with ‘paradise’ share some properties in that they are opposite to reality: movies are human-made and paradise is antonymous to reality. Both therefore, could be associated with the concept of the UNREAL. It should also be noted that in this context, Tarutao Archipelago is associated simultaneously with both REAL/ UNREAL in that it represents the place as a location where dreams come true. The summary of this process is listed in Table 5.2.

UNREAL	REAL
these dreams of a tropical paradise	reality along the coasts...
to make the beach in The Beach look like a laid-back proper island paradise	find the real thing in islands of the Tarutao Archipelago

**Table 5.2: oppositions associated to REAL/ UNREAL dichotomy**

The reference to ‘dreams’ and ‘paradise’ appear to imply an ideal tourist attraction. The association of Thailand and the concept of UNFAMILIARITY in this context extends beyond the differences in the physical spaces by including elements closer to that of surrealism. Hence, the distinctions between Thailand and home particularised in the promotion literature for tourists appears to be constructed on the ground of REALITY. The following example



portrays a similar form of opposition between Thailand and the West, but the opposition appears to be based on Western logic and thought-process.

8.	<p><b>The language barrier may seem huge, but it's never prevented anybody from loving the Thai people.</b></p> <p>The capital's cultural underpinnings are evident in virtually all facets of everyday life, and most enjoyably through its residents' sense of <i>sà•nùk</i>(fun). <b><i>In Bangkok, anything worth doing should have an element of <i>sà•nùk</i>.</i></b> Ordering food, changing currency and haggling at markets will usually involve a sense of playfulness – a dash of flirtation, and perhaps <b>a smile.</b></p> <p><b>It's a language that doesn't require words, and one that's easy to learn.</b></p>	LP, HPT56
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To start with, the unconventional opposition is in the sentence form, **the language barrier may seem huge/ it's never prevented anybody from loving the Thai people.** It suggests that the problem with communication (the language barrier) should make the trip to Thailand less pleasant. The Concessive opposition *but*, triggers an opposition that challenges this expectation as tourists are still enamoured by Thai people despite the language barrier. The fact that 'the language barrier may seem huge' appears to be a rational expectation (LOGICAL). However, it seems irrational that it is not the case in Thailand (ILLOGICAL) because of the general friendliness of Thai people. This seems to be in-line with the concepts of 'friendly/ 'exotic', paired in example 2 which represents the pair as positive traits to be experienced in Thailand.

Another pair of opposition is **language/ smile.** Language with words is an acceptable form of communication. Even though a smile, described by the phrase "a language that doesn't require words", is considered as a form of non- verbal communication in this context, it is still a less conventional one. Thus, to succeed with the communication with a smile, people should use

emotions to deal with the problem (ILLOGICAL), rather than conventional language (LOGICAL).

The theme, LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL, appears to deal with the idea that Thailand should be appreciated more with the heart and less so with the head. Like the previous section, the distinction seems to be constructed based on the logic of Westerners represented by LOGICAL. Between this pair of oppositions, experiencing Thailand with the head (LOGICAL) seems to serve as a standard form of experience: something that is common and which is to be expected at general tourist attractions, e.g. being able to communicate with the local Thai populace in proper English.

Therefore, the LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL appears to be underscored with EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED. In other words, the opposition forms appear to portray Thailand associated with the concepts of ILLOGICAL and UNEXPECTED. During this process, the oppositions also reveal an expectation of what people should generally expect at tourist attractions (LOGICAL and EXPECTED).

### **5.2.2 Internal oppositions**

In the previous section, the linguistic oppositions represent the distinctions between Thailand and the West through the means of the conceptual binary, FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR. The oppositions are constructed based on the concepts of FAMILIARITY (FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR and LOGIC (REAL/ UNREAL or LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL). Additionally, the linguistic oppositions also point out aspects of Thailand that Westerners appear to be familiar with. It refers to the conceptual opposition, GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE, where the writer mentions aspects of the sex industry whilst introducing new information about Thailand. This section introduces and focuses on oppositions constructed within Thailand.

### 5.2.2.1 INSIDER/ OUTSIDER: ISAN/ THAILAND

Consistent with the FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR, through means of linguistic oppositions, the area of Isan (the North-eastern part of Thailand) is represented as opposite from the rest of the country:

9.	For <b>travellers</b> and <b>Thais alike</b> , the <b>northeast</b> is <b>Thailand' forgotten backyard</b> .	LP, HP89
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From 9, Isan is unfamiliar to the rest of Thai people, quite similar to how Thailand is deemed as an exotic destination by Westerners. The reference of the Isan area as 'forgotten backyard' seems to highlight the status of the area as an outsider or out-of-place to both the local Thais and travellers. The notion of FAMILIARITY in this context appears to be associated with the INSIDER/ OUTSIDER as well. The INSIDER represents the relationship between Thailand and the West based on their shared views of Isan. The OUTSIDER therefore stands for the northeast region. The following example elaborates the representation of the unfamiliarity of Isan with the conceptual binaries of INSIDER/ OUTSIDER.

10.	Spend even just a little time in <b>this colossal corner of the country</b> and you'll discover as many <b>differences</b> as <b>similarities</b> to the rest of Thailand. The language, food and culture are <i>more Lao than Thai</i> , with hearty helpings of Khmer and Vietnamese thrown into the mix. ... <b>Thailand's tourist trail is at its bumpiest here (English is rarely spoken), but the fantastic attractions and daily interactions</b> could end up being highlights of your entire trip.	LP, HP90
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To begin with, in 10, the association of Isan with OUTSIDER is reinforced with the 'colossal corner of the country'. However, the conventional opposition, **differences/ similarities**, is an indication that this area is not entirely dissimilar to the rest of Thailand. The association of Isan with OUTSIDER is also constructed with an opposition between **Isan and Lao/ Thai**.

The opposition between **Thailand** and **Isan** is constructed by another opposition, *Lao/Thai*, triggered by the Comparative opposition, *more X than Y*: ‘The language, food and culture are *more Lao than Thai*, ...’. In this context, the comparative form treating Isan as an outsider to the Thai as the region is more readily identified with Laos.

Moreover, the distinction between **Isan** and **the rest of Thailand** is constructed with the superlative form, ‘*bumpiest*’ in ‘**Thailand's tourist trail is at its bumpiest here (English is rarely spoken)**’. In this context, Isan could be associated with the UNFAMILIAR because of the lack of ability to communicate in English could possibly go towards making the area even more ‘exotic’ or different from the West than is the rest of Thailand.

However, the Concessive opposition, *but*, triggers another opposition between **Isan** represented as a very exotic area (in comparison with the rest of Thailand) and **the fantastic attractions and daily interactions** which could represent the friendliness of the Thai people. The unconventional pair, **exotic/ friendly**, is mentioned in example 2 to represent the authentic quality of Thailand. As a result, this opposition appears to suggest a link to the conceptual binary, AUTHENTIC/ INAUTHENTIC.

#### **5.2.2.2 PAST/ PRESENT**

The temporal oppositions, PAST/ PRESENT or PRESENT/ FUTURE, are also used to elaborate a variety of activities that Thailand offers. They are also associated with other conceptual oppositions, such as AUTHENTIC/ INAUTHENTIC, FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR, and NATURAL/ UNNATURAL.

11.	<b>Isan (ee•sǎhn)</b> , as it's called, offers <i>a glimpse of the Thailand of old</i> : rice fields run to the horizon, water buffalo wade in muddy ponds, silk weavers work looms under their homes, and pedal-rickshaw drivers pull passengers down city streets. If you have a penchant for <u>authentic experiences</u> , it will surely be satisfied here.	LP, HP89
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The first opposition in 11 is between **Thailand of old** and **modern Thailand** (unlexicalised) triggered by auto-evocation, *old*. The semantic feature of the modifier, *old*, should associate this pair of opposition with the conceptual opposition, PAST/ PRESENT. Plus, the description of Isan: ‘rice fields run to the horizon, water buffalo wade in muddy ponds, ...’ appear to construct an opposition between this area and the rest of Thailand in which Isan is associated with the PAST and the rest with the PRESENT.

Isan’s association with the notion of AUTHENTICITY is highlighted with the conditional at the end of the example: ‘If you have a penchant for authentic experiences, it will surely be satisfied here’. The mention of *authentic* could possibly be an Auto-evocation that triggers the opposition in a conceptual level between AUTHENTIC and INAUTHENTIC in which Isan is considered more **Thai (AUTHENTIC)** than **the other parts of Thailand (INAUTHENTIC)**. The representation of Isan through the oppositional form seems to paint a picture of the ‘real’ Thailand with an association to something of a past (PAST) and hints at underdevelopment (UNDEVELOPED). On the contrary, the more ‘modern’ part of Thailand appears to be viewed as not a ‘real’ representation of Thailand. The relationship is summarised in table 5.3:

<b>WESTERNERS &amp; THAIS</b>	<b>PEOPLE OF ISAN</b>
INAUTHENTIC	AUTHENTIC
INSIDER	OUTSIDER
PRESENT	PAST

**Table 5.3: association of Westerners and Thais in contrastive relationship with people of Isan**

The notion of UNFAMILIAR could be taken to the extent of an area that has still not been discovered. When mentioned in oppositional form, the area is mentioned alongside places that are already well-known to the readers:

12.	<b>Thailand’s beauty is no secret, <i>but</i> there are <i>still</i> a few wonders that remain relatively under wraps.</b>	LP, TA24
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The example is an internal opposition constructed with the reference to ‘secret’ with the Negated opposition, *no*, as a rhetorical technique to broadcast that everyone knows about the exquisiteness of Thailand (FAMILIAR). Then with the Concessive opposition, *but*, new information is introduced that there are still some places that are left to be discovered (UNFAMILIAR).

The adverb *still* could be seen as a temporal marker indicating the association of PAST/ PRESENT binary. Thailand may already be widely known among tourists at present (PRESENT and FAMILIAR). However, there are ‘a few wonders’ that are kept secret in Thailand implicating the version of Thailand in the past (PAST) that no one knows about (UNFAMILIAR). The following example is about the changing state in Ko Lipe which is also related to the conceptual oppositions, FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR, PAST/ PRESENT and NATURAL/ UNNATURAL:

13.	<b>KoLipe</b> calls out to travellers seeking <b>the tropical idyll of sun, sea and sand between the toes</b> , <i>but</i> <b>the island is changing fast, with more bungalows bursting out of the jungle with each passing monsoon</b> . A short boat-ride across brilliant blue waters in almost any direction will deposit you on <b>an island where <i>not</i> even footprints disturb the sand</b> .	LP, TA30
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The first opposition is a transitional one that involves the changing state of the opposition from being **the tropical idyll of sun, sea and sand between the toes** to the one with **more bungalows bursting out of the jungle with each passing monsoon** constructed with the Concessive oppositions, *but*, and the Transitional oppositions, *changing*. The opposition is a changing state from being a place that tourists do not know about (UNFAMILIAR) to the one that is well-known among travellers (FAMILIAR). The changes appear to be represented with another conceptual opposition, NATURAL/ UNNATURAL: **the tropical idyll of sun...** allied with NATURAL and **more bungalows bursting...** with UNNATURAL.

In the end of the example, an alternative place that is allied with the concept UNFAMILIAR is added: ‘...deposit you on an island where not even footprints disturb the sand’ which suggests that there is still something unknown in Thailand and this should indicate that a beach with **the tropical idyll of sun, sea and sand between the toes** and **an island where not even footprints disturb the sand** (UNFAMILIAR) could still be more favourable than the one with ‘more bungalows bursting out of the jungle with each passing monsoon’ (FAMILIAR). This added alternative also seems to implicate that NATURAL could be preferred over UNNATURAL as well.

The temporal opposition, PAST/ PRESENT, could be constructed with the transitional state of Koh Lipe from being associated with NATURAL, a place with natural abundance, to the more developed one with bungalows (UNNATURAL) at present (PRESENT). The writer suggests an alternative area which is still undiscovered (‘where *not* even footprints disturb the

sand’). This state of underdevelopment appears to be associated with the notion of the PAST. It should be noted that in this context, the state of being undeveloped (NATURAL) and associated with the PAST seems to carry positive connotation since it is mentioned as an alternative to the changing condition of KoLipe (with more bungalow). The following example elaborates this point in more detail:

14.	Back in 2009, <u>the big fear</u> was whether or not <b>Lipe</b> would <i>become</i> another <b>Phi Phi</b> . <b>Those fears were stoked when a bass heavy nightclub arrived on Hat Pattaya, but the club was shut down and those fears have mellowed somewhat. Which is a relief, because there’s <i>still</i> plenty to love, and love deeply, about Lipe.</b>	LP, HPT 52
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The first opposition is a transitional one between Lipe and Phi Phi triggered by the Transitional opposition, ‘*become*’. There is also a clear evaluative element, ‘the big fear’ at the beginning which seems to give a negative connotation to Phi Phi. According to the unconventional opposition that follows, **Those fears were stoked / the club was shut down and those fears have mellowed somewhat**, triggered by the Concessive opposition, *but*, Phi Phi appears to be burdened with a negative connotation because of the nightclubs in the area which also makes it very well-known (FAMILIAR and UNNATURAL).

Following the previous example, there seems to be an implication that between the two pairs of conceptual oppositions, FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR and NATURAL/ UNNATURAL, in this specific context, the FAMILIAR and UNNATURAL seem to carry a more negative connotation as seen in the repetition of ‘fear’ (mentioned three times in one paragraph). Therefore, the opposition, ‘**...when a bass heavy nightclub arrived on Hat Pattaya**’/ **“the club was shut down and those fears have mellowed somewhat**’, triggered by the Concessive oppositions, *but*, could represent the idea that the ideal version of beaches in Thailand should be associated with UNFAMILIAR and NATURAL because people seem to



be relieved when ‘the club was shut down’. In other words, the natural state of the area appears to be more appreciated than supposed development in the form of nightlife.

This positive connotation of UNFAMILIAR and NATURAL is highlighted again at the end of the example with the use of *still* as in ‘Which is a relief, because there’s *still* plenty to love, and love deeply, about Lipe’. The repetition of ‘love’ seems to highlight that the idyllic beach in Thailand should be the one that is still in pristine condition. Along with the use of *still*, this state of the place (without ‘a bass heavy night club’) could refer to the condition of the beach in the past that is unknown and untouched. Hence, the UNFAMILIAR, NATURAL and PAST appear to work together to provide a positive connotation to the place. The table below represents three more examples of the application of *still* that contributes to the theme, FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR:

<b>FAMILIAR + PRESENT</b>	<b>Concessive opposition</b>	<b>UNFAMILIAR + PAST</b>
15. Social seekers will love <b>the developed beauties, such as Ko Phi-Phi and Ko Lanta, where you can party into the wee hours and meet plenty of fellow ramblers on the beach</b>	<i>yet</i> <i>still</i>	find a <b>peaceful strip of sand.</b>
16. (the area that have more visitors and already well- known)	<i>still</i>	The mainland coast beyond the islands sees <u>few foreign visitors...</u> , ... <u>this region will convince any naysayer</u> that Thailand  holds a bevy of off-the-beaten-track wonders.

<p>17. ... whatever happens, ('whatever happens' refers to 'the easier-to-access west coast has attracted a handful of new upscale resorts and a few older places have been revamped to attract a more ritzy market.')</p>	<p><i>still</i></p>	<p>chances are that the vast inland jungle will continue to feel undiscovered, and there will be</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">plenty of stunning, secluded bays in which you can string up a hammock and watch the tide roll in.</p>
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**Table 5.4: oppositions triggered by 'still' and associated with FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR and PAST/ PRESENT conceptual oppositions**

The association of UNFAMILIAR with NATURAL and PAST is realised through the Concessive oppositions, *still*. The oppositions in the second column represent the conditions of the beaches that are could be considered ideal for the travellers; the places with 'a peaceful strip of sand' in 15, 'a bevy of off-the-beaten-track wonders' in 16 and 'plenty of stunning, secluded bays' in 17. They refer to the relatively pristine and undiscovered states of the places (NATURAL). When mentioned alongside places associated with FAMILIAR, there seems to be an implication of the PAST/ PRESENT dichotomy in that these places still have the same condition as they were in the past (PAST and UNFAMILIAR), before they are discovered and become famous among the tourists (UNNATURAL, PRESENT and FAMILIAR). The Concessive opposition, *still*, semantically gives an indication of a temporal marker indicating the situation as was in the past and continues to the present. Hence, they seem to give positive undertones to the portrayal of Thailand that is associated with the terms UNFAMILIAR, NATURAL, and PAST.

## 5.3 DEVELOPMENT

### 5.3.1 Internal oppositions

DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED represents binary oppositions between places distinguished by the different degrees and stages of development. I discuss only *internal oppositions* as the main linguistic oppositions associated with DEVELOPMENT are constructed to represent different places within Thailand. However, the examples are also modified with external influences from the West. Likewise, in RICH/ POOR, the textual oppositions are focus on activities tailored for prospective (supposedly) Western customers with varying degrees of affluence. Therefore, the internal distinctions between activities that tourists may look forward to in Thailand showcase internal oppositions within the Western communities.

#### 5.3.1.1 DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED

18.	Increasingly, <b>the Asian-style squat toilet</b> is <i>less of the norm in Thailand</i> . There are <i>still specimens in rural places, provincial bus stations, older homes and modest restaurants</i> , <i>but</i> the <b>Western-style toilet</b> is <i>becoming more prevalent</i> and appears <u>wherever foreign tourists can be found</u> .	LP, EI40
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The opposition between **the Asian-style squat toilet** and **the Western-style toilet** should be evident from the canonical feature of **Asian/ Western** and the Concessive opposition, *but*. The opposition triggers another pair of opposition, which represents two segments of Thailand: **rural places, provincial bus stations, older homes and modest restaurant** and **wherever foreign tourists can be found**. As it is mentioned at the beginning of the example that ‘the Asian-style squat toilet is less of the norm in Thailand’, though not directly lexicalised, ‘the norm in Thailand’ should be associated with the area that provides the Western-style toilet (DEVELOPED).

The evaluative value of these two types of toilets is not explicitly stated, but may be seen from the Transitional oppositions, *increasingly*, *less of the norm*, and *becoming more prevalent* that construct an opposition between two periods of time. The time that the Asian-style squat toilet is more of the norm in Thailand and the other is less than a norm. Therefore, this opposition could also be associated with the PAST/ PRESENT, and as the change is usually made for the better, it should also be related to DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED. The reference of ‘the norm’ of Thailand should suggest that the country is considered relatively developed.

Tourism appears to influence the development of Thailand with an association of conceptual binaries, PAST/ PRESENT, DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, and NORMAL/ ABNORMAL. Based on the way these places are described, ‘specimens in rural places, provincial bus stations, older homes and modest restaurants’ where the Asian-style squat toilet can be found is modified with terms such as ‘rural’, ‘provincial’, ‘older’ and ‘modest’ which portrays that these could be less developed places for possibly poorer people.

On the other hand, the places that have the Western-style toilet installed are modified with a relative clause, ‘wherever foreign tourists can be found’. It should be noted that by explicitly mentioning foreign tourists, it could be a supposition that foreign tourists influence the rate progress in Thailand. Also, considering that the oppositional form which relates places with the Asian style squat toilets with PAST and UNDEVELOPED, the area that is associated with ‘foreign tourists’ should therefore be associated with the terms PRESENT and DEVELOPED.

The table 5.5 sums up the relationship between the opposition Asian-style squat toilet/ the Western-style toilet and several other conceptual oppositions; PAST/ PRESENT, DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, and COMMON/ UNCOMMON.

<b>Conceptual opposition</b>	<b>DEVELOPED</b>	<b>UNDEVELOPED</b>
Oppositions	Western-style toilet (PRESENT) (DEVELOPED) (NORMAL)	Asian-style squat toilet (PAST) (UNDEVELOPED) (ABNORMAL)
Places associated with oppositions	wherever foreign tourists can be found	specimens in rural places, provincial bus stations, older homes and modest restaurant

**Table 5.5: oppositions associated with DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED**

19.	Health risks and the quality of medical facilities vary depending on where and how you travel in Thailand. <b>The majority of cities and popular tourist areas have adequate and even excellent medical care. However, travel to remote rural areas can expose you to some health risks and less adequate medical care.</b>	LP, EI54
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The writer appears to elaborate on the condition of the developed and undeveloped areas in Thailand with the same conceptual binaries as mentioned in the previous example. In 19, the opposition is between **the majority of cities and popular tourist areas with adequate and even excellent medical care** and **remote rural areas with less adequate medical care**. The opposition is triggered by the Concessive opposition, *however*, and Comparative opposition, *less*. The mention of ‘excellent medical care’ could be associated with DEVELOPED while “remote rural areas” with UNDEVELOPED at a conceptual level.

With ‘the majority of...’, the NORMAL/ ABNORMAL is introduced. In this context, the URBAN that is associated with DEVELOPED and SAFE seems to be associated with NORMAL as it covers the ‘majority of the country’. The conceptual opposition seems to automatically associate the RURAL with UNCOMMON, UNDEVELOPED and UNSAFE in the same way that the writer does in the previous example. Besides, the mention of ‘the

majority of cities and popular tourist area’, could also be an indication of the role of tourism in the modern development of Thailand. This point is elaborated again in the following example:

20.	<p><b>Most parts of Thailand visited by tourists, particularly city and resort areas</b>, have minimal to no risk of malaria, and the risk of side effects from taking anti-malarial tablets is likely to outweigh the risk of getting the disease itself. If you are travelling to <b>high-risk rural areas</b> (<i>unlikely for most visitors</i>), seek medical advice on the right medication and dosage for you.</p>	LP, EI62
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Example 20 reveals an opposition between **most parts of Thailand visited by tourists** and **high-risk rural areas**. The influence of tourism may be seen from the way the former opposite is modified with most, and past participle in most parts of Thailand visited by tourists: the majority of heavily visited tourist area is safe (SAFE and DEVELOPED).

This point is emphasised in the latter opposite when the writer uses a form of personal aside in the bracket to provide extra information for tourists that not many people visit ‘high-risk rural areas’, ‘(*unlikely for most visitors*)’. Therefore, similar to the previous examples of the opposition, **most parts of Thailand visited by tourists/ high-risk rural areas**, is also associated with DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED and SAFE/ UNSAFE.

The RURAL is also associated with NORMAL/ ABNORMAL conceptual opposition with the repetition of ‘most’ in ‘**Most parts of Thailand visited by tourists**’ and ‘**high-risk rural areas** (*unlikely for most visitors*)...’. The normality seems to cover two aspects: the rural area being associated with ABNORMAL and the tourists who want to visit Isan are considered abnormal (ABNORMAL). As a result, Isan is still associated with being ABNORMAL, UNDEVELOPED, and UNSAFE in this context. Examples 18 and 19 seem to associate RURAL with unconventional forms of UNSAFE:

21.	For the preschool set, who are <b>becoming self-conscious</b> <i>but still have major cute quotient</i> , <b>stick to tourist centres</b> <i>instead of trotting off to far-flung places where foreigners, especially children, will attract too much attention.</i>	LP, EI103
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The focus of example 21 is the opposition **tourist centres/ far-flung places** that is triggered by Replacive opposition: *instead of*. It is tourism that also determines the degree of safety in this context. The writer implies that it is safe in tourist centres because people are more familiar with foreigners, but people out of this locality are not. This should suggest that the tourist area is considered safe and developed.

The conceptual opposition SAFE/ UNSAFE and DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED that goes hand in hand with URBAN/ RURAL seems to imply that looking exotic could be potentially dangerous. This alludes to a peculiar kind of danger because it is caused by the interest that these people in “far-flung places” have the foreigners and their children. This uncommon form of danger is highlighted in 22:

22.	Thai women, <b>especially</b> the younger generation, <b>are showing more skin</b> <i>these days</i> . <b>That means almost everyone is now dressing like a bar girl</b> and you can <b>wear spaghetti strap tops and navel-bearing shirts</b> without offending Thais’ modesty streak. <b>But</b> to be on the safe side, <b>cover up if you’re going</b> deep into rural communities. <b>And certainly cover up if visiting</b> temples.	LP, EI124
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The UNSAFE in 22 seems to be about the different forms of danger. The perceived danger is not a physical one, but more to do with violating a sense of etiquette in Thailand. The opposition seems to be concerned with the PAST/ PRESENT conceptual opposition due to the temporal marker, ‘these days’ and ‘now’, which suggests that dressing like a bargirl is

more acceptable now. However, the prepositional phrase, ‘**without offending Thais’ modesty streak**’ seems to suggest that this behaviour was not acceptable in the past. The reference of ‘you’ seems to include Westerners, who seems to represent DEVELOPMENT, in this context. Therefore, even though ‘a bar girl’ usually carries a negative connotation, this type of dressing style appears to be related to PRESENT and DEVELOPMENT which are considered positive traits in this example. Additionally, the mention of ‘almost everyone’ could be considered as an Auto-evocation that constructs an opposition between a majority of Thai women who are “dressing like a bargirl” and those who are not. Hence, the opposition should be associated with NORMAL/ ABNORMAL as well.

The Concessive opposition, *But*, as well as the association of rural area with the temple seems to highlight the association of being traditional with the PAST and the UNDEVELOPED. In this context, the UNSAFE seems to be concerned with the dressing code that is not acceptable for the Thais, but does not extend to physical activities. The following table summarises the oppositions constructed within the URBAN/ RURAL opposition which are associated with the DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED opposition within which the Westerners are portrayed as influencing development in Thailand. The conceptual binary is also associated with PAST/ PRESENT, SAFE/ UNSAFE, and COMMON/ UNCOMMON.

<b>URBAN</b>	<b>RURAL</b>
18. Western-style toilet	Asian-style squat toilet
19. majorities of cities and popular tourist areas with adequate and even excellent medical care	remote rural areas with less adequate medical care
20. minimal to no risk of malaria in most part of Thailand visited by tourists	high-risk rural area
21. tourist centre	far-flung places where foreigners, especially children, will attract too much attention



22. ... showing <i>more</i> skin <i>these days</i> . .... without offending Thais' modesty streak	... to be on the safe side, cover up if you're going deep into rural communities
<b>DEVELOPED, SAFE, PRESENT, COMMON</b>	<b>UNDEVELOPED, UNSAFE, PAST, UNCOMMON</b>

**Table 5.6: summary of conceptual oppositions related to URBAN/ RURAL**

### 5.3.1.2 RICH/ POOR

The section elaborates linguistic oppositions about the various experiences that Thailand has to offer based on the wealth-level of tourists. Similar to the previous section, the textual binaries are internal oppositions representing various types of activities distinguished by whether such activities are for the rich or the poor. This information could also give some idea as to the type of prospective customers being dealt with based on their financial status. The following example is taken from the introduction to Thailand and should serve as a starting point for the section:

23.	With two long coastlines and jungle-topped islands anchored in azure waters, Thailand is a getaway for <b>the hedonist and the hermit, the prince and the pauper.</b>	LP, HPT80
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Mentioned earlier in the introduction to Thailand, these conventional oppositions, **hedonist/ hermit** and **prince/ pauper**, are triggered not only by their semantic triggers, but also by their parallel patterns of phonemic initial /h/ and /p/. The focus here is the conventional opposition, **prince/ pauper** which represents the conceptual opposition, RICH/ POOR. This pair could be an indication that being financially affluent, could play a role in the diverse types of experiences one can avail to oneself in Thailand. This RICH/ POOR binary seems to be expressed, amongst other things, through choices of dining experiences:

24.	<p><i>Despite what your dodgy uncle might have told you, having a good time in Thailand does not necessarily have to involve ping-pong balls or the word 'go-go.'</i></p> <p>The drinking and partying scene in Thailand is diverse, and <i>caters to pretty much any audience.</i> You can <b>watch the sun set over Bangkok at one of the glamorous rooftop bars that have <u>captured the imagination of western travellers since the Hangover II</u>; listen to reggae at bohemian beach bungalows, or get wild with some help from cheap Thai whisky at a sloppy full moon party in KoPhang Ngan.</b> <i>And just about everything in between.</i></p>	LP, TA38
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The above example appears to construct two forms of oppositions: the 'sex industry/ other forms of 'good time in Thailand' and the dining experiences tailored 'for the rich/ 'for the poor.' The former is already mentioned in the section about FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR when the opposition is concerned with the GIVEN KNOWLEDGE indicating what is already well-known about Thailand. In this case, it is information about the sex industry in Thailand. The example introduces other "good time in Thailand" (NEW KNOWLEDGE) which is about dining experiences associated with RICH/ POOR conceptual binary.

The claim that Thailand has something for everyone is started with '*caters to pretty much any audience*' and then concluded by '*And just about everything in between.*' The oppositions then are mentioned in a taxonomic sister form, by indicating three specific activities: **watch the sun set over Bangkok at one of the glamorous rooftop bars ... (1),listen to reggae at bohemian beach bungalows (2), or get wild with some help from cheap Thai whisky at a sloppy full moon party in KoPhang Ngan (3).**

Of all three suggestions, the semantic features of **glamorous/ cheap** could ally the first and third dining experiences with RICH/ POOR dichotomy. Plus, though not as explicit as 'cheap', the place in 2, 'bohemian beach bungalows' and the one in 1, 'the glamorous rooftop bars' could still be opposed considering the possible differences in the amount of money invested

in the place. In this context, the second activity could also be associated with POOR in RICH/ POOR conceptual oppositions.

On the Plane of Equivalence, the places 'Bangkok', 'bohemian beach bungalows' and a sloppy full moon party in KoPhang Ngan, are equivalent as types of party scenes. However, the differences among them seem to be constructed through activities that people undertake in the areas are also based on financial positions of the prospective customers. Importantly, these are internal oppositions between the different places in Thailand that are related to internal oppositions between different types of likely Western tourists. Therefore, the internal opposition works in parallel ways in both Thailand and the West, presenting Thailand as suiting tourists of different degrees of wealth.

The RICH/ POOR dichotomy that lies beneath the oppositions between types of activities in Thailand seems to be associated with REAL/ UNREAL dichotomy. The UNREAL is associated with the experience for the rich in 'You can **watch the sun set over Bangkok at one of the glamorous rooftop bars that have captured the imagination of western travellers since the Hangover II.**' It should be noted that the UNREAL is used in this context to express idealism: in tourism discourse, the UNREAL should have a positive connotation as it could be considered as form of escape from mundane reality.

The evidence of the shared or macro knowledge about Thailand could be seen in the reference of *Hangover II* which is a Hollywood movie filmed in Thailand. The film production and the 'imagination' seems to associate the activities for the rich (RICH) with the UNREAL. On the other hand, when mentioned in the form of binary opposition, the experience for the poor (POOR) could be associated with REAL described with 'reggae music and bohemian beach' which goes hand in hand with 'cheap Thai whisky at the sloppy full moon party'. The following example also elaborates the experiences in Thailand based on the RICH/ POOR conceptual dichotomy. It should be noted that the example is already mentioned in the FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR conceptual binary which relates to the sex industry which seems to be a shared expectation about Thailand (GIVEN KNOWLEDGE):

25.	<b>The island's sin city of Patong</b> is the biggest town and busiest beach. It's <b>the ultimate gong show where beachaholics sizzle off their hangovers and go-go girls play ping pong...without paddles.</b> <i>But</i> ultimately <b>the island's affinity for luxury far outshines its other stereotypes.</b>	LP, HPT61
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The use of 'its other stereotypes' appears to compartmentalise activities that give Patong the title of 'sin city' with NORMAL as it is already known and expected in Thailand. Similar to the previous example, the information about activities for the rich (RICH) is associated with NEW KNOWLEDGE.

The Concessive opposition, *But*, introduces a new form of knowledge that the place is also acknowledged for 'luxury', but the oppositional form seems to indicate that it is still less commonly known than the other forms of activities, referred to as 'stereotypes'. Hence, in comparison, the activity for the rich is uncommon and related to ABNORMAL in NORMAL/ ABNORMAL conceptual binary.

To summarise, even though these two types of activities are both prevalent on the island, the use of oppositional forms appear to show the perception of the Westerners through the NORMAL/ ABNORMAL binary that the place is widely known for prostitution and that the introduction of 'luxury' activities should be less expected of the tourists. Hence, it could be presumed, according to the writer, that the meaning of Thailand has been associated with sex tourism (NORMAL) and the ones for the activities that are allied with RICH could be new information about Thailand (ABNORMAL). The RICH/ POOR is also evident in the representation of Ko Samui:

26.	<b>Ko Samui</b> is like a <b>well-established Hollywood celebrity</b> : she's outrageously manicured, has lovely blonde tresses and has gracefully removed all of her wrinkles without more than a peep in the tabloids.	LP, HPT103
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	<p><b>She's been in the tourism business longer than almost any other Thai island, but rather than becoming passe, she's embraced a new generation of resort goers, many of them upscale and Russian. ...</b></p> <p><b>Behind the glossy veneer</b> there's still <b>a glimmer of the girl from the country</b>. Look for <b>steaming street-side food stalls beyond the beach, backpacker shanties plunked down on quiet stretches of sand</b> and secreted Buddhist temples along the backstreets. <u>It's then that you remember</u> you're <b>in Thailand</b> and <i>not</i> <b>a globalisation-induced trance of a Photoshopped beach vacation.</b></p>	
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The personification of Ko Samui in example 26 utilises the RICH/ POOR concept to provide an overall picture of the island. To begin with, it is clear that being ‘**a well-established Hollywood celebrity**’ should be associated with wealth. The paragraph also mentions the embrace of ‘**a new generation of resort goers, many of them upscale and Russian**’. The adjective ‘upscale’ is synonymous with the rich. Along with the reference of ‘**a well-established Hollywood celebrity**’, Ko Samui is a place for rich travellers.

In the second paragraph of the example, the image of Ko Samui in the first paragraph is represented with ‘**the glossy veneer**’. It is opposed to ‘**a glimmer of the girl from the country**’ triggered with the preposition *behind* which suggests that she has two personalities: being **a well-established Hollywood celebrity** and **the girl from the country**. A further concept that might also arise here is SPECIAL/ ORDINARY as being the girl from the country is associated with some kind of a girl next door. Nevertheless, activities that accompany this part of Ko Samui is ‘**steaming street-side food stalls** beyond the beach, **backpacker shanties** plunked down on quiet stretches of sand and secreted Buddhist temples along the backstreets’. The **street-side food stalls** and **backpacker** represent a form of travelling that is contrasted

to a **new generation of resort goers, many of them upscale and Russian** because it is known for a fact from previous examples that eating at the food stall is cheaper than at the restaurant and that backpackers are also known as budget travellers. Therefore, what Ko Samui offers to tourists is a combination of experiences that are suitable for both the rich and the poor.

Apart from the RICH/ POOR concept, another interesting part of this section is the authenticity of the experience. The paragraph ends with another pair of opposition **Thailand/ a globalisation-induced trance of a Photoshopped beach vacation** in 'It's then that you remember you're in **Thailand** and *not a globalisation-induced trance of a Photoshopped beach vacation*'. 'Then' indicates the backpacker sort of experiences which allies with POOR in RICH/ POOR binary. Hence, the oppositions are also associated with the notion of AUTHENTICITY: even though Koh Samui can offer activities for tourists with variable financial standings, the fact that 'you remember that you're in Thailand' shows that the essence of Thailand is still associated with poverty (AUTHENTIC), not the luxury that it also provides to the tourists (INAUTHENTIC). Besides dining experiences, activities for prospective tourists are divided into ones for the rich and the poor:

27.	It's <b>the contradictions</b> that give the City of Angels its rich, multifaceted personality. Here <b>climate-controlled megamalls</b> sit side-by-side <b>200-year-old village homes</b> ; <b>gold-spired Buddhist temples</b> share space with <b>neon-lit strips of sleaze</b> ; <b>slow-moving rivers of traffic</b> are bypassed by <b>long-tail boats plying the royal river</b> ; and <b>streets lined with food carts</b> are overlooked by <b>restaurants on top of skyscrapers serving exotic cocktails</b> . As Bangkok races towards the future, <i>these contrasts</i> will never stop supplying the city with its never-ending <u>Thai-ness</u> .	LP, HPT57
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In example 27, oppositions could be an essence of Bangkok as mentioned at the beginning of the example: 'It's the contradictions that give the City of Angels its rich, multifaceted

personality’. The explicit mention of the *contradictions* prepares the reader for oppositions that are about to be mentioned in the paragraph. The writer ends the paragraph with the emphasis that *these contrasts* are part of Thai identities or Thainess: *these contrasts* will never stop supplying the city with its never-ending Thai-ness. Even though different types of oppositions are mentioned; the focus of this example is RICH/ POOR conceptual opposition only. Here, among other oppositions representing Thainess, the conceptual opposition RICH/ POOR is expressed in the form of dining experiences as in ‘**streets lined with food carts** are overlooked by **restaurants on top of skyscrapers serving exotic cocktails**’. The opposite types of dining, as conveyed by the words, **food carts/ restaurants**, represent the RICH/ POOR binary: the location of the restaurant, ‘streets’ and ‘on top of skyscrapers’ should make it easier to associate these two dining experiences with RICH/ POOR conceptual opposition.

28.	<p><b>Once the domain of backpackers and sea gypsies,</b>  <i>Lanta hasn't just gentrified, it's morphed almost completely from a luscious southern Thai backwater into a midrange getaway for French, German and Swedish <u>package</u> tourists who come for her divine beaches ....</i></p>	LP, HPT26
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Example 28 shows a Transitional opposition between **the domain of backpackers and sea gypsies, a luscious southern Thai backwater/ a midrange getaway for French, German and Swedish package tourists ... beaches** triggered by the Transitional opposition in a form of verb phrase, *hasn't just gentrified, it's morphed almost completely from*. It should be noticed that ‘not just’ in ‘hasn't just gentrified’ seems to be redundant, but it might mean that Lanta ‘being gentrified’ was to be expected. However, the following is beyond the expectation of the readers. Moreover, this sentence contains an opposition within itself considering ‘not just’ and ‘almost completely’ tends to be different in various degrees on the semantic spectrum. This is an influence of the first of opposition **not just/ almost completely** on the construction of the second one, **gentrified/ morphed**, but the opposition is a gradable one. However, the

main focus of interest should be activities available for the rich and the poor: the poor are referred to as ‘backpackers and sea gypsies’. These travel around with a limited amount of money and the rich are referred to as ‘French, German and Swedish package tourists...’. It should be noted that they are here with the ‘package’ tour. This could also be the alternative type of travelling experience that the backpackers and sea gypsies could have been based on, namely the RICH/ POOR conceptual opposition.

29.	The phrase <b>‘private infinity pool’</b> and <b>‘personal butler’</b> may soon be heard <i>more frequently than</i> <b>‘magic milkshake’</b> and <b>‘another whisky bucket please.’</b>	LP, HPT107
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In example 21, the opposition **‘private infinity pool’** and **‘personal butler’** / **‘magic milkshake’** and **‘another whisky bucket please’** is constructed with Comparative opposition, *more*. To relate to this opposition with RICH/ POOR, readers need to draw on background knowledge that **‘private infinity pool’** and **‘personal butler’** are associated with a wealthy lifestyle and that **‘magic milkshake’** and **‘another whisky bucket please’** are cheaper kinds of drink.

It should be noted that **‘magic milkshake’** could have some negative undertone because some illegal substances may be added into the drink. Therefore, **‘private infinity pool’** and **‘personal butler’** that is related to RICH should have a connotation related to affluence more so than **‘magic milkshake’** and **‘another whisky bucket please’** (and possibly more legal). The positive implication appears to be evident the level of economic development in the area associated with RICH as evidenced in the comparative opposition, *more*, that constructs an opposition related to the change in KoPha-ngan, from being a place that attracts poor tourists to being one for the rich.

The financial development is conceptualised into RICH/ POOR to classify types of activities in Thailand which, to an extent, brings to consideration the financial status of the prospective



tourists. Table 5.7 summarises the oppositions that are related to the conceptual oppositions, RICH/ POOR:

<b>RICH</b>	<b>POOR</b>
23. price	pauper
24. Watch the sunset over Bangkok at one of the glamorous rooftop bars	- good time in Thailand (that your dodgy uncle might have told you) - get wild with some help from cheap Thai whisky at a sloppy full moon party
25. island's affinity for luxury	its other stereotypes (the ultimate gong show)
26. Ko Samui as a well-established Hollywood celebrity	Ko Samui as a glimmer of the girl from the country
27. restaurants on top of skyscrapers	street lined with foodcarts
28. midrange getaway for French, German and Swedish package tourists	domain of backpackers and sea gypsies
29. 'private infinity pool' and 'personal butler'	'magic milkshake' and 'another whisky bucket please'

**Table 5.7: summary of linguistic oppositions representing RICH/ POOR**

The oppositions in table 5.7 represent types of experiences available to tourists in Thailand catering to the needs of tourist according to their respective the financial statuses. Some examples tend to convey more information. For instance, those particularised in 24 -26 seem to suggest that the AUTHENTICITY of Thailand is related to the POOR, as is sex industry, expressed in the form of GIVEN KNOWLEDGE. Having something for the RICH is then considered NEW KNOWLEDGE. The oppositions in 28 and 29 also represent changes in the perception of Thailand as a more luxurious destination.

#### **5.4 DEGENERACY**

The previous section about DEVELOPMENT is centred on changes in Thailand, e.g. in Western and Asian style of toilettes. It examines the activities available to the tourist in

Thailand categorised by their respective affordability dependant on the financial status of the prospective tourists. However, the changes are not exclusively an indication of negative qualities of Thailand: Isan is still interesting because it represents an authentic version of Thailand. This section, on the other hand, focuses on aspects that mainly convey negative connotations about Thailand.

#### 5.4.1 External oppositions

##### 5.4.1.1 SAFE/ UNSAFE

In Lonelyplanet.com, the conceptual opposition, SAFE/ UNSAFE, appears to be primarily concerned with the ASSAILANT/ VICTIM. It mainly appears on the page titled *Women Travellers*, devoted to female readers. The following examples include the information presumably written for prospective female travellers considering the use of the pronoun ‘you’. Hence, there seem to be three parties related to these examples: the writer who wrote the piece of information, the ‘female’ readers represented with ‘you’ and the Thai people. Though not directly lexicalised, they are presumed to be Thai men based on the underlined male/ female dichotomy.

30.	<p><b>Attacks and rapes</b> are <i>not common in Thailand</i>, <i>but incidents do occur</i>, especially when <b>an attacker</b> observes <b>a vulnerable target: a drunk or solo woman</b>. If <b>you</b> return home from a bar alone, <i>be sure</i> to have <b>your</b> wits about <b>you</b>. <i>Avoid accepting</i> rides from strangers late at night or travelling around in isolated areas by <b>yourself</b> — <i>common sense stuff</i> that might escape <b>your</b> notice in <b>a new environment filled with hospitable people</b>.</p>	LP, EI125
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The SAFE/ UNSAFE in example 30 focuses specifically physical danger and bodily harm, ‘attacks and rapes’ elaborated with an unconventional opposition, **not common/ do occur** constructed with *not X but Y* frame. The Negated opposition, *not*, is in a form of Labov’s

comparator (1972). It implicates that the incidents are expected to be common', though in reality, they are rare (but exist nonetheless). The oppositions seem to indicate that in general Thailand is relatively safe (NORMAL) when it is allied with SAFE in SAFE/ UNSAFE conceptual opposition.

However, the 'unsafe' version of Thailand is associated with women who are in a somewhat 'not normal' state; 'a vulnerable target: a drunk or solo woman' (ABNORMAL). It is a part of a relatively conventional opposition: **an attacker/ a vulnerable target, a drunk or solo woman**. It should be noticed that the former opposite (an attacker) is not modified, but the latter is described as being vulnerable, drunk or solo.

In example 30, Hyland's Engagement Markers (2005) plays an essential role in this example. The pronoun *you* which is mentioned throughout the paragraph ( *you return...*, ...*your wits about you, by yourself, your notice*), and the imperative, *be sure* and *avoid accepting*, engage the readers, presumably female Westerners, throughout the conversation. Therefore, it could be possible to associate 'you' with 'a vulnerable target' and Thai men with 'an attacker'. This association could introduce another conceptual opposition, ASSAILANT/ VICTIM, which is also related to the opposition of SAFE/ UNSAFE.

The representation of the ASSAILANT/ VICTIM should be examined closely and seriously due to the nature of its impact. In this particular example, an attacker is associated with hospitable people' in 'a new environment filled with hospitable people'. This appears to unconventionally give positive connotation to ASSAILANT. On the other hand, linguistically, the finger of blame seems to be pointed to the VICTIM who has put herself at risk by being drunk or alone (considered abnormal qualities).

As mentioned earlier, the pronoun 'you', as well as the warning in the imperative: 'be sure' and 'avoid accepting,' could presuppose that the Westerners are likely to be victims (VICTIM). The mention of 'common sense stuff that might escape your notice' as well as 'a vulnerable target, a drunk or solo woman' appear to represent these women as being in an

‘abnormal’ state: they are drunk, solo, and have no common sense (ABNORMAL). Therefore, to an extent, they should take the blame for being attacked. The following example portrays a similar example of SAFE/ UNSAFE with similar related conceptual oppositions:

31.	<p><i>While <b>Bangkok</b> might be a men’s paradise to some, <b>foreign women</b> are finding their own Romeos on <b>the Thai beaches</b>. As more couples emerge, more <b>Thai men</b> will make themselves available. <b>Women who aren’t interested in such romantic encounters should not presume that Thai men have merely platonic motives</b>. <b>Frivolous flirting could unintentionally cause a Thai man to feel a loss of face if attention is then diverted to another person and, in some cases where alcohol is involved, the spurned man may become unpleasant or even violent.</b></i></p>	LP, EI126
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The SAFE/ UNSAFE in example 31 continue to be elaborated with the ASSAILANT/ VICTIM binary with an emphasis on the representation of ‘foreign women’ and ‘Thai men’. The pair is further referred to as **Women who aren’t interested in such romantic encounters/Thai men have merely platonic motives**, triggered by the negation, *not*. It should be noticed that the behaviour of ‘foreign women’, also described as ‘women who aren’t interested in such romantic encounters’, is repeated with **frivolous flirting**. As flirting could be closely related to the idea of deceiving someone, this is almost an indication that the ‘victim’ should take the blame for their action as well.

On the other hand, the act of the ‘assailant’ seems to be justified with a transitional opposition — **a spurned man/unpleasant or even violent man** — triggered by the verb, *become*. The blame is also likely to be placed on the female victims since they are considered be the cause of turning a man violent as they were initially spurned by ‘frivolous flirting’ of ‘foreign women’. As a result, the Thai men seem to be associated with both concepts in ASSAILANT/ VICTIM which in turn lessens the degree of the seriousness of the crime they committed to

“foreign women” or the real “victim”. The SAFE/ UNSAFE, also represented by ASSAILANT/ VICTIM, appear to be a prominent aspect for the following example as well:

32.	<p><b>Women</b>, especially solo travellers, need to be smart and somewhat sober when interacting with <b>the opposite sex, be they Thai or fa•ràng(foreigners)</b>. <b>Opportunists</b> pounce when <i>too many whisky buckets are involved</i>. Also be aware that <b>an innocent flirtation</b> might convey <b>firmer intentions to a recipient who does not share your culture’s sexual norms</b>.</p>	LP, EI44
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The example is taken from another section that could be written explicitly for women called ‘Assault’, also listed under ‘Danger and annoyances’. The conventional opposition, **man/woman**, referred to in this example as **women/the opposite sex, be they Thai or fa•ràng(foreigners)** should also be associated with the conceptual opposition of ASSAILANT/VICTIM, with men being ‘assailants’ and women being ‘victims’.

The Engagement markers in the form of *your* in ‘your culture’s sexual norms’, seems to suggest that the women in this context could be Westerners. On the other hand, the assailants are referred to as ‘the opposite sex, be they Thai or fa•ràng (foreigners)’, ‘opportunists’, and ‘a recipient who does not share your culture’s sexual norms’. The writer mentions explicitly that the ‘assailants’ in this example could be either Thais or Westerners. However, it is also clearly pointed out that ‘a recipient’ in ‘a recipient who does not share your culture’s sexual norms’ should refer to a Thai who does not understand the Western sexual norms.

The last pair of opposition in this section, **an innocent flirtation/ firmer intentions**, appear to paraphrase the pair of oppositions between **Thai men** who do not have ‘merely platonic motives’ and **Western women** who engage in ‘frivolous flirting’. Thai men may mistakenly believe that Western women have ‘firmer intentions’ because they do not share the Westerners’ ‘culture’s sexual norms.’ Therefore, along with the description of these women’s behaviour in this example; with phrases such as ‘solo travellers’, ‘too many whisky buckets

are involved' and 'innocent flirtation', the writer appears to point out that the victims (Western women) should assume some of the blame as well.

In conclusion, the relationship between men and women in this example seems to be centred on SAFE/ UNSAFE conceptual oppositions. All three examples share the idea that the association of Thailand and the UNSAFE and the ASSAILANT/ VICTIM opposition in which the Western women (VICTIM) are responsible for their actions. Table 5.8 summarises the representation of Thai men and Western women which is associated with the conceptual binary SAFE/ UNSAFE:

<b>Thai men</b>	<b>Western women</b>
30. an attacker (... hospitable people)	a vulnerable target: a drunk or solo woman ( <i>be sure to have your wits ... — common sense stuff that might escape your notice</i> )
31. Thai men (not having platonic motive...spurned man may become unpleasant or even violent)	Foreign women (Frivolous flirting ...cause a Thai man to feel a loss of face)
32. the opposite sex, be they Thai or fa•ràng(foreigners), Opportunists, a recipient who does not share your culture's sexual norms	Women (solo travellers, need to be smart and somewhat sober...too many whisky buckets are involved an innocent flirtation)
<b>ASSAILANT</b>	<b>VICTIM</b>

**Table 5.8: summary of the linguistic oppositions associated with ASSAILANT/ VICTIM**

#### **5.4.1.2 GOOD/ BAD WOMEN**

The notion of DEGENERACY in this study is concerned with the concept of CONSERVATIVE. Regardless of the collective knowledge about Thailand's association with prostitution as pointed out in section 5.2.1.2, Thai people are described with conservative qualities:

33.	Thai culture is relatively tolerant of both <b>male</b> and <b>female homosexuality</b> . There is a fairly prominent <b>gay</b> and <b>lesbian</b> scene in Bangkok, Pattaya and Phuket. <b>With regard to dress or mannerism, lesbians and gays are generally <i>accepted without comment</i>. However, public displays of affection – whether heterosexual or homosexual – are <i>frowned upon</i>.</b>	LP, EI128
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Most of the oppositions in 33 are conventional: **male/ female, gay/ lesbian** and **heterosexual/ homosexual**. However, they are inclusive oppositions which mean that there is an opposition between heterosexual and homosexual which could be associated with the COMMON/ UNCOMMON conceptual opposition. However, the unconventional opposition is in a sentence form, '**With regard to dress or mannerism, lesbians and gays are generally *accepted without comment*'/ 'public displays of affection – whether heterosexual or homosexual – are *frowned upon***', and constructed with the Concessive opposition, *However*. The verb 'accepted without comment' and 'frowned upon' suggests that the opposition between being a homosexual and showing affection publicly could be related to the ACCEPTABLE/ UNACCEPTABLE conceptual opposition.

The fact that showing affection in public is less acceptable than being homosexual in Thailand is in fact, peculiar compared to the number of people who engage in homosexuality in other countries. However, in the context of actual sexual intercourse, the public display of affection is still not acceptable in Thailand. Hence, it reveals that the Thais are able to accept homosexuality more readily than showing affection in public. The expression that Thais people are conservative is also made apparent and visible in their clothing style:

34.	<b>Thai women, especially the younger generation, are showing <i>more</i> skin these days. That means <i>almost everyone</i> is now <b>dressing like a bargirl</b> and <b>you can wear spaghetti strap tops and navel-bearing shirts</b></b>	LP, EI124
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	<p><i>without offending Thais' modesty streak.</i> But to be on the safe side, cover up if you're going deep into rural communities. And certainly cover up if visiting temples.</p>	
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Example 34 was mentioned earlier in this Thesis in the section about the rural area and its association with the notion of the PAST. The first opposition is the one between **the old generation** and **young generation of Thai women**, created by the Comparative trigger: *-er* and *more*. In this case, it is the younger generation that 'are showing more skin these days.' Hence, the oppositions appear to also relate to the dressing styles of the past and the present time (PAST/ PRESENT): older women in the past dress modestly while 'the younger generation are showing more skin these days'. The opposition seems to associate the PAST with the CONSERVATIVE and the PRESENT with the LIBERAL.

Another pair of oppositions is constructed by Auto-evocation, *almost*, indicating that even though almost every Thai woman dress like a bargirl, there is still a small number who do not. Therefore, this is also an opposition between **Thai girls who dress like a bargirl** and **those who do not**. This is an opposition between two types of Thai girls (supposedly) in the same generation. The use of 'almost everyone' appears to posit these Thai women 'who dress like bargirls' with a connotation of being NORMAL and 'those who do not' as being ABNORMAL. The temporal marker, *now*, could also be an Auto-evocated opposition that associate women who dress modestly (ABNORMAL) with the PAST and those who dress like bargirls (NORMAL) with the PRESENT.

Even though this section focuses on oppositions within Thailand, the example also appears to be associated with an opposition between Thai and Western women. To begin with, there is the presupposition that in general, Thai women dress modestly. The opposition is constructed by the negation 'without' in *without offending Thais' modesty streak*. It can be seen from this trigger that Negated opposition is not necessarily used in the form of X (not Y), but



'without' is comparable as well: if 'without' is replaced by 'not', the phrase should still mean the same.

Since Thai people dress modestly; from the given example, the dressing style which is considered 'not modest' is 'dressing like a bargirl and wearing spaghetti strap tops and navel-bearing shirts'. The opposition here is the two styles of dressing: **dressing like a bargirl.../dressing modestly like a Thai**. Due to the negative connotation of 'a bargirl', an association with this type of women through dressing style seems to compartmentalise these women with the BAD and the other (dressing modestly) with GOOD WOMEN.

This opposition results in another pair of oppositions, which means the two groups of people who wear these two types of clothing: **women who dress like a bargirl and you (referring to the readers, so supposed to mean Westerners)/ Thai people**. In this context, those who dressed like a bargirl are considered liberal because the manner in which they dress is different from the Thais' modesty streak and comparable to that of the West. Therefore, the readers are able to refer to the conceptual opposition: **CONSERVATIVE/LIBERAL**, and **THAILAND (EAST)/WEST**, with Thailand falling into the **CONSERVATIVE** and the West being **LIBERAL**.

Being liberal could be considered positive in a general context. However, because of an association of this trait with 'bargirls', this type of clothing (showing more skins) appears to have negative connotation even though it is associated with Western style of clothing. It should also be noted that the 'bargirls' are mentioned explicitly only once in Lonelyplanet.com (they are mentioned indirectly as part of GIVEN KNOWLEDGE in the section 5.2.1.2 GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE and 5.3.1.2 RICH/ POOR). Their representation is also one dimensional here: being the one that dresses differently. The sex-related aspect of the bargirl is omitted. This could be the only characteristic of bargirls that the writer (presumably be a Westerner) is concerned of. This could be considerably different from the depiction of bargirls in Stickmanbangkok.com, which will be examined in the

following chapter. The last example is associated with the reference to Thailand as a ‘mama-san’. To an extent, the term is used to refer to women working in the sex industry:

35.	Thailand <b>has long been <u>Southeast Asia’s mama-san</u>, inviting foreigners from <i>near</i> and <i>far</i> to indulge in the kingdom’s natural splendours.</b>	LP, HPT79
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There is a conventional opposition **near/ far** which has an inclusive effect in bringing together travellers from different places to Thailand. Referring to Thailand as Southeast Asia’s mama-san could merely be a rhetorical style employed to enforce the notion that Thailand’s beauty is as attractive as beautiful women. However, it could concurrently result from the widespread beliefs about the sex industry in Thailand which also indicates that prostitution is rife in Thailand.

### 5.5 Conclusion

In Lonelyplanet.com, the conceptual oppositions used in the representation of Thailand are summarised in the following table:

Categories	Types of oppositions	Main conceptual oppositions	Associated conceptual oppositions
1. FAMILIARITY	External oppositions	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	
		GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE	
		REAL/ UNREAL, LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL	

	Internal oppositions	INSIDER/ OUTSIDER	AUTHENTIC/ INAUTHENTIC
		PAST/ PRESENT	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR, NATURAL/ UNNATURAL
2. DEVELOPMENT	Internal oppositions	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED	PAST/ PRESENT, NORMAL/ ABNORMAL
		RICH/ POOR	GIVEN/NEW KNOWLEDGE (FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR), RICH/ POOR, NORMAL/ ABNORMAL
3. DEGENERACY	External opposition	SAFE/ UNSAFE	ASSAILANT/ VICTIM
	Internal opposition	GOOD/ BAD WOMEN	CONSERVATI VE/ LIBERAL

**Table 5.9: summary of conceptual oppositions used in the examples in chapter 5**

Table 5.9 summarises the conceptual oppositions that are prominent in the representation of Thailand in this chapter, categorised in the domains of FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY. For FAMILIARITY, the relationship between Thailand and home appears to be based on the idea that Thailand as a country is ‘exotic’ (UNFAMILIAR), but that it is welcoming because of its friendly people (FAMILIAR). On the other hand, in the form of GIVEN KNOWLEDGE, the writer also points out aspects of prostitution that the

readers are expected to be familiar with. Therefore, Thailand is 'exotic' to the readers, but the prevalence of the sex industry is represented as familiar. The distinctions between Thailand and home are also constructed on the degree of reality in that Thailand is portrayed in association with it being UNREAL and ILLOGICAL. The differences in Thailand are based on Western conceptions. It should be worth mentioning that the two examples (4 and 5) appear to be the only explicit mention of the sex industry in Lonelyplanet.com. Of all the four analysis chapters, the website seems to steer away from the association of Thailand with prostitution. When the term, 'bargirl' is mentioned in 34, it is to address the concept of CONSERTIVITY, rather than the actual act of PROMISCUITY. This representation of the prostitution in this chapter is different compared with the views of all the writers in Stickmanbangkok.com.

Also, the notion of FAMILIARITY could be applied to the internal representation of Thailand. In the section, 5.2.2.1, the examples represent how the portrayal of Isan as places and people are associated with the OUTSIDER, indicating that to the Thais, Isan appears to be unfamiliar to them the same way that Thailand is exotic to the West. The internal oppositions are also in the form of temporal oppositions. One of the examples is the Isan which represents what Thailand was like in the past (PAST). When this part of Thailand is associated with the AUTHENTIC, it could mean that of all the qualities of Thailand, the real Thailand is primarily related to the past. Therefore, the Isan is considered 'not Thai' (OUTSIDER), and 'real Thai' (AUTHENTIC) at the same time. Lonely Planet's representation of Isan is conducted in the same way as described in 1.4.2 in relation to class distinctions in Thailand. Vorng (2017), among others, portrays Isan people and the lifestyle as 'Other', OUTSIDER.

Apart from Isan, the internal opposition that is associated with the PAST also associated with the notion of the NATURAL, signifying the condition of Thailand that is unknown to many. The area represents pristine natural conditions of the place that appears to be valued and appreciated for the purposes of tourism. The oppositions reflect Cohen's (1972) types of tourists in that for the INSTITUTIONALIZED, Thailand has something for the rich and

changes are made to accommodate these wealthier tourists. On the other hand, there is also something for the NONINSTITUTIONALIZED, e.g. the version of Thailand associated with the PAST and UNFAMILIARITY as it provides a sense of the pioneering spirit to explore the places that no one knows of. This area is to an extent, likened to that of having a coloniser explore a virgin land in the Orient as elaborated in a McLeod's (2012) stereotypes of Orientalism in 3.6.2. The transitional oppositions, therefore, describing the Thai areas in DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED could be perceived as part of Colonial discourse as discussed in 1.3.1.

The concept of DEVELOPMENT is divided into the physical (DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED) and financial development (RICH/ POOR). With a combination of PRESENT and NORMAL, the linguistic oppositions portray Thailand as a developed country in general, e.g. with a Western-style toilet and medical care. For financial development, the RICH is associated with NEW KNOWLEDGE. It appears to confirm the fact that Isan (impoverished part of Thailand) is considered 'genuine Thailand' (AUTHENTIC) because this is the aspect of Thailand that the readers are not familiar with. Thailand is also represented as having something for both the rich and the poor, but the authenticity of the country is associated with the POOR. On the other hand, the transitional oppositions also point out that the changes in Thailand are for the rich which suggests the changing identities of the country to become a more developed country.

The DEGENERACY represents the qualities of Thailand associated with GOOD/ BAD. Within the SAFE/ UNSAFE category, though the representation focuses mainly on ASSAILANT/ VICTIM, the linguistic features appear to portray Thailand as a safe country. The adverse situations appear to be a result of the risky behaviour of female tourists (VICTIM). The section also deals with the concept of GOOD WOMEN/ BAD WOMEN. For instance, in 37, Thailand is represented with open-mindedness when it comes to sexuality. However, it is more concerned with the notion of CONSERVATIVE.

In the representation of ASSAILANT/ VICTIM, Lonely Planet refers to the notion of NORMAL. In 3.6.1, the discussion of gender appropriated behaviour is related to social normality. Thailand is represented as relatively safe in Lonelyplanet, but through oppositions, it is the women that violate the gender stereotypes by being sexually active (flirting with men) and being drunk and solo. Lonely Planet, through the opposition of ACCEPTABLE/ UNACCEPTABLE, represents these behaviours as against Thai sexual norm which highlight the conservativeness of Thai culture. In 3.6.3 conservativeness is treated as an ideal quality of GOOD WOMEN in Thailand. Therefore, Lonelyplanet.com constructs a range of oppositions both between Thailand and the West and within Thailand itself.

## CHAPTER 6: OPPOSITIONS IN STICKMANBANGKOK.COM

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### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the oppositions that are identified and analysed on the Stickmanbangkok.com website, specifically from the website's *Travel in Thailand* pages. The contents tend to display certain similarities with the discourse related to tourism that is found in Lonelyplanet.com. Despite the apparent surface difference of the degree of formality between Lonely Planet as a corporate website with strict standards and guidelines , (as discussed in section 1.5.2 about the Thorn Tree incident) and Stickman Bangkok which is a privately owned website operated with a set of rules and regulations that are a lot more lax. Another significant difference between the two websites is that Lonelyplanet.com is a corporate website dedicated to tourism while Stickmanbangkok.com could be considered sex-oriented: the section about tourism could be equivalent to the Lonelyplanet.com in terms of content, but it should take into account the influence that the overall tone of the website might have on the representation of Thailand. The linguistic oppositions are categorised into the concepts of FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY.

### 6.2 FAMILIARITY

The section elaborates how Thailand is positioned as being different from travellers' home. Through linguistic oppositions, the relationship is associated with FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR, REAL/ UNREAL, and LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL. It also includes internal oppositions constructed within Thailand, aligned with INSIDER/ OUTSIDER.

## 6.2.1 External oppositions

### 6.2.1.1 FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR

The conceptual oppositions represent how linguistic oppositions are constructed to portray how Thailand is viewed as being different from the West.

1.	One of the world's most popular and delicious cuisines. Beautiful beaches and islands. <i>Friendly</i> , charming people. Warm weather all year round. Reasonable prices for most everything. Colourful, enchanting temples. An <i>exotic</i> culture preserved through the ages by a country that has <i>never</i> been colonised. Where is this? Thailand, of course!	STB, INT1
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Example 1 is taken from the Stickman' introduction to Thailand. The concept of the UNFAMILIAR is introduced early and on two levels of oppositions, both lexical and cultural. To start with, the semantic properties of the 'exotic' trigger an opposition between **Thailand** and **the West**. The other one is a cultural trigger, with emphasis on the fact that Thailand is 'a country that has never been colonised'. The Negated opposition, *never*, is also a comparator indicating the expectation that it has been colonised (since it is located in South East Asia). The readers could draw on the background knowledge that the colonisation in Southeast Asia was mostly carried out by colonisers from the West. Hence, the previous statement suggests that Thailand is free from Western influence, which could as a result make it even more unfamiliar to the readers (who supposedly are Westerners). Hence, the modifier 'exotic' and the fact that Thailand 'has never been colonised' could work together to establish a relationship between **Thailand** and **the West**, primarily as one that is unfamiliar to the other. Even though the term 'exotic' alone could construct an opposition with its semantic feature, in both Lonelyplanet.com and Stickmanbangkok.com, 'exotic' is mentioned in conjunction



with the term ‘friendly’, as discussed in Chapter 5. This form of pairing may seem less conventional in other contexts, but in the discourse related to tourism, the unconventional pairing may be a way to convey the message that though the country could be **exotic**, the people are **friendly** (FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR). This could lessen the concerns one may have when travelling to unfamiliar places. Another use of the word ‘exotic’ could be seen in the following example:

2.	Arguably the most <b>exotic</b> destination in South East Asia, Thailand offers travellers and holidaymakers a huge range of vacation possibilities.	STB, INT3
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In 2, two levels of opposition are constructed here to represent Thailand as the most unfamiliar place that Westerners could visit in comparison to other countries in South East Asia. The first level of opposition is created by an explicitly stated distinction between **South East Asia** and **the West** utilising the semantic trigger of ‘South East Asia’.

The other opposition is between **Thailand/ and other countries in South East Asia**. The opposition is constructed with the superlative, *the most exotic*. Even though the opposition is between Thailand and other countries in South East Asia, the outcome is that Thailand could be perceived as very strange by the West (even more so than other countries in South East Asia). The writer appears to construct two levels of oppositions to paint Thailand to be as unfamiliar as possible to the readers as possible. The opposition between Thailand and the West with the modifier ‘exotic’ which is related to the conceptual opposition of FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR is elaborated in Table 6.1.

FAMILIAR	UNFAMILIAR
Friendly	Exotic
(the West)	Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia	Thailand
(HOME)	(THAILAND)

**Table 6.1: Oppositions contributing to differences between Thailand and the West with a comparison to other countries in Southeast Asia**

The table is a summary of three oppositions that are associated with the FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR conceptual oppositions. The column on the left represents the opposites that seem to be more related to HOME. On the other hand, the terms particularised in the right column strongly suggests connections with the concept of foreignness, something that separates Thailand from the West.

To further this point, the conceptual distance between Thailand and the West seems to be constructed through both lexical and cultural oppositions. Thailand as a place is modified with the term ‘exotic’ and the use of the word ‘friendly’. This usage could stand for the friendliness of the people in Thailand which should associate the place with the FAMILIAR. The UNFAMILIAR is also portrayed by the reference to the cultural fact that Thailand has been free from the Western colonisation and that consequently as a result that Thailand should also be more exotic, and free from Western influence.

3.	<i>But despite</i> such huge numbers of international visitors, Thailand has not been unduly damaged by the ravages of mass tourism. It is <i>still</i> <u>quite possible to find a pristine stretch of beautiful white sand beach that you can have all to yourself.</u> Lazing away the days on a hammock under a palm tree on a mile long beach, <u>without anyone else in sight</u> , swaying in the breeze under a cloudless sky as the waves gently break against the soft white sand....is <u>an experience that can still be had.</u> Welcome to Thailand!	STB, INT 4
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The above example 3 could be contrasted with the given examples in the table, but it is the writer's opinion that Thailand as a whole is still considered safe from the damages caused by tourism. Concessive opposition plays a vital role in this section as it serves to challenge the assumption that Thailand may no longer have any mysterious places left due to its popularity as a destination for tourists. There are two uses of the concessive opposition to trigger an opposition between **what is known** and **unknown to the readers**. The first one is '*But despite*' which constructs an opposition between **the expectation** that 'such huge numbers of international visitors' could cause damage to Thailand and that **in reality** that there is little or no damage.

The concessive opposition, *still*, also constructs an opposition between **the condition of the beach in Thailand in the past and that it remains the same in the present**. 'To find a pristine stretch of beautiful white sand beach that you can have all to yourself... without anyone else in sight...', is a phrase that is associated with the PAST/ PRESENT dichotomy that though it may be unlikely, these places remain as beautiful as they are now compared with the past. In [Stickmanbangkok.com](http://Stickmanbangkok.com), the writer also observes the lifestyle forms of the Thai people which are expressed in forms of linguistic oppositions. Example 4 to 6 are mentioned together as they seem to capture views on Thailand that go beyond tourist attractions:

<p>4. <i>While</i> Thai people can appear to be very friendly and gracious when you first meet them, <i>be aware that the Thai smile does not always mean the same as the farang smile...</i> Thais don't just smile when they are happy - <b>the smile can show one of many emotions but for the uninitiated it can be hard to read.</b></p>	<p>Thai smile/Western smiles</p>	<p>STB, SP 30</p>
<p>5. Generally, Thai people like to be photographed and <i>don't be surprised to see them jump into your photograph, as opposed to move away when they see a camera!</i></p>	<p>Thais' sense of personal space/ Westerners' sense of personal space</p>	<p>STB, PI4</p>

<p>6. <i>It can be quite novel to watch the Thai family enjoy their day out at the beach ... The Thais will sit under the umbrellas all day for fear of <b>getting black skin, something that is looked down on in Thai society as being a marker for lower class citizens.</b></i></p>	<p>Thais' association of skin colour with social class/ Westerners' perceptions of skin colours</p>	<p>STB</p>
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In example 4 above, the concept of the UNFAMILIAR is expressed in three levels. The first is an opposition between ‘the writer’ and the ‘readers’, constructed with an engagement marker in the imperative form, ‘be aware that’ and to point out the manner in which the Thai people’s smile could be perceived as being difficult for Westerners to interpret. The writer then constructs an opposition about the Thai people ‘when you first meet them’ (UNFAMILIAR) and the real Thai people (when you get to know them) (FAMILIAR) constructed with the Concessive opposition, *while*. The opposition appears to be embodying both positive and negative qualities. In ‘Thai people can appear to be very friendly and gracious when you first meet them’ (UNFAMILIAR), though not directly lexicalised, the writer’s perception is from the viewpoint of an insider who points out that the Thais may not be as ‘friendly’ and ‘gracious’ when the readers get to know them (FAMILIAR). Lastly, the opposition is between **the Thai smile** and **the farang smile**, triggered by the Negated opposition, *not*, in ‘does not always mean the same as.’ Referring to the two previous oppositions, the Thai smile could also carry some negative connotations as it is difficult to comprehend by the uninhibited (UNFAMILIAR).

Example 5 also points out a reader/ writer relationship with an Engagement marker in Negated imperatives, ‘don’t be surprised’ to signify that the behaviour could be considered strange to the Westerners (UNFAMILIAR). The opposition that is constructed in this context is between **Thai people** and **Westerners** (readers/ writer). The following example is **to jump into your paragraph/ to move way when they see a camera**, triggered by Explicit opposition, *as opposed to*. The latter one should be an appropriate response to the Westerners since it could

be a violation of privacy to take photos of people without their permission. However, the Thais are represented as having different views on the notion of private and personal space.

In Example 6, the opposition is focuses on the association of skin colours with social classes. Stickman’s remark in ‘It can be quite novel’ could trigger an opposition between **the Thais’ view on darker skin tone that is treated as ‘a marker for lower class citizens’** and **the situation in the West** (unlexicalized) that might not be as prevalent and overt in the West. The distinctions between Thai and Western perceptions of skin colour could be associated with how Thailand could also be viewed as different (UNFAMILIAR). The following table summarises the triggers used in the construction of linguistic oppositions:

<b>Triggers</b>	<b>UNFAMILIAR</b>	<b>FAMILIAR</b>
<p>4. <i>while, be aware</i></p> <p><i>that, not always</i></p> <p><i>mean the same</i></p> <p><i>not..., but...</i></p>	<p><b>the Thai smile</b></p> <p>(the smile can show one of many emotions)</p>	<p><b>the farang smile</b></p> <p>(smile when they are happy)</p>
<p>5. <i>... don't be</i></p> <p><i>surprised</i></p> <p><i>.... as opposed to...</i></p>	<p><b>to see them jump into your photograph</b></p>	<p><b>move away when they see a camera!</b></p>
<p>6. <i>It can be quite</i></p> <p><i>nove lto watch the</i></p> <p><i>Thai family enjoy</i></p> <p><i>their day out at the</i></p> <p><i>beach</i></p>	<p><b>The Thais will sit under the umbrellas all day for fear of getting black skin, something that is looked down on in Thai society as being a marker for lowerclass citizens.</b></p>	<p>the Western way</p> <p>(unlexicalized)</p>

	<b>The Thais' ways</b>	<b>The Westerners' ways</b>

**Table 6.2: oppositions associated with FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR**

### 6.2.1.2 GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE

In this section, the focus revolves around the portrayal of Thailand as unfamiliar to the West in the cultural, reality, and temporal areas. Here, the linguistic analysis reveals aspects of Thailand that is already familiar to the Westerners. This form of opposition is underlined with a conceptual binary, NORMAL/ ABNORMAL:

7.	<u>It's widely known</u> that <i>more than a few men</i> come to Thailand, perhaps <b>not for the purpose of getting involved with Thai women</b> , <i>but ultimately they end up with a Thai lady at their hotel.</i>	STB, ACC6
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The mention of 'It's widely known' appears to point out what could be perceived as the shared or macro-level knowledge about the sex industry in Thailand. The concept of NORMAL could be applied to this situation when prostitution is so prevalent that it becomes something of an accepted norm in Thailand. In this example, the comparative opposition, *more than a few men*, triggers an opposition between **a group of men who want to 'get involved with Thai women'** and **those who do not**. However, with the Concessive opposition, *but*, the intention of those who want to avoid prostitution appears to be in vain as eventually 'they end up with a Thai lady at their hotel'. As a result, the opposition appears to point out the generalisation of the sex industry that it is so common that every man coming to Thailand engages the services of a prostitute. This point is further elaborated in example 8:

8.	It should be noted however that <b>a number of guesthouses and budget hotels in the Khao San Road area do not allow Thai nationals to stay!</b> I am not sure of the reasons for this but if you are travelling	STB ACC21
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	with a Thai, you need to be aware of this! Of course one of the reasons is that the guesthouses and hotels want <u>to discourage blokes from bringing hookers back to their room.</u>	
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This example refers to the area called Khao San, well-known as a hangout for Western backpackers. The focus is on how Thai people universally, despite their true purposes or station in life are not allowed to stay in these properties in order to ‘discourage blokes from bringing hookers back to their room’. The implementation of this type of hotel policy appears to indicate how prostitution has become a norm in Thailand where the perception has sunk to the level where all Thai women are considered as prostitutes. The normalcy of the relationship between Western men and prostitutes is also portrayed in the following example:

9	<b>All over Thailand</b> you find <i>Western men</i> chasing <i>Thai women</i> but it is a little different on <b>Samet</b> . There are a bunch of <i>handsome Thai boys</i> on the island who chase <i>Western females</i> . <b>Some of these Thai guys are just trying to bed a Western woman for the fun of it while others are in it for the money. Yep, you got it, the Western woman pays him!</b>	STB, KST 13
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To start with, the first opposition is between **all over Thailand** and **Samet** in which the latter is associated with ABNORMAL regarding the relationship between Westerners and Thai. The opposition, constructed with the Concessive opposition, *but*, and the Explicit opposition, *little different*, suggests that the normalcy in Thailand is when Thai women are with Western men. The Concessive opposition, *while*, also points out an opposition between doing something ‘for fun’ and ‘for the money’. With an Engagement marker, ‘*Yep, you got it, the Western woman pays him!*’ that follows, the writer appears to implicate that this form of prostitution is considered a less conventional one. As mentioned in the introduction of this

chapter, Stickmanbangkok.com seems to be a place for bargirls and sex business. Therefore, the discussion of the normality of sex business in 7-9 appears to be embedded with the attitude of the writer towards the business; that it is normal and prevalent in Thailand.

10.	Phuket provides them with <i>a tropical island paradise</i> , but also with the promise of all of the comforts of <i>home</i> .	PH10
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In example 10, the concept of REAL/ UNREAL is manifested through a linguistic binary, *a tropical island paradise/ home*. It is triggered by a Concessive opposition, *but*, through the means of the semantic contrast between paradise and home should be sufficient to trigger an oppositional sense. The use of paradise (UNREAL) appears to be for rhetorical purposes to express some form of perfection:

11.	<b>With a good camera and blue sky the beach can be made to look pretty</b> but when you're there, <b>you never really feel like you're in paradise</b> - which you do at some <b>other Thai beaches, such as those in Phuket or on Ko Samui</b> .	STB
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In 11, the opposition is between **to look pretty** (REAL) and **feel like you're in paradise** (UNREAL) triggered by the Concessive opposition, *but*, and the Negated opposition, *never*. The opposition appears to in comparison to suggest that the ultimate form of beauty should consist of an element of surrealism, e.g. elements of which are found in Phuket or Ko Samui. The use of 'paradise' in this manner is also evident in the following example:

12.	Ko Samui, <i>once</i> known as <b>an affordable destination</b> and <b>a backpacker's paradise</b> , is the second largest island in Thailand... <i>now</i> that Samui's identity <i>is slowly changing from</i> <b>backpacker hangout</b> to <b>another Asian beach paradise</b> , so too do <b>the wealthier tourists</b> arrive.	STB, KSI1
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In example 12, the temporal dichotomy PAST/ PRESENT is also expressed through a textual opposition, *once/ now* to portray Ko Samui in the past that was for backpackers (POOR) and at present which is for the wealthier tourists (RICH). Also, a transitional opposition between **a backpacker's paradise** and **another Asian Beach paradise** is constructed with the phrase *slowly changing from*. The focus here is that though the transitional opposition is constructed, the term 'paradise' is applied to both. Therefore, the 'paradise' in this context should be used beyond the surrealism sense, but more to express a form of perfection, as the place is perfect for the poor (PAST) and the rich (PRESENT). Table 4 elaborates the transitional oppositions associated with the use of 'paradise' and the PAST/ PRESENT conceptual binary.

### 6.2.1.3 REAL/ UNREAL and LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL

Similar to Lonelyplanet.com, the UNFAMILIAR is also expressed through linguistic oppositions constructed and based on the different degree of REALITY. For instance, in the following example, the writer constructs a linguistic opposition to highlight the beauty of Phuket:

13.	<p><b>Pros:</b> Not too far from Bangkok and relatively easy to get to. Beautiful beaches on a <i>paradise</i> island. <b>Low level of development –comparatively.</b></p> <p><b>Cons:</b> <b>Not a huge amount to do there–but some would consider that a bonus.</b> Accommodation is expensive for what you get. It can get busy during the high season and the beach can get over run.</p>	STB, KST25
14.	<p>The second day trip that is well worthwhile is over to the small <i>paradise</i> like island, <b>Phi Phi</b>. This is the island where every Thai girl's heart-throb Leo Di Caprio filmed the movie, "The Beach." <u>This island is stunningly beautiful and I reckon that 20 years ago, it would have been one of the most idyllic places on</u></p>	STB, PH21

	<u>the planet. Sadly, this is no longer the case and tourism has all but ruined it.</u>	
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**Table 6.3: Usage of ‘paradise’ in examples 13 and 14**

The evaluative value of the opposition in 13 is evident with the mention of *Pros/ Cons*. The paradise is mentioned within the *Pros* section as expected to indicate a positive quality of the place which is also modified with "low level of development – comparatively" (UNDEVELOPED). The application of DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED in this context appears to point out that the UNDEVELOPED appears to be more appreciated in this context. This is emphasised again in the *Con* section, ‘not a huge amount to do there’/ ‘some would consider that a bonus’ followed by the phrase ‘it can get busy ...and the beach can get over run’ citing the negative aspects of having too many people at the beach. Therefore, the qualities of "paradise" could be associated with the UNDEVELOPED indicating fewer tourists in the area.

In example 14, the writer also points out the adverse effects that tourism has on the natural resources of the tourist destination. The term ‘paradise’ is used to describe a small island, Phi Phi. The description of the island with an opposition, **This island is stunningly beautiful/ no longer the case and tourism has all but ruined it** is also associated with PAST/ PRESENT in which the PAST is associated with UNREAL version of the island, ‘one of the most idyllic places on the planet 20 years ago’. The term, ‘idyllic’ is almost synonymous to ‘paradise’ indicating that the place would have been much appreciated in the past.

On the other hand, in example 14, the Phi Phi at present carries a negative connotation as evident in the use of ‘sadly’, and the increased level of tourism is cited as a cause of this deterioration, ‘tourism has all but ruin it’. Within the conceptual binary, DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, tourism should be associated with DEVELOPED as the industry requires a well-designed and efficient infrastructure to accommodate tourists. This by-product of tourism is seen as having an adverse effect on the natural resources of the country as

mentioned in the previous example. Hence, similar to the previous example, the term ‘paradise’ should be related to the idea of the PAST and UNDEVELOPED.

## 6.2.2 Internal oppositions

### 6.2.2.1 INSIDER/ OUTSIDER: ISAN/THAILAND

To begin with, I use the term ‘Isan’, the Northeastern part of Thailand, to maintain consistency throughout the study even though Stickman refers to the area as ‘Isaan’. Both are correct and can be used interchangeably. The conceptual binary, FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR, can also be applied to the oppositions within the country. Isan appears to be treated as ‘Other’ within their own country. Similar to the contents in Lonelyplanet.com, Stickman also points out this particular aspect about Thailand in the form of linguistic oppositions related to the INSIDER/ OUTSIDER conceptual opposition:

15.	Should you mention to <b>any Thai friends</b> that you intend to travel into the Isaan region, <i>you'll sure get a smile, or even a comment or two</i> , for <b>many Thais from outside the region <u>have never been there</u></b> -and many simply wouldn't be able to comprehend why a <b>Westerner would want to go there for fun</b> . Unfortunately <b>the people of Isaan</b> <i>are looked down on by much of the Thai population</i> who often view them as no more than <b>poor farmers</b> .	STB, ISA5
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To begin with, the rest of Thailand is referred to as ‘any Thai friends’, ‘many Thais from outside the region’, and ‘much of the Thai population’ which appears to trigger an Us/ Them dichotomy between Isan and the rest of Thailand. The opposition is also highlighted in conjunction with the physical attributes and the remoteness of the distance in ‘never been there’ and ‘simply wouldn't be able to comprehend’ which appear to draw them away from Isan region due to their lack of interest in the area. It is in fact the Westerners who are comparatively more interested to go there for ‘fun’.

The financial status of the tourists also plays a role in the opposition between Isan and Thai people: “**the people of Isaan** *are looked down on by* **much of the Thai population**”. From this statement, Isan is not merely different, but also considered inferior to the rest of the Thais because they are ‘poor farmers’. The conceptual opposition of RICH/ POOR, that also underlines the distinction between the Isan people and other Thais, could be an indication that to the Thais, financial positions also determines one’s social status. The opposition could be further analysed based on the concept of food in example 16:

16.	The food in Isaan is known for being particularly spicy, and a lot of the dishes from the Isaan region also contain bla-ra, that is fermented fish sauce, something which <b>most Westerners and indeed most Thais not from the region</b> <i>do not really care for</i> .	STB, ISA18
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The food preferences also highlight an opposition between Isan and the rest of Thailand: **most Westerners and indeed most Thais not from the region** *do not really care for*, constructed with the Negated opposition, *not*. It should be noted that this exclusion of the Isan area and their general locality is made alongside the inclusion of the rest of the Thais and the Westerners: that they both do not like Isan food. As food is an essential part of ones’ identities, the elaboration of the Thais’ and Westerners’ disinterest in Isan food could be a way to treat them as ‘others’.

### 6.3 DEVELOPMENT

The notion of DEVELOPMENT implicates transitional changes that one is more advanced than the other. It also involves binary oppositions in which one is also perceived as being developed than the other.

### 6.3.1 External opposition

#### 6.3.1.1 DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED

Stickman constructs binary oppositions between Thailand and the West to point out the various levels of services available and the different types of accommodation available to tourists of differing means in Thailand. Therefore, this section is a combination of external and internal oppositions.

17.	Thailand is a wonderful country for a holiday but many people experience a problem of some sort or another and as often as not, it has to do with the expected level of service. <b>Service in Thailand is a little different to in the West and while it can be a lot better at times, sometimes things aren't handled as well as they could have been.</b> If you are staying in the best hotels and eating in the best restaurants then you should largely be dealing with well trained service staff who have a good understanding of what western tourists expect. <b>It's when things go wrong that some Westerners start to lose the plot a little.</b> As mentioned in the scams and problems section, remain cool, point out the issue and don't get too loud! After that you may need to hope for the best!	STB, MIS 18
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The first opposition in 17 is **service in Thailand/ in the West** triggered with the Explicit opposition, is *a little different to*. The trigger establishes an opposition between **services in Thailand** and **the West**. Then the Concessive opposition, *while*, constructs an opposition between **the times that services in Thailand are better** (than those in the West) and **time that they are not** (based on the Westerners' expectations as in 'not as well as they could have been'). The conceptual oppositions that arise in this context should be GOOD/ BAD

(services), but so far the oppositions show how services in Thailand and the West are not entirely different in terms of quality: they are 'a little different'.

Stickman later introduces the definition of good service, and there seems to exist a correlation between GOOD service and the Westerners' expectation in 'the best hotels', 'the best restaurants', 'well trained staff that have a good understanding of what western tourists expect'. In other words, Westerners expect the very best, so the services for the Westerners have to be exceptional as well. Since the writer only mentions the service element for the Westerners, the readers are left to fill in the gap as to how good the services for the Thais should be.

There is another opposition in the paragraph: 'It's *when things go wrong that **some Westerners start to lose the plot a little***'. The opposition that could be inferred from this sentence is the NORMAL/ ABNORMAL state of the Westerners. The NORMAL of the Westerners is associated with the "the BEST". The Transitional opposition, *start to lose the plot a little*, reveals the changing state of the Westerners from being NORMAL/ GOOD to ABNORMAL/ (LESS GOOD) 'when things go wrong'. It is also hard to think otherwise that when things do go wrong, is a direct result of Thai service that does not meet the expectation of the Westerners. Hence, the bad service from the Thais could result in the change of the Westerners' behaviour from being good to bad.

In addition, there is no mention of the cost of the service, but the concept of RICH/ POOR arises from the association of RICH with 'the best hotels', 'the best restaurants', and 'well trained service staff who have a good understanding of what western tourists expect'. It is not unnatural to surmise that the best service is usually the most expensive. Therefore, without stretching plausibility, it would seem that the Westerners are associated with being RICH and GOOD. On the other hand, the Thais are unavoidably linked with being POOR and responsible for BAD service.

18.	One of the great things about <b>accommodation in South-East Asia (with the exception of Singapore) is that you can get your own room at an affordable price.... Having said that, in the areas that are popular with backpackers, such accommodation can be had for a pittance, at less than 100 baht a bed. However, again, this is Asia and sometimes the quality of said establishment may be questionable.</b> You can therefore forget the idea of youth hostels that you may have had to suffer in the likes of Western Europe.	STB, ACC7
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The first part of example 18 is about the description of cheap accommodation in Europe based on Stickman's experience. The opposition is a conventional opposition **South East Asia/ Europe**, which is related to conceptual opposition of EAST/ WEST. To this point, both EAST/ WEST are mentioned within the CHEAP concept in CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE binary because Stickman talks about cheap accommodations in South- East Asia and Southern Europe. Furthermore, a Concessive opposition *however*, triggers an opposition between **establishment in Asia** and **(in the West)** which could be associated with conceptual opposition, GOOD/ BAD QUALITY in 'However, again, this is Asia and sometimes the quality of said establishment may be questionable'. Even though accommodations mentioned in this context both fall into the CHEAP category, within this concept, there is also a division between GOOD/ BAD QUALITY within which **the West** is still associated with the GOOD and **the East** to the BAD.

19.	Even in some of the islands <b>the quality of accommodation</b> is not always that good - and sometimes <b>the prices, while cheap by international standards, can be expensive by local Thai standards.</b> Places like KoSamet and Ko Chang are classic examples where, in my personal opinion,	STB, ACC5
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	accommodation prices really are higher than they should be.	
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Besides the conventional oppositions, **cheap/ expensive** and **international/ local**, there is an association between the price and the standard here: **cheap by international standards** and **expensive by local Thai standards** which are triggered by the Concessive opposition, *while*. The opposition reveals reverse judgment in term of quality because if Thais considered that these places are expensive, they should have a good level of service. However, it does not turn out as such as they are still considered ‘cheap’ by international tourists. Therefore, it still cannot satisfy Western customers: ‘the quality of the accommodation is not always that good’. As a result, Stickman sums up that contrary to traditional beliefs, accommodation prices cannot determine and give an indication of the level of service in Thailand because of the differences in perception of the RICH/ POOR among Westerners and Thais. Even though this example also seems to suggest that there is no connection between the price and the quality in this context, it also suggests that in general, the price is what people use as a marker to decide the quality of places.

<b>Service in the West</b> <b>(GOOD SERVICE)</b>	<b>Service in Thailand</b> <b>(BAD SERVICE)</b>
times that the service reaches the expectation of the Westerners  <b>(GOOD SERVICE)</b>	times that the service does not reach the expectation of the Westerners  <b>(BAD SERVICE)</b>
‘the best hotels,’ ‘ the best restaurants,’ ‘ well trained staff	.....  <b>(BAD SERVICE)</b>



who have a good understanding of what western tourists expect.’  (GOOD SERVICE)	
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**Table 6.4: services in Thailand associated with GOOD/ BAD conceptual opposition**

### 6.3.2 Internal opposition

Continuing on the subject of DEVELOPMENT, this section focuses on the internal oppositions constructed within Thailand to elaborate different degrees of development.

#### 6.3.2.1 DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED

Section 6.2.2.1 portrays the association of Isan and the concept of the OUTSIDER: the linguistic oppositions are between the rest of Thailand (including the West) and Isan making the region an outsider within its own country. However, the linguistic oppositions also point out that Isan, in fact, represents an authentic version of Thailand.

20.	Isaan is for those who <i>genuinely</i> want to taste a <u>traditional rural slice of Thailand</u> . I have taken a few people up there and <b>some have admitted to me that it was less than enthralling</b> . <i>But those who genuinely love Thailand and the Thai people and who really are interested to know what the real Thailand is like</i> , this is the place for you.	STB, ISA 17
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The writer mentions that there are two versions of Thailand distinguished by the varying degrees of authenticity: ‘what the real Thailand is like’ (AUTHENTIC)/ (an altered version of Thailand) (INAUTHENTIC). The two versions of Thailand also appeal to two types of tourists based on their level of interest in Thailand: ‘those who genuinely love Thailand and the Thai people ... what the real Thailand is like’/ (those who find Isaan) ‘less than enthralling’.

The AUTHENTICITY of Thailand is described as ‘a traditional rural slice of Thailand’ in which the semantic features of ‘**traditional rural**’ appear to point out that the ‘ingenuine’ version of Thailand could be ‘**modern urban**’, which seem to be associated with UNDEVELOPED and DEVELOPED accordingly. When the region is portrayed as ‘genuine’, it appears to implicate two types of tourists. ‘Those who genuinely love Thailand’ could be considered more sophisticated and well-rounded as they are interested in the essence of the country (INFORMED). The oppositional form implies that the other type of tourists that prefers a version of Thailand with more advanced facilities or mainstream attractions for tourists. With the reference of ‘genuine’, these tourists could be associated with the IGNORANT.

21.	<i>If you really want to get <b>a picture of traditional Isaan</b>, you need to get away from <b>the major centres of Korat, KhonKaen and Ubon which are slowly becoming Westernised with improved infrastructure, increasing numbers of Westerners visiting and even all of the Western fast food chains setting up there.</b></i>	STB, ISA10
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In 21, the writer emphasises the area of Thailand that is associated with the INAUTHENTIC. The area, ‘major centres of Korat, KhonKaen and Ubon’ is represented as a transitional opposition constructed with *slowly becoming Westernised* which associates the area with the PAST and UNDEVELOPED referring to the way they were in the past and PRESENT and DEVELOPED when they have been Westernised with ‘improved infrastructure...’. This is another example of the effects of tourism on the authenticity of a tourist destination, in contrary to ‘a picture of traditional Isaan’ (AUTHENTIC):

22.	What <b>Isaan</b> does offer to visitors to Thailand is a chance to get a glimpse at <i>a more traditional way of life</i> and it is my experience that <b>people who feel a true</b>	STB, ISA4
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	<b>affinity towards Thailand and the Thais thoroughly enjoy their time travelling throughout Isaan.</b>	
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The opposition between Isan and the rest of Thailand is constructed in the form of a Comparative opposition, *a more traditional way of life*. This example also reemphasises the type of tourists who are interested in Isan, a more authentic side of Thailand, also represented as being a more sophisticated type of tourist: ‘people who feel a true affinity towards Thailand and the Thais’. Therefore, Stickman points out through the use of linguistic oppositions that Isan, though treated as outsiders by the rest of the Thais, is considered a genuine version of Thailand, associated with the concepts of PAST, TRADITIONAL, and UNDEVELOPED, as opposed to the one represented with notions of the PRESENT, MODERN, and DEVELOPED supposedly constructed to accommodate tourism. Considering the degree of FAMILIARITY, Isan appears to be represented as being even more unfamiliar to the Westerners. The emphasis here is to point out that there could be various degree of Thainess in which the more authentic is actually represented with Isan region. The following example examines the influence of the West in the development of Thailand:

23.	<b>You don’t need to worry too much about squat toilets as <i>although</i> they are still popular in the countryside, just about anywhere where a Westerner goes has standard Western toilets.</b>	STB, ACC27
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To begin with, the Concessive opposition, *although*, points out the oppositions between the DEVELOPED and UNDEVELOPED area in Thailand. The notion of UNDEVELOPED is portrayed through the reference to ‘squat toilets’ as they represent an older form of toilets. Therefore, the countryside, where these types of toilets are still prevalent, is associated with being UNDEVELOPED while the area that is related to DEVELOPED is presented in association with the West in ‘anywhere where a Westerner goes has standard Western toilets’. The Engagement marker, *You*, at the beginning of the sentence points out that the ‘squat

toilets' could be inconvenient to them as in 'to worry much about squat toilets'. This concern is another implication of an opposition between Thailand and the West based on the concept of DEVELOPMENT.

The PAST/ PRESENT should be associated to each other here as well. The readers need to draw on some background knowledge that the squat toilet is a traditional kind of toilet widely used in the past in Thailand. The adverb, *still*, suggests their continuation in the countryside, but possibly already obsolete in the urban area or places that the Westerners frequent. Then the coming of the Westerners for the purposes of tourism should be viewed from the perspective of it being an influence to the development process in Thailand. Example 24 to 26 are mentioned together to elaborate the concept of DRAWBACK and BENEFIT that are related to different level of development in Thailand:

No	Context		Source
24.	There are <b>a few local routes in the provinces where air-conditioned buses routes just don't exist</b> so if you get off the beaten track you might find yourself on such a bus!	<i>But</i> it is <b>not that bad</b> and <b>there are a few benefits</b> . People using this type of bus are often <i>poorer folks who have never met a Westerner and they will be delighted to try and chat with you</i> so you have a great opportunity to meet and have conversations with <b>the nicest Thai people on these buses.</b>	STB, GT5
25.	<b>Public transport will get you everywhere</b> <i>but</i>	<i>Still, you can meet some real characters</i>	STB, ISA9

	<b>you may be forced to endure long waits for the bus to leave and slow trips on non air-con rural buses.</b>	<b>on such buses</b> and if you aren't in any hurry, this can be a real fun way to get around.	
26.		The locals are friendly and <i>while the sight of a farang is not completely unusual in Khon Kaen, the locals are still curious enough about us that they may well approach you and try to find out more about you.</i>	STB, ISA2 7
	<b>DRAWBACKS</b>	<b>BENEFITS</b>	

**Table 6.5: Western influence on developed areas and authenticity of Thailand in undeveloped areas**

The table represents evaluative values (BENEFIT/ DRAWBACKS) that are attached to the linguistic oppositions representing areas in Thailand differentiated by varying degrees of development. The linguistic oppositions elaborate the **exotic/ friendly**, represented as part of FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR conceptual opposition. Though Thailand could be considered exotic or unfamiliar to the Westerners, it is perceived as being welcoming due to the warmth and friendliness of the Thai people.

The first opposition in example 24 is related to the notion of DEVELOPMENT. To the Westerners, the lack of 'air-conditioned buses routes' should be allied with UNDEVELOPED and it should be 'unfamiliar' or 'exotic' to them. The oppositional form, constructed with the Concessive opposition, *but*, indicates the unexpected outcome of these difficulties that it is 'not that bad' and that 'there are a few benefits'. The concept of UNDEVELOPED is

associated with POOR when people are described as 'poorer' folks. The Comparative opposition of 'poorer' give an implication that the 'richer' is associated with a more developed area of the country (DEVELOPED). In this context, the rural area is associated with 'friendly' as in '**they will be delighted to try and chat with you**', and they are referred to as '**the nicest Thai people on these buses**'. The benefits of the UNDEVELOPED, POOR, and UNFAMILIAR are mentioned again in example 25.

First of all, the opposition is between **public transport everywhere** and **the non air-con rural buses**. This opposition, constructed in conjunction with the Concessive opposition, *but*, involves both the DEVELOPED with URBAN and UNDEVELOPED with RURAL oppositions. The opposition between the first and second sentence constructed with the Concessive opposition, *still*. In this context, what is supposed to be a drawback: 'to be forced to endure long waits for the bus', turns out to be beneficial because 'you can meet some real characters on such buses'. Hence, the physical endurance is made up by interaction with local people. Similar to the previous example, this should be another representation of 'exotic' (non air-con rural buses) and 'friendly' (some real characters on such buses). Example 24 also represents a similar form of linguistic oppositions in which the existence of foreigners as a symbol of the DEVELOPED is mentioned again in the following example.

The concessive opposition, *while*, is a very similar opposition with the oppositions found in example 26. The opposition **the sight of a farang is not completely unusual in KhonKaen/ the locals are still curious enough about us that they may well approach you and try to find out more about you** is associated with the DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED dichotomy. This example differs from the previous examples in that Stickman intends to say that KhonKaen is developed (DEVELOPED). However, the Concessive opposition suggests how people are 'still curious enough about us...' which seems to give rise to the expectation that the area is still to a certain degree not 'too developed' as people still share the characteristics of those living in rural areas. The statement presupposes that people in the

developed area should not be ‘curious’ about Westerners (because they saw or came into contact with a number of them in the area) and that they should be considered less friendly.

### 6.3.2.2 RICH/ POOR

The RICH/ POOR dichotomy is mentioned as part of the external oppositions between Thailand and the West. The textual oppositions are constructed to distinguish levels of proficiency of services. To Stickman, the places that are associated with the RICH are comparable to Western standards. This section focuses on the internal oppositions within Thailand. However, similar to Lonelyplanet.com, the internal oppositions about places in Thailand associated with the RICH/ POOR also distinguish the tourists based on their financial capabilities.

27.	Arguably the most exotic destination in South East Asia, Thailand offers travellers and holidaymakers a huge range of vacation possibilities. It doesn't matter <i>whether</i> you're <b>a budget traveller</b> wanting to explore a foreign land on a tight budget, <i>or</i> <b>a well-heeled traveller</b> who wants to be pampered and experience the very best, Thailand has something for you.	STB, INT3
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In example 27, the unconventional opposition is **a budget traveller/ a well-heeled traveller** constructed within the framework of a Binarized opposition, *whether X or Y*. The opposition is very apparent because of its clear opposite semantic properties. **A budget traveller** is consequently modified with ‘wanting to explore a foreign land on a tight budget’. The prepositional phrase ‘on a tight budget’ suggests that ‘a budget traveller’ does not have much money. Therefore, he is thought of and associated with being POOR.

Regardless of whether X or Y places **a budget traveller/ a well-heeled traveller** in an opposite position, ‘a well-heeled traveller’ would inevitably be associated with being RICH even though readers might not know the meaning of the phrase ‘well-heeled’ at all. The

conceptually canonical opposition RICH/ POOR shows that financial class is a rhetorical tool used to include the whole group of prospective tourists: ‘Thailand offers travellers and holidaymakers a huge range of vacation possibilities’ and ‘Thailand has something for you’ (example 2). What should also be focused here are the experiences that the rich and the poor might experience in Thailand.

A budget traveller is associated with the verb ‘to explore’ which suggests a process of learning about Thailand during the course of travel. On the other hand, the rich get to have ‘the very best’ in Thailand. Hence, it could be summed up that the RICH are able to avail themselves to something special, but that the POOR get to learn about Thailand. However, the following example seems to suggest that even the developed areas of Thailand, are still not good enough in comparison with the West:

28.	<p><i>I used to think of Khao San Road as a rat hole serving Western food and culture to those who seem oblivious to the fact that they had travelled half way around the world to <b>exotic Asia</b>, only to spend it amongst their Western peers in this <b>false hybrid environment</b>. But as I spent <b>more time at Khao San</b>, never as a <b>traveller mind you</b>, only ever as a <b>resident of Bangkok</b> going to the area for a night out, I <i>began to warm to it</i>. One can find fun out there and the vibe isn't bad once you know where to go.</i></p>	STB, BA21
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Example 28 begins with an opposition, exotic **Asia/ hybrid environment**, triggered by semantic trigger *exotic/ hybrid*. The former one, *exotic*, has an exclusive effect in that it highlights that Asia is different. The word, *hybrid*, could also indicate inclusion of people from a different cultural background in the area. In this example, the opposition is embedded with judgmental value based on the reference of a place ‘as a rat hole’, and description of people as ‘those who seem oblivious to the fact that ...’. The whole behaviour results in a situation that the writer considers as less than ideal. The writer therefore sums it up with the



noun phrase 'this false hybrid environment' which indicates that this place is not what it is supposed to be (a real hybrid environment). The main point of this paragraph is how the semantic trigger, *exotic/ hybrid, contributes* to the idea that Thailand is different from the West, allied with FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR.

The conceptual oppositions of EXPECTATION/ REALITY are also related to the concept of GOOD/ BAD. The EXPECTATION is represented with 'I used to think' which is the past tense, suggesting that the writer has changed his perception and that the opinion he used to hold is no longer subscribed to. The EXPECTATION of Khao San according to Stickman is one of 'a rat hole serving Western food and culture to those who seem oblivious to the fact that they had travelled half way around the world to exotic Asia, only to spend it amongst their Western peers in this false hybrid environment'. A rat hole refers to some type of cheap, unhygienic accommodation. Hence, it is associated with the concept CHEAP and POOR because the writer seems to insinuate that the place is specifically for the poor.

The other concepts that could be associated to the writer's opinion are IGNORANT/ INFORMED, EXPERIENCED/ INEXPERIENCED: these people in Khao San are considered ignorant based on Stickman's observation that they choose to spend their time with their kind despite travelling a long way to Thailand. The expectation in the past about Khao San is contrasted with the reality and triggered by Concessive opposition, *but*. The reality is composed of another pair of opposition constructed with the Negated opposition, *never*: **a traveller / a resident of Bangkok going to the area for a night out**. Being a resident means the person should have a sound knowledge of the place, more so than a traveller and Stickman, who goes on to say 'as I spend more time at Khao San' which indicates that he now draws on and concurrently comments on direct experience he has had of the place. Hence, the opposition associated with **a traveller/ a resident** could be allied with a conceptual opposition: INFORMED/ IGNORANT in the sense that a resident is very much informed about the place, but a traveller, though not completely ignorant, is deemed to be less knowledgeable about the place than a resident. Even though with this example, the Concessive

opposition, *but*, constructs an opposition, EXPECTATION/ REALITY, the textual opposition that arises within these two concepts do not seem to make much sense.

The EXPECTATION of Stickman is that this is the place with ignorant budget travellers: ‘a rat hole serving Western food and culture to those ... in this false hybrid environment’. On the other hand, the reality is learning about the place based on direct experience and beginning to like it: ‘I began to warm to it. One can find fun out there and the vibe isn't bad once you know where to go’. If the opposition is clear and direct, the opposition of ‘a rat hole serving Western food...’ could be the one about the realisation that it is not exactly ‘a rat hole’ and that the people there are not entirely ignorant. However, the reality from Stickman's point of view is the vibe or the feeling he gets when going there on a night out. He intimates that he is less concerned with the hygiene of the place and the level of knowledge the people there possess about Thailand.

29.	A lot of <b>Bangkok residents</b> , that is <b>Westerners</b> and <b>Thais</b> , like to go to Khao San Road for a night out as it is different to anywhere else in the city. Having said that, the area is <i>still</i> dominated by <b>budget travellers</b> . <u>What makes me laugh about this bunch is how they try to show off to all and sundry how much they have learnt about Thai culture by doing such dumb, improper and downright inappropriate things such as wai-ing every Thai service provider they deal with. You can see the Thais snicker to themselves when the intrepid farang makes a fool of himself!</u>	STB, BA22
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The first opposition relates to a comparison of a night out on Khao San Road and a night out anywhere else in the city is triggered by the Explicit opposition, is different to. This opposition shows that Khao San Road is so special that both Westerners and Thais (Bangkok residents) love to flock there. The conventional opposition, **Westerners/ Thais**, has inclusive function to express the popularity of the place. The use of opposition gives an implication that in

general places are either popular among Westerners or Thais. This could possibly be due to differences in personal tastes and financial status (the Westerners are believed to be richer in previous examples). However, the whole idea involves the conceptual oppositions between GOOD/ BAD.

To begin with, Khao San Road is allied with the GOOD because of its uniqueness (both Thais and Westerners like it). Then the concept of the BAD is introduced with: 'Having said that, the area is still dominated by budget travellers.' The adverb 'still' signifies that apart from the residents of Bangkok, both Westerners and Thais, including the affluent and budget travellers are all congregated there. Therefore, it from the example, we note that there is some contradiction between Bangkok residents in Khao San and budget travellers, and as Bangkok residents include both Westerners and Thais, it may be possible to assume that even Westerners are divided amongst themselves based on their financial means.

Stickman does not represent the budget travellers in a complimentary light: it can be seen from the example that these people are described as a joke: 'what makes me laugh about,' 'doing such dumb, improper and downright inappropriate things'. Their behaviour could be explained that they do not understand how to behave in Thailand. In other words, they are ignorant. Therefore, another conceptual opposition that could fit into this context is that of the INFORMED/ IGNORANT. As Stickman considers himself as one of the Bangkok residents, he should be associated with the INFORMED group of people because he has a clearer idea of the right things to do and appropriate places to visit in Thailand. On the other hand, the budget travellers are pigeon-holed into the category of being IGNORANT because they are seen as inept and not being as socially aware and savvy as Stickman portrays himself to be.

The example ends with Stickman mentioning that 'You can see the Thais snicker to themselves when the intrepid farang makes a fool of himself'. From this example, the budget travellers are made fun of by both Thais and the Westerners. If there is a hierarchy here, the budget travellers could be at the lowest rung because they are associated with POOR and IGNORANT. As a result, their existence in this area is associated with the BAD. On the other

hand, being at Khao San Road for the night out with Bangkok residents is associated with being GOOD. The association between GOOD/ BAD with the CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE may also be seen in the following example:

30.	<p><b>Khao San Road is worth a visit and its location is good, but it may not the best place to stay if you are not into the whole backpacker ghetto scene. While some visitors may describe the area as vibrant, others might just call it noisy!</b></p>	STB, BA29
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The whole unconventional opposition ‘Khao San Road is worth a visit and its location is good, but it may not the best place to stay if you are not into the whole backpacker ghetto scene’, may be summed up with the conceptual opposition between the concepts of GOOD/ BAD meaning it is good to visit Khao San, the concessive opposition, but, indicates that it is also concurrently bad because there is ‘the whole backpacker ghetto scene’ to contend with. The ‘whole backpacker ghetto scene’ signifies something cheap. The fact that Khao San area is considered BAD should not be merely because it is ‘cheap’, but because of its association of the CHEAP with the concepts of BAD, UNINTERESTING and IGNORANT as mentioned earlier in Stickman's depiction of the backpackers. The association of Khao San with the GOOD/ BAD dichotomy is summarised in the table below:

GOOD	BAD
Bangkok residents going to Khao San for a night out (INFORMED) + (RICH)	Dominated by budget travellers (POOR) + (IGNORANT)
Worth a visit and its location is good (RICH)	The whole backpacker ghetto scene (POOR)

**Table 6.6: relationship between Khao San and GOOD/ BAD conceptual opposition**

The concept of the INFORMED is related to the RICH in this context. However, a similar association is made in the representation of Isan in 6.3.2.1 that those who are interested in Isan (an area associated with POOR, but represent a ‘genuine’ version of Thailand, AUTHENTIC) is aligned with the INFORMED. All in all, this association with the concept of DEVELOPMENT, reveals the role of the concept in different parts of Thailand, which in turn, also has implications for the different types of tourists interested in Thailand as their destination of choice for tourism purposes.

#### **6.4 DEGENERACY**

The section discusses linguistic oppositions representing unpleasant situations or traits in Thailand, e.g., theft and food hygiene. Accurately, it represents the danger related to the conceptual binary of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN.

##### **6.4.1 External oppositions**

###### **6.4.1.1 SAFE /UNSAFE**

To expound further on this point, the notion of POVERTY appears to convey positive qualities as being associated with the genuine version of Thailand and the friendliness of the people in the area. The section is on the other hand, also represents the adverse representation of the POOR within the RICH/ POOR dichotomy.

31.	Please do not forget that <b>Thailand</b> is, compared to <b>most Western countries</b> , <i>far from wealthy</i> . Many Thais earn less than 10,000 baht per month. When <b>Thais see foreigners throwing around more in a day than they earn in a month</b> it can <i>create resentment and jealousy, and that may manifest itself into crime</i> .	STB, SP2
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In example 31, Thailand, in comparison with most other Western countries, are associated with unconventional oppositions based on the levels of income of their residents. In other words, most Western countries are considered as being rich financially, whilst Thailand is considered as being poor. Hence, these views are conformed to the conceptual opposition of being RICH/ POOR which is later associated with the concept of SAFE/ UNSAFE. This could possibly be explained with the act of foreigners ‘throwing around’ a certain amount of money in a day that is more than what Thais could make in a month: the Comparative opposition, more X than Y, also constructs another opposition between what Thais make in a month (less than 10,000 Baht per month) and what foreigners make in a month which forms a basis of comparison that underscores the RICH/ POOR dichotomy.

The transition opposition is from something safe to unsafe, by ‘throwing around...’to ‘create resentment and jealousy, and that may manifest itself into crime”: there is nothing wrong with spending the money, but in Thailand, this innocent act could lead to something dangerous. Since Stickman implies that people could become dangerous because they are poor, there is a relation that ties in with the concepts of POOR and UNSAFE. This point was reiterated in example 32:

32	<p><i>While</i> <b>crime</b> is not especially high in this part of the country, one needs to exercise the usual caution because there are <b>a lot of very poor people there</b> and many of these people live on no more than 1000 baht a month! <b>Flashing several thousand (or more) baht around may attract attention</b> from people that you would probably rather not meet.</p>	STB, ISA14
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Example 32 starts with the SAFE/ UNSAFE dichotomy in association with the Concessive opposition, ‘while’. The writer ironically mentions that the area is generally ‘safe’, and yet mentions that one has to be careful because ‘there are a lot of very poor people there’. With the RICH/ POOR conceptual opposition in mind, the mentioning of the poor leaves a gap for

readers to conclude that there are also rich people in the vicinity. Since the writer warns that people should be careful because of the poor who ‘live on no more than 1000 baht a month’, it could be summed up that poverty is associated with the concept of the UNSAFE.

On the other hand, the rich (who are not mentioned) could be associated with the safer part of the area in question. Thus, they are associated with the concept of SAFE. Once again, the POOR are associated with the UNSAFE and Stickman uses pretty much the same example of how the danger could manifest itself: ‘Flashing several thousand (or more) baht around may attract attention from people that you would probably rather not meet’. The act of ‘throwing around more in a day than they earn in a month’ and ‘Flashing several thousand (or more) baht around’ may not be considered as an act of sensible people. In a way it could be possible to relate the behaviour of people who are IGNORANT in conjunction with the concepts of being IGNORANT/ INFORMED.

33.	<p>One has to be careful with what they eat in Thailand. Let me say right off though that you should <i>not</i> be <b>any more concerned about the food that is sold on the street <i>than</i> the food sold in restaurants. Thai people eat food off the street every day and seldom <u>have any problems at all</u> - and so <b>most Westerners</b> can eat this food without problems too. <i>However</i> if the vendor looks like they have poor hygiene then move on to the next place to eat.</b></p>	STB, MIS11
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The first opposition in example 33 focuses on two types of dining experience: the food that is sold on the street and the food that is sold in the restaurant. They are both places that sell food but differentiated by the amount of money that is perceived as being invested in the business. It requires less money to sell food on the street than to have a restaurant. Therefore, it leads to the perception that food that is sold on the street is associated with the concept of being POOR and that the food sold in restaurants associated with the RICH. The warning at the beginning of the example reveals that one of the pairs does carry a negative connotation: ‘One

has to be careful with what they eat in Thailand’. This sentence triggers the SAFE/ UNSAFE dichotomy based on an opposition between these types of dining. However, Stickman further mentions that Thai people are safe when they eat on the street, so the concept of the POOR (eating on the street) should not directly be associated with UNSAFE in this context.

Hereafter, both types of restaurants fall into the SAFE concept because Stickman later mentions that the readers should be safe eating street food as well. ‘ Thai people eat food off the street every day and seldom have any problems at all - and so most Westerners can eat this food without problems too’. Nevertheless, the example, ‘However if the vendor looks like they have poor hygiene then move on to the next place to eat’ is contradictory to the earlier stance taken in the example as it is triggered by Concessive opposition, *However*. It should be noted that ‘the vendor’ is someone who sells food on the street. Hence, it is the POOR that are associated with the UNSAFE.

#### 6.4.2 Internal oppositions

##### 6.4.2.1 GOOD/BAD WOMEN

In Stickmanbangkok.com, in the discussion about tourism in Thailand in *Travel in Thailand*, a section is specifically devoted to women called *Women of the Night*. The representation of men and women in Lonelyplanet.com is associated with SAFE/ UNSAFE conceptual opposition in which the advice is for women to stay safe in Thailand. Similarly, the oppositions apparent in the Stickman website appear to centre around the SAFE/ UNSAFE binary as well, but the focus seems primarily to be for the safety of men.

34.	A final note needs to be said about <b>the infamous women of the night in Thailand</b> . If you think you may indulge with the ladies of the night, then you should remember one piece of advice, whatever you do: <b>NEVER fall in love with a bargirl</b> because if you do, you'll be in for a hell of a ride.	STB, SP56
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The DEGENERACY in 34 is elaborated with the concept of the opposition of ASSAILANT/ VICTIM giving credence to the UNSAFE situation. When represented in Stickmanbangkok.com, the binary is almost contrary to Lonelyplanet.com in that the warning is more for male travellers. The Engagement markers in the form of the pronoun *you* and the imperative NEVER indicates two types of experiences: **whatever you do/ indulge with the ladies of the night, never fall in love with a bargirl** which is allied with the SAFE/ UNSAFE conceptual opposition. The UNSAFE experience is called ‘a hell of a ride’. Within this opposition, men are likened to be the VICTIM with reference to the pronoun ‘you’. The ASSAILANT is represented by women being referred to as the ‘infamous women of the night’, ‘the ladies of the night’, and ‘a bargirl’, The consequence of being involved with the Thai women or being in for ‘a hell of a ride’ is elaborated in example 35:

35.	These <b>bargirls</b> , <i>or let's call them what they are</i> , <b>prostitutes</b> , will try to <b>treat men extremely well</b> in the interest of <b>separating the man from his hard-earned money</b> . <b>They will say and do everything they can to do that</b> <i>but</i> at the end of <b>the day they are after your money</b> .	STB, SP57
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In 35, the writer seems to construct an opposition between **bargirls** and **prostitutes** with the phrase ‘or let's call them what they are’. However, as they are eventually the same type of women, the differences appear to be due to a degree of politeness rather than the resultant notion that the two are of opposite semantic features. The concept of the SAFE/ UNSAFE is also related to the concept of ASSAILANT/ VICTIM. The danger of ‘these bargirls’ (ASSAILANT) is described with two pairs of oppositions, **try to treat men extremely well/ separating the man from his hard-earned money** and **say and do everything they can to do that/ at the end of the day they are after your money**. Both are triggered by *in the interest of* and *but* accordingly. The two sets of pairs represent the act of deceiving which

seems to be associated with the UNSAFE in the SAFE/ UNSAFE dichotomy. The VICTIM should be Western men referred to as ‘the man’ and Engagement marker, ‘your’.

36.	<p><i>Please also be aware that Thai women do not necessarily believe in <b>the concept of "free sex," something they see as an entirely Western concept.</b></i></p> <p><b>This means that if you meet a Thai woman in a bar, or a place where women of questionable reput hang out, and you later end up in your hotel room or elsewhere with her, she might actually expect payment from you. This is a bit of a problem if you do not know the environment well because asking a woman if she is a hooker or not is getting close to being the ultimate turn-off!</b></p>	STB, SP59
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Example 36 is an association of the SAFE/UNSAFE concept with the concept of the GOOD/ BAD WOMEN. The readers' engagement in the form of the imperative, ‘Please also be aware that’, could indicate that the situation is associated with the UNSAFE. However, the risk is concerned with possible confusion between the two types of Thai women. Therefore, the danger here is not a physical one, but is centred on offending Thai women.

According to the readers, there are two types of Thai women. These Thai women are differentiated on the grounds of their belief system. It hinges on whether that believe or do not believe in ‘free sex’. Since ‘free sex’ is described as being a Western concept, it triggers another form of opposition between Thailand and the West. In this context, believing in ‘free sex’ could be considered as a practice that is more closely associated with the West. As Stickman associates this type of women with hookers, it seems like prostitution could be associated with the West as well. Hence, with Stickman, the negative connotation seems to be associated with the West given that the attitude to ‘free sex’ is more acceptable in their context.

The confusion between the two types of Thai women seems to suggest a degree of normality with regards to prostitution in Thailand. In this particular example, it also reflects the evaluative values embedded within spaces. The ‘bad’ space in this context is referred to as ‘a bar, or a place where women of questionable repute hang out’. The ‘bad’ space also appears to determine the types of women it is associated with. Therefore, the ‘good’ women are mistaken for being ‘bad’ merely because they are also in this ‘bad’ space. The oppositions apparent between good and bad Thai women will be further elaborated in the section that focuses on internal oppositions.

To summarise, the relationship between the Thais and Westerners is approached from the concept of safety which is similar to the approach adopted in Lonelyplanet.com and elaborated further with the ASSAILANT/ VICTIM conceptual opposition. However, contrary to the previous chapter, the UNSAFE is not just about the physical assault, but also about falling in love, and then being deceived by Thai women as well as being confused with the two types of Thai women who have different notions regarding sex. The bad women, almost always deemed as prostitutes, appear to attract the main focus and the problems seem to stem from the abundance of these types of women in Thailand.

Moreover, the prevalence of sex industry also results in the changes in the physical space of the country. This occurs through the transferral of meanings related to the prevalent sex industries and the impact this prevalence causes by disrespecting spatial identities as the changes appear to be made throughout Thailand to accommodate the sex industry. Example 37 to 39 are mentioned together:

	<b>PAST</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	
37.	For a long time, Samui seemed largely exempt from the sex for sale scene. Sure, it did exist, but it was never really anything like was	This has since changed, and <b>Samui now has a flourishing bargirl scene.</b>	<b>STB, SKI10</b>

	available in other places.		
38.	Thai girls flock in from <b>the poorer parts of Thailand...</b>	...to meet <b>the wealthy Western men</b>	<b>STB, SKI10</b>
39.	now that <b>Samui's identity is slowly changing from a backpacker hangout</b>	<b>Another Asian beach paradise...</b> There is an ever-increasing demand for girls on the island, and the girls are going to Ko Samui in ever greater numbers. Chaweng Beach even has a couple of gogo bars.	<b>STB, SKI10</b>

**Table 6.7: examples portraying changes in Thailand based on prostitution**

The transitional oppositions, to a large extent, represent changes to Thailand as it attempts to accommodate the sex industry. Table 6.7 highlights the distinction between the condition of Samui in the **past** and at **present**. The focus is not so much on the stigma of the business, but on how the changes affect the identity of the cities. For example, Samui's identity morphing from being a place for low budget tourists (backpackers) to being 'another Asian beach paradise' for 'the Wealthy Western men' is a prime example of how this transition took place to keep up with ever changing attitudes to the sex industry. Similar to how the mentioning of the Vietnam war could trigger an image of Thailand as a hub for the sex industry, Samui, to an extent, is also perceived as a place with a thriving sex scene.

40.	It should be noted that <b>some hotels may not allow obvious women of the night into the establishment. In some hotels, prostitutes are barred from entering. Such places include some guesthouses and budget hotels, as well as some hotels which cater specifically to families or tour groups. In some hotels there is a "joiner fee" which means you have to pay a supplementary cost to allow a woman who is</b>	<b>STB, ACC6</b>
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	<p><b>obviously a prostitute</b> to spend the night with you. The fee could be anything from a few hundred baht to over a thousand. <b>In and around the areas known for naughty nightlife, virtually all of the hotels are "guest-friendly."</b> <b>The vast majority of hotels in Thailand allow prostitutes to stay overnight and it would be less than 1% which bar entry and only a small percentage which charge extra.</b></p>	
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To begin with, the discussion of bargirls could lead to several other forms of oppositions, but the major ones are those that encompass the notions of GOOD/ BAD. This notion concerning spaces in Thailand and the two types of women in Thailand represent the concepts of NARROW-MINDED and OPENMINDED conceptual oppositions. The GOOD/ BAD spaces are not dissimilar in that they are both forms of accommodation in Thailand, but they are differentiated by the degree of their acceptance and attitude towards prostitution in Thailand. The definition could also be interchangeable based on two different perspectives. The GOOD places could be the ones that do not accept prostitutes to stay in their place. This could possibly be a form of a moral judgment that people pronounce on the prostitutes. Hence, by not accepting prostitutes at their establishment, they could be trying to present these places as being GOOD. On the other hand, those establishments that allow prostitutes to ply their trade at their premises could possibly be referred to as establishments that adopt a level of open-mindedness.

According to [Stickmanbangkok.com](http://Stickmanbangkok.com), the majority of Thai entrepreneurs are more inclined to be associated with the notion that they are OPEN-MINDED. This adoption does bring about an inevitable result of getting categorised as a BAD space: ‘The vast majority of hotels in Thailand allow prostitutes to stay overnight. Hence, there are not many that are NARROW-MINDED and consider their places GOOD space. ‘It would be less than 1% which bar entry and only a small percentage which charge extra’. This form of space is elaborated at the

beginning where the writer says, ‘Such places include some guesthouses and budget hotels, as well as some hotels which cater specifically to families or tour groups.’

The guesthouses and budget hotels are quite general, but the specific type of accommodation here is meant for ‘families or tour groups.’ This could lead to another form of opposition where the locations are segregated as places specifically for ‘families of tour groups’ and the rest in the other types of accommodation. This idea will be elaborated in the later section. Discussing the way prostitutes are referred to, they are called ‘obvious women of the night’. The repetition of ‘obvious’ and ‘obviously’ could indicate that there are, on occasions, some ‘women of the night’ who are less obvious in their behaviour, although they are indeed prostitutes. The implication that arises from the repetition, ‘obvious’ is that prostitutes are allowed in these establishments. All in all, the acceptance for prostitutes should also be a testament to the COMMONNESS of prostitution in Thailand in that prostitution is so common that it should be an accepted norm. Example 41 similarly repeats this idea.

41.	Some of <b>the cheaper places</b> around about will rent out rooms short time for use by working girls and their customers. <i>Unless you are a prude, <b>there's no reason to let this bother you</b></i> and keep in mind that if you go somewhere that is busy and there seems to be no rooms available, just hunt for the local short time hotel which will be more than happy to rent you a room for however long you require.	STB, ACC28
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The comparative opposition *cheaper*, denotes an opposition between ‘the cheaper places’ which ‘will rent out rooms for a short period for the use of the working girls and their customers’. This triggers another pair of opposition where it could be surmised that the place that is more expensive is an establishment that does not allow prostitution. However, the GOOD/ BAD conceptual opposition seems to be less clear in this example when Stickman constructs another opposition with ‘Unless’ in ‘Unless you are a prude, there's no reason to let this bother you’. The concepts of NORMAL/ ABNORMAL seems to play a

role here by suggesting that those who do not accept prostitution appear to be associated with the ABNORMAL as they are the unusual ones in society.

## 6.5 Conclusion

Table 6.8 summarises conceptual oppositions used in the representation of Thailand in [Stickmanbangkok.com](http://Stickmanbangkok.com):

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Types of oppositions</b>	<b>Main conceptual oppositions</b>	<b>Associated conceptual oppositions</b>
1. FAMILIARITY	External oppositions	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	
		GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE	NORMAL/ ABNORMAL
		REAL/ UNREAL, LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, PAST/ PRESENT
	Internal oppositions: ISAN/ THAILAND	INSIDER/ OUTSIDER	RICH/ POOR
	Internal oppositions: KHAO SAN/ THE WEST	INSIDER/ OUTSIDER	EXPECTATION/ REALITY, GOOD/ BAD,

			CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE  IGNORANT/ INFORMED, EXPERIENCED/ INEXPERIENCED
2. DEVELOPMENT	External oppositions	RICH/ POOR	GOOD/ BAD SERVICE,  GOOD/ BAD QUALITY,  NORMAL/ ABNORMAL,  EAST/ WEST, CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE
	Internal oppositions	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED	AUTHENTIC/ INAUTHENTIC,  PAST/ PRESENT,  MODERN/ TRADITIONAL,  DRAWBACKS/ BENEFITS
3. DEGENERACY	External oppositions	SAFE/ UNSAFE	RICH/ POOR,  IGNORANT/ INFORMED



	Internal oppositions	GOOD/ BAD WOMEN	SAFE/ UNSAFE, ASSAILANT/ VICTIM, NARROW MINDED/ OPEN MINDED, NORMAL/ ABNORMAL

**Table 6.8: summary of conceptual oppositions used in representation of Thailand in Stickmanbangkok.com**

Like Lonelyplanet.com, the conformity to cultural oppositions reflects the consideration and deference ascribed to Thai culture. This approach further allows the website owner of Stickmanbangkok.com to give himself credit for being not only part of the Thai society but also being fully integrated. Stickman's representation of Thailand appears to engage in the Orientalist discourse (2003). His linguistic oppositions used in the representation of Thailand may be categorised regarding FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT and DEGENERACY. Following Urry's *Tourist Gaze* (2012), Stickman focuses on the exoticness of Thailand, citing frequently and fervently that Thailand has never been under the Western influence, as a reason to travel to Thailand. Within this section, Stickman's observation includes, for example, the subject of social class, e.g. an association of skin colour and social class. This aspect is widely discussed in 1.4. 2, with an emphasis on Isan as a region and their people. Similar to the discourse in Lonelyplanet.com, the external relationship between Thailand and the West is represented with the "exotic"/ "friendly" pairing to elaborate how Thailand could be perceived as very different from home, emphasised with reference to colonialism and comparison with

other Southeast Asian countries. This therefore propagates the notion that Thai people can make the experience of visiting a new country for the first time, less intimidating.

Prostitution also features as a major aspect of Thailand that the readers are expected to be familiar with. Apart from the direct mention of the phrase 'It's widely known', the prevalence of the profession is expressed through the generalisation of Thai women (that they are all prostitutes) leading to a situation where Thai women are prohibited to stay in hotels in Khao San Road (frequently visited by Westerners). There seems to be a certain form of expectation that it should always be Western men with Thai women, without any thought given to a reversal of circumstances where the Western woman is with a Thai man. In example 15, Engagement marker is used to indicate how Western women and Thai men could be perceived as a less conventional pair.

The element of surrealism (REAL/ UNREAL) is also used to represent the UNFAMILIAR with reference to the term 'paradise'. However, the function of the term appears to point to what should be considered as ideal feature of Thailand. The use of paradise to reference perfection seems to maintain the benefit of surrealism in highlight the unfamiliarity towards the country (Urry 2012). A place associated with the PAST and at the same time, UNDEVELOPED. Also within the FAMILIAR, internal oppositions are also associated with the representation of Isan as 'Other' within (OUTSIDER). Similar to how Thailand is portrayed as being exotic to the West, to the Thai people, the Isan, their food and their culture is unfamiliar to them. The relationship between the Thais and the Isan is not only exotic but also unequal due to the association of the Isan region with poverty (POOR).

Poverty has two unique facets in the case of Thailand. On the one hand, it is an authentic feature of the country. When elaborated with the notion of being UNDEVELOPED and boring to mainstream tourists, Stickman appears to reflect Cohen's types of tourists (1972) about INSTITUTIONALIZED and NONINSTITUTIONALIZED. This view is also maintained in Lonelyplanet.com. The latter type of tourist could indeed be interested in an area like Isan, which is associated with the notion of 'genuine Thailand'. On the other hand, Stickman

conforms to the discourse related to Orientalism when describing the country in relation to the West. He refers to the poor level of service, shabby accommodation and the prevalence of theft. The reference to accommodation and level of service represent the level of DEVELOPMENT in Thailand. He also suggests that if they are associated with the concepts of EXPENSIVE and GOOD, they could be on par with Western standards. Also, similar to the discourse found in Lonelyplanet.com, with reference to internal oppositions, the areas associated with the DEVELOPED are portrayed as being influenced by the West, with the usage of terms such as ‘slowly Westernised’, or ‘standard Western toilets’.

Isan is attached with the notion of UNDEVELOPED, and though they are portrayed with the OUTSIDER in the context of FAMILIARITY, it represents the authenticity of Thailand (AUTHENTIC). Stickman expresses this point directly in 18, by stating ‘those who genuinely love Thailand and the Thai people and who really are interested to know what the real Thailand is like’. The opposition, *exotic/ friendly*, is also indirectly alluded to by mentioning the drawbacks (difficult journey on local buses) and meeting friendly locals as benefits.

In this chapter, Khao San is represented as an area for Western budget travellers to have a night-out. The Westerners who visit Khao San are associated with the POOR and IGNORANT due to their lack of understanding of the Thai culture. , In example 41, the area is represented by making reference to the ‘whole backpacker ghetto scene’. Stickman portrays these Westerners with condescending tones and, to an extent, these Westerners are portrayed as outsiders due to their lack of Western qualities, namely being RICH and INFORMED (INTELLIGENT).

For the subject of DEGENERACY, Stickman draws on the concept of the UNSAFE and ties it in with being POOR. This seems to suggest that the poverty in Thailand, apart from representing the authenticity of the country, could also be a cause for dangerous situations in Thailand. He mentions theft and poor-quality food and also suggests that the cheaper places may have poorer hygiene. In terms of internal oppositions, the concept of the UNSAFE is associated with the conceptual oppositions of ASSAILANT/ VICTIM and GOOD/ BAD

WOMEN. In this chapter, the VICTIM represents the Western tourists who engage the services of a prostitute in Thailand. He cites dangerous situations that involve being deceived by bargirls or mistaking ordinary Thai women for bargirls. However, the negative connotation associated with prostitutes in this section is unclear when Stickman points out how sex workers are welcome in most hotels, except for those specifically for ‘families or tour groups.’ His mentioning that ‘unless you are a prude’ seems to point out that although the prostitutes appear to be deceptive; they seem to be accepted in Thai society, to a certain extent. His portrayal of the industry as a normal business seems to reflect the nature of the website in which sexual entertainments are promoted.

## **CHAPTER 7:**

### **OPPOSITIONS IN READERS' SUBMISSIONS:**

#### **WESTERN WRITERS**

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##### **7.1 Introduction**

The previous chapters investigate the linguistic oppositions that are constructed in the course of representing Thailand in discourse related to tourism. With an application exercise conducted utilising the same triggers; the chapter examines the use of linguistic oppositions in the representation of an interracial relationship between Thais and Westerners. Given the reputation attached to Thailand in relation to prostitution, it would be beneficial to explore the writers' personal views on this matter of prostitution, along with their opinions on other cultural oppositions, if any. The investigation is conducted on three submissions. Each appears to elaborate on the versions of 'Thainess' perceived that are based primarily on the writer's personal experiences with Thai people. Despite the differences in the writers' views about the Thai people, the writers construct linguistic oppositions that are categorised with the same three conceptual oppositions, FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY in the discourse related to tourism. The study also takes into consideration that even though the chapter focuses on the writers' points of view, the accounts of Thai people could be influenced by the sex-oriented nature of [Stickmanbangkok.com](http://Stickmanbangkok.com).

##### **7.2 FAMILIARITY**

In chapters 5 and 6, the distinctions that are apparent are between Thailand and home and are of significance in the discourse related to tourism. Linguistic oppositions are also distinctions constructed within the country. This section explores the application of this concept in the relationship between Thais and Westerners. The following examples are chosen to elaborate

on the oppositions between Thais and Westerners and falling under the concepts of the FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR, NORMAL/ ABNORMAL, and INSIDER/ OUTSIDER.

## 7.2.1 External oppositions

### 7.2.1.1 FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR

This section elaborates on an example that explicitly mentions the differences between Thais and Westerners.

1.	<p><b>My time and experiences in Thailand are generally positive, <i>but</i> I think it is important to recognize that there are <i>many significant distinctions between Thai and western culture, traditional and modern Thais, and Thai - farang perspectives that <u>create important differences important to long-term successful relationships.</u></i></b></p>	<p>WINMAT, W:SL20</p>
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Taken from *Why I Never Married a Thai*, the writer constructs two forms of linguistic oppositions. The first linguistic opposition is the Concessive opposition, *but*, that triggers an opposition in a sentence form, ‘My time ... generally positive’/ ‘... differences important to long-term successful relationships’. The writer maintains that regardless of the positive experiences that he has had in Thailand, it is fundamental (highlighted with the repetition of ‘significant’ and ‘important mentioned twice) that the distinctions between Thais and the Westerners are recognised and that they are also significant. In other words, the opposition comes about by the good and bad times experienced by the writer in Thailand which in turn, determines the awareness of these oppositions.

The second opposition is mentioned explicitly with the use of the Explicit opposition form, *many significant distinctions between X and Y*. The writer further emphasises that the oppositions could be in the form of external oppositions evidenced by phrases such as ‘Thai

and Western culture’, ‘Thai-farang perspectives’. He also mentions an internal opposition, evidenced with the usage of the phrase, ‘Traditional and modern Thais’. The example also discusses two aspects of oppositions. Firstly, that of being aware of the oppositions could determine the success in fostering and enhancing the relationship with the Thais and that this process include both aspects of a Thai-Western relationship and concurrently the aspect related to internal oppositions within Thailand, namely between the concepts of traditional/modern.

### 7.2.1.2 NORMAL/ ABNORMAL

The Thai-Western oppositions may be constructed implicitly. In *You Save My Marriage*, the writer refers to the distinctions based on the state of NORMALITY when he was in Thailand and when he is back home in the West:

2.	My wife and I went to BKK 3 days and then on to Phuket 4 days. This is <i>when MY marital problems began.</i>	YSMM 2
3.	When <b>our time was up</b> we <i>returned back</i> to <b>Scotland</b> , and to what I thought would be <b>normality in our lives, but my brain and heart were still in that bar in Phuket.</b>	YSMM 3
4.	<b>On my arrival at home</b> , it was just amazing, like I had been away for years; she was so pleased to see me home, and started crying and hugging me just making sure <b>I was back to my normal self.</b>	YSMM 16

From examples 2 to 4, Transitional oppositions are constructed to portray how the writer’s sense of normality is disrupted by his experiences in Thailand. In example 2, the verb *began* triggers a Transitional opposition between **not having marital problems** and **undergoing marital problems**. Phuket, as a place, is also used as a trigger of the abnormal condition the writer encounters beginning with his arrival to this place also marks the beginning of his problem. Therefore, the concept of NORMAL/ ABNORMAL could be applied in this

instance. Scotland (the West) is associated with the concept of NORMAL while Phuket (Thailand) is associated with the concept of ABNORMAL.

Likewise, in example 3 the verb, *returned back*, marks the physical transition from being in Thailand to Scotland. The association of Scotland with the concept of NORMAL is expressed with ‘what I thought would be normality in our lives’. The Concessive opposition, *but*, points out the contrary notion that his condition is still related to ABNORMAL by stating ‘my brain and heart were still in that bar in Phuket’.

In example 4, the Transitional opposition, triggered by the verb, *back to my normal self*, also points out the writer's physical transition in which he turns back to his normal state of mind (NORMAL). The concept of the ABNORMAL is represented through "like I had been away for years" which appears to describe how the writer seems to lose track of time. All in all, the writer seems to associate Scotland and Phuket with the concepts of NORMAL and ABNORMAL accordingly. The concepts of NORMAL/ ABNORMAL could be equivalent to the concepts of LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL as previously elaborated in the discourse related to tourism. It would almost seem that the writer feels that Thailand represents a place where things seem to work in illogical ways in comparison with Western logic.

### 7.2.1.3 INSIDER/ OUTSIDER

In *You Save My Marriage*, the concept of FAMILIARITY is represented with the conceptual opposition of the concepts of INSIDER/ OUTSIDER which involves exclusion of those who do not belong to the group. This scenario could also be referred to as the in-group/ out-group opposition.

5.	I hated what the family was doing to me; they were slowly freezing me out. <b>I began to understand the true nature of Thai people. A farang will always be a farang. We are tolerated, but very few ever make it into the inner circle of the ‘family.’</b> I grew up in <b>New England</b> . If you weren't <b>born into the community</b> , you	FJ10
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	were considered <b>an outsider</b> . <i>Thailand takes that notion to a perverse level.</i> Leaving my hamlet or Thailand looked like it was an event that was inevitable.	
6.	For me the most painful part of leaving my Thai family was that <b>they knowingly began to freeze me out of any meaningful social interaction within the family-even though I asked questions and tried to re-insert myself into the family...</b> As painful as it was, the situation was <u>a real eye opener to me.</u> <b>As a foreigner-A ‘Farang’: I had the status of a ‘Farang’ the family merely tolerated me because I was married to one of their members. When Jiraporn died, the gloves came off and they showed me what they really thought of me as a person and as a member of the family.</b>	FJ19
7.	She was disturbed that I considered Khae to be part of my family. Racism takes many forms, <b>Phyllis did not want Khae to be part of her family.</b> <i>That was Ok with me. Khae is MY family.</i>	FJ23

In example 5, the writer constructs a Transitional opposition between **when he is unfamiliar with the ‘true nature of Thai people’** (UNFAMILIAR) and **when he does** (FAMILIAR). To the writer, what he learns about the Thai people is associated with the concepts of the INSIDER/ OUTSIDER in **We are tolerated/very few ever make it into the inner circle of the ‘family’** constructed with Concessive opposition, *but*. The reference to ‘A farang will always be a farang’, indicates that the exclusion of the Westerners into the Thai familial circle in this instance appears to be merely because of their race.

The writer also constructs an opposition between **Thailand** and **New England** to support his explanation of the INSIDER/ OUTSIDER conceptual opposition by making reference to ‘If you weren’t **born into the community**, you were considered **an outsider**’. The reference to be born into ‘something’ is not very different from ‘A farang will always be a farang’ in that both indicate the exclusion of someone from the circle based on their biological background.

This opposition as well as the one about Thailand mentioned in the previous paragraph, therefore, has inclusive effects in situations related to being the INSIDER/ OUTSIDER, and this trait exists in both Thailand and the West. However, his mentioning of *Thailand takes that notion to a perverse level* triggering a form of gradable opposition by explicitly implying that the situation is worse in Thailand.

Likewise in example 6, the conceptual notion of the FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR is triggered with the phrase *a real eye opener* in that the writer is now familiar with the ‘true nature of Thai people’: the opposition is a transitional one between **the state of knowing about the Thais’ nature and not knowing**. The difference between this example and the previous one is that in this example, the inclusion is in the form of a marriage in which the writer feels like is part of the group (INSIDER), until his wife passes away, and the family sees him as the one who does not belong (OUTSIDER) by the writer stating that **‘As a foreigner-A “Farang”: I had the status of a “Farang”... what they really thought of me as a person and as a member of the family’**.

It should be noted that in this example, the writer constructs another opposition, **they knowingly began to freeze me out.../ ... tried to re-insert myself into the family**, constructed with the Concessive opposition, *even though* to point out his attempts to be part of the family (INSIDER). Yet, it would seem that his efforts are in vain. In examples 5 and 6, the emphasis is on how the Thais exclude the writer out of their circle (INSIDER/ OUTSIDER). Therefore, the Thais seem to be portrayed in a negative light in this context. In example 7, the writer points out a similar situation that occurs in the West where a Westerner (his sister-in-law, Phyllis) treats Khae (his Thai stepdaughter) as an outsider. His point is elaborated with an unconventional opposition in a sentence form by stating, **Phyllis did not want Khae to be part of her family/ Khae is MY family**, constructed with the semantic trigger of the pronoun, *her/ MY*, and Negated opposition, *not*.

The situation that is related to the INSIDER/ OUTSIDER conceptual opposition is repeated thrice in this submission. However, it is only when the Westerner, Phyllis, treats the Thai (Khae) as an outsider, that the writer treats this act as a form of racism.

#### 7.2.1.4 GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE

In the discourse related to tourism, Thailand is portrayed with exoticism which represents the unfamiliarity of the country. When expressed in the form of an opposition, the matters concerning prostitution appears to be elaborated as something that the Westerners are already familiar with. Hence, it is represented as GIVEN KNOWLEDGE in GIVEN/ NEW conceptual binaries. The reference to the prevalence of the sex industry in Thailand as part of GIVEN KNOWLEDGE is also prominent in this chapter.

8.	I first arrived in Thailand as a foreign exchange student, in the 1970s. <b>I can't remember all the reasons why I decided on Thailand (Bangkok region) as a place for a year of high school, but some factors were that it seemed to be <i>as out-of-the-way place as you could find in the world, that no one I knew was really familiar with the country (although my father had been stationed nearby during the Vietnam War), and that I like to explore. I had almost no knowledge of the country back then and I certainly didn't know anything about the Vietnam Era R&amp;R thing that was going on and for which the country wouldbecome infamous.</i></b>	WINMT, W:INT3
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The unfamiliarity of Thailand is pointed out with the phrases ‘as out-of-the-way place as you could find in the world’, ‘that no one I knew was really familiar with the country’, and ‘I had almost no knowledge of the country back then’ (UNFAMILIAR). With the syntactic trigger; Concessive opposition, *but* and *although*, and with the Labov’s comparator (1972), *not*, the writer constructs a series of oppositions between what fits into the notion of the

UNFAMILIAR (that he knows nothing about Thailand) and FAMILIAR (referring to the aspects about prostitution that are expected to be well-known already). The GIVEN KNOWLEDGE (FAMILIAR) is served as a foreground form of cultural knowledge that is considered infamous or as shared knowledge about Thailand. In this example, the writer refers to the Vietnam War when Thailand was chosen for R&R (Rest & Recreation) area for the American troops. This period is widely considered as the beginning of the proliferation of the legacy of Thailand being a hub for the sex industry. Though the writer points out that prostitution is something that the readers are likely to be familiar with, he seems to separate himself from this context by indicating that this piece of information was new to him at that time. In example 9, the writer makes a clear separation between his interest in the country and the aspects related to prostitution.

9.	Also note that <b>my familiarity with the country</b> is <i>NOT</i> based on the nightlife of the country... while I've met <b>many Thai women over the years, before 1988</b> I had talked to <b>less than 5 women who to my knowledge had ever worked in the sex industry.</b> <b>My introduction to Thailand then is definitely not from a tourist or sex enthusiast perspective.</b>	WINMT, W:INT6
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The Negation, *NOT*, is highlighted in the uppercase indicating the contrast between ‘My familiarity with the country’ and ‘(the expectation that it should be) based on the nightlife of the country’. The example is part of the previous example which elaborates the oppositions between the GIVEN KNOWLEDGE (about the prostitution started during the Vietnam War) and the NEW KNOWLEDGE (referring to his unfamiliarity of the country before or when he first moved to the country).

This example is primarily centred on his familiarity with the country. The opposition is constructed again to signify that he is not familiar with the aspects related to prostitution in the country. In other words, the opposition should be about **the expectation that men go to**

**Thailand for sex and the reality that the writer did not.** This point is repeated at the end of the example with the repeated use of the Negation, *not* in ‘**My introduction to Thailand then is definitely not from a tourist or sex enthusiast perspective**’. It could be drawn from the repetition of the GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE that the writer sees prostitution as something prevalent and as a significant part of Thailand. However, through a series of Negated opposition, his attempts to represent himself as not another sex tourist could be an indication that he views this business as something degrading.

The prevalence of the sex industry in Thailand is also highlighted with another form of opposition constructed with the Concessive opposition, *while*, that distinguishes between **ordinary Thai women and bargirls** in stating that ‘*while* I’ve met **many Thai women over the years, before 1988** I had talked to **less than 5 women who to my knowledge had ever worked in the sex industry**’. His mention of this industry, though it appears to be redundant in this instance, seems to be his way of supporting his claim that he is not involved in this particular area of business in the country. Taking into account the Grice’ Cooperative Principle (1975), the writer appears to be flouting the maxim of quantity by giving too much information. At the same time, his need to point out this information could emphasise the prevalence of the sex industry in Thailand which results in an over-generalisation that all Thai women work in the sex industry. In YSMM, the writer also points out the prevalence of the sex industry as part of the GIVEN KNOWLEDGE or what one is familiar with about the country.

10.	<b>I made the fatal mistake as so many farangs do; I fell for the patter of a bargirl</b> (and lets make no mistake <u>even my Mrs thought she was drop dead gorgeous</u> ).	YSMM2
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Example10 is the writer's justification for his participation in the sex business. The first attempt is by identifying his action with what others already do (GIVEN KNOWLEDGE). The mistake he made by falling for a bargirl is alluded to as being common and in-line with

what others also do. Considering the tense form, ‘as so many farangs do’ is mentioned in the present tense, but his own action is in the past tense, with words such as ‘made’ and ‘fell’. The use of the Simple Present is to indicate facts or actions that occur regularly. Therefore, the common element of the Westerners' involvement in the sex business could be seen through the choice of the writer’s tense form.

The writer adds a form of Personal aside (part of Engagement Marker) in the bracket to point out his wife’s opinion that ‘even my Mrs thought she was drop dead gorgeous’. The view of his wife could be treated as a form of validation in a way that it is, to an extent, justified and common to fall for beautiful women. In this context, the writer asserts that the bargirl is so beautiful that even his wife thinks she is beautiful. This seems like an attempt to validate his action.

The FAMILIAR appears to be associated with two forms of conceptual oppositions, one between GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE, in that his mistakes (NEW KNOWLEDGE) could be justified as something that other Westerners also commonly known to do (GIVEN KNOWLEDGE). It could therefore be part of the concept of the INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE because his individual act could be part of the collective form of behaviour pattern. Both conceptual oppositions could be considered as a relation between the act of one person at the micro-level (INDIVIDUAL) and the reference of this similar form of action at the macro-level (COLLECTIVE). The pattern of opposition is also mentioned in the following example:

11.	<b>You can only begin to imagine the talk on the plane, 4 blokes escaping to Thailand without the wives, what we <i>weren't</i> going to do.</b>	YSMM5
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In this example, Labov's Comparator (1972) in ‘what we weren't going to do’ also draws on his shared background knowledge between the writer and readers (represented with the pronoun ‘you’) about the prostitution in Thailand. The GIVEN KNOWLEDGE is in the form

of an expectation that the readers should know about what the '4 blokes escaping to Thailand without the wives' would do. The writer flouts the maxim of quantifying by not giving enough information. Instead of mentioning it directly, the writer leaves the readers to assume the missing information (about the prostitution in Thailand) because the readers are expected to have prior knowledge about it. Therefore, by omitting this piece of information, there is an implication of the prevalence of sex business in Thailand that the writer assumes that readers are in the know about these activities (FAMILIAR).

## **7.3 DEVELOPMENT**

### **7.3.1 External opposition**

In the discourse related to tourism, the conceptual binary, DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, reveals an association of the developed area of Thailand with Western influence. The undeveloped area, on the other hand, is represented as even unfamiliar to the Westerners, which at the same time, is related to the idea of AUTHENTICITY, making it more Thai than their developed counterpart.

In the representation of people in *the Readers' Submission*, one of the relationships between the Thais and Westerners is also based on the concept of DEVELOPMENT. The Thai-Western relationship could be summed up by the domain of CHILD/ ADULT in which Westerners take on the role of the active ones in the relationship whereas the Thais are portrayed as being dependent on Westerners. The DEPENDENCY could be categorised in the domain of intellectual development as in INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT, from the perspective of safety as in SAVIOUR/ VICTIM, and from a financial viewpoint as in RICH/ POOR.

### 7.3.1.1 CHILD/ ADULT: INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT

In this study, the CHILD/ ADULT relationship represents the role of Westerners as leaders in their relationship with Thai women. This section focuses on the notion of INTELLIGENCE, or intellectual development. To begin with, the writer of *For Jiraporn* represents himself in his submission as the one that triggers changes in his stepdaughter in the area of intellectual development:

12.	During the eight years <b>we</b> had been together, <i>we had formed a strong father-daughter relationship. She had taken on a Western mindset and was independent enough to make it on her own. She is very intelligent. She is able to hold her own when we discuss Philosophy and Human Nature issues...</i>	FJ15
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The Transitional opposition is in the form of verb phrases *had formed* (a strong father-daughter relationship) and *had taken on* (a Western mindset). The transition reveals that ‘a strong father-daughter relationship’ and ‘a Western mindset’ is something that Khae had acquired during her eight years with her step-father. The positive qualities that come from this transition are elaborated with: ‘... was independent enough to make it on her own. She is very intelligent. She is able to hold her own when we discuss Philosophy and Human Nature issues ...’. These qualities could be the definition of being INTELLIGENT and consequently, more aligned with ‘a Western mindset’. Since they are mentioned in an oppositional form, Khae before the transition (not influenced by the West) could inevitably be associated with the UNINTELLIGENT. To conclude, referring to example 2, Khae could biologically be associated with UNINTELLIGENT and then with the influence of the writer, a Westerner, she morphed into being INTELLIGENT. Example 4 also involves the INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT conceptual opposition realised through a transitional opposition:



13.	<b>At 20 years old, Khae</b> is more mature than <b>most 35 year old women I know</b> , <i>but</i> she is still 100% Thai and has the thought patterns and hormones of a 20 year old Thai girl, <i>even if</i> my time with her <i>has changed</i> her vantage point to <b>a western view</b> .	FJ 27
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In the second paragraph, the Comparative opposition, *more mature than*, constructs an opposition between **20 year old Khae** and **35 year old women** based on the level of maturity. The oppositions indicate that Khae is more mature than most girls her age. He contradicts his own statement with the Concessive opposition, *but*, in ‘but she is still 100% Thai’ which constructs an opposition in the form of mutual exclusivity indicating that she is still considered childish. This statement could be an implication that this characteristic is biological even when being modified with the phrase ‘has the thought patterns and hormones of a 20 year old Thai girl’.

Khae is represented with two forms of opposition, one indicating that Khae is more mature than her age when compared with the ‘35 year old woman’ and the other states that she is still considered immature because she is still a ‘Thai’ girl. The writer also points out another opposition constructed with the Concessive opposition, *even if*, and the Transitional opposition, *has changed*, in ‘even if my time with her has changed her vantage point to a western view’. The opposition could challenge the expectation that she is supposed to be smart because being with the writer, a Westerner, should transform her, a Thai, to be more mature. However, biologically she is still a Thai. Hence, she is still associated with the UNINTELLIGENT because she is ‘still 100 % Thai’ even though her time with the writer, a Westerner, should make her more developed intellectually (INTELLIGENT). The notion of intellectual development also prevails in the representation of Thai women in WINMT.

14.	<p>There is <u>a long held joke in U.S. society</u> about <b>the dumb blonde that has been around for so long</b> that <b>today</b> is a <b>standard form of saying</b> someone may <b>look nice</b>, <i>but</i> they are <b>stupid</b>. <b>To be blonde</b> is <b>to lack intellectual substance</b>. In a way, <b>the Thai are the blondes of Asia</b>. <b>The Thais are wonderful people and the women are pretty, sexy, and fun (suay, sexi, sanuk)</b>, <i>but</i> they are also <i>not</i> <b>an intellectual force...</b> in any way. You may <b>enjoy looking at them, and having fun with them</b>, <i>but</i> long run commitments to them soon become tiresome as there is <i>little</i> <b>intellectual curiosity that creates a long-term interest</b>; the longer I am with them the more I feel that I'm <b>taking care of a child</b>, <i>not</i> <b>dealing with someone who is supposed to be an adult</b>.</p>	<p>WINMT, W: IC2</p>
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Several oppositions are constructed in this paragraph, and they seem to work together to represent Thai women. The direct mention of ‘child’ and ‘adult’ in this example relates to the qualities of Thai women, expressed in oppositional forms, with the CHILD/ ADULT conceptual opposition.

To begin with, the East/ West dichotomy is mentioned (**the Thai are the blondes of Asia/ a long held joke in U.S. society about the dumb blonde**), but the opposition has an inclusive effect to indicate that the unconventional opposition, **beautiful/ stupid**, does exist in both cultures. This opposition appears to be normalised through many indications through the phrasing of ‘a long held joke’, ‘has been around for so long’, and ‘a standard form’. The writer then constructs two other unconventional oppositions with Concessive oppositions, *but*, and the Negated opposition, *not*, which triggers oppositions of mutually exclusive types:

<b>Beautiful</b>		<b>Stupid</b>
The Thais are wonderful people and <u>the women are pretty, sexy, and fun (suay, sexi, sanuk)</u>	<i>but,</i> <i>not</i>	an intellectual force... in any way
You may <u>enjoy looking at them, and having fun with them,</u>	<i>but</i>	long run commitments to them soon become tiresome as there is <i>little</i> intellectual curiosity that creates a long-term interest
<b>UNINTELLIGENT</b>		<b>INTELLIGENT</b>

**Table 7.1: linguistic oppositions associated with INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT**

From table 7.1, the writer describes Thai women for their beauty, considered their positive quality, but, in the form of opposition, they are also elaborated on with the mention of their lack of intelligence. Both oppositions are in sentence form, but they could both be aligned with the INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT conceptual opposition. As a result, being stupid is inevitably associated with being UNINTELLIGENT. Though the **beautiful/ stupid** is considered an unconventional opposition, it has been repeatedly used (even referred to as ‘standard form’ in this context) and could be considered a stereotype that beautiful women are generally stupid. Therefore, the pervasive use of a certain kind of unconventional opposition could make a certain non-canonical opposition appear more canonical. Moreover, the writer also reflects the concept of male gaze and sexual objectification. Considering his choice of verbs to describe Thai women, ‘enjoy looking at them and having fun with them,’ Thai women in this context are portrayed as objects to look at and to play with.

In the end, the writer summarises the characteristics of Thai women with the CHILD/ ADULT conceptual opposition; ‘the longer I am with them, the more I feel that I’m **taking care of a child, not dealing with someone who is supposed to be an adult**’. Similar to the DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED conceptual opposition that represents the relationship

between Thailand and the West in the URBAN/ RURAL category, is that the West represents or brings in development to Thailand. In this example, the Westerner is portrayed as an adult that is ‘taking care of a child’ (Thai women). The modality in ‘supposed to be an adult’ seems to express the expectation of the writer, a Westerner, Thai woman should act like an adult (implicating that Western women are more mature). Therefore, the relationship between Thais and Westerners is represented with the conventional opposition of a **child/ adult** respectively. The CHILD/ ADULT relationship is associated with the concept of INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT, in that, in general circumstances, adults are thought to be more intelligent than children.

In YSMM, being intelligent is portrayed through the representation of **a Western woman, the wife**, and **a Thai woman, a bargirl named Da**. Through verb choices and forms, the two women represent the concept of WEST/ THAILAND dichotomy which is then associated with the concept of INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT accordingly. In this context, the concept of INTELLIGENT is described with an ability to use the thinking process to solve problems. An example of this representation is listed in the following table which shows the process by which the wife and Da solve their problems in life.

<b>The Wife (WEST)</b>	<b>Da (THAILAND)</b>
15. my Mrs who <i>knows</i> me all too well just <i>knew</i> at times my thoughts were else where	She <i>portrayed so much sorry in her face</i> it only deepened my thoughts that I must <b>rescue poor little Da from this living hell she was trapped in</b> , but as quick as a flash she was gone.
YSMM3	YSMM6

<p>16. its so obvious she was <i>calculating</i> how far she <i>thought</i> I'd gone of the rails.</p>	<p>We sat in a cosy corner of the bar and we talked, <i>she again portrayed so much sorry in her for the life and how she was forced to do bar work</i>, she only did so she could look after her Mamma and Papa and knew no other way to make a living.</p>
<p>YSMM3</p>	<p>YSMM7</p>
<p>17. she <i>asked all the right questions at the right times</i></p>	<p>During the evening I spoke to Da, and again she was spewing out the stuff mentioned above, and <i>how she wanted me to help her get out of the bar life.</i></p>
<p>YSMM4</p>	<p>YSMM15</p>
<p>18. Of course my Mrs <i>knew</i> I was crying like a new born, and of coarse she <i>knew</i> why, but again all she <i>tried her hardest to convince me</i> Da was only a HOOKER</p>	<p>Well of coarse I heard what they said, but in my head Da was different "<i>I could save her from all the shit in her life and rescue her and make her life more meaningful.</i>"</p>
<p>YSMM4</p>	<p>YSMM4</p>
<p>19.</p>	<p>Again in the Land of Smiles we had a great time, but I felt worse inside now, how could I go back to <b>Scotland</b> and <i>leave this beautiful creature behind, I wanted to be her knight in Shining</i></p>

	<i>Amour and save her from the evils of bar work.</i>
	YSMM4

**Table 7.2: representation of how Western and Thai women solve their problems**

From table 7.2, we note that the verbs that are associated with these women are categorised into two groups. The writer's wife is described with verbs related to the thinking process, e.g., *calculating, asked all the right questions at the right times, tried her hardest to convince* and the repetition of *knows* and *knew*. On the other hand, Da is described with several emotive verbs in the phraseology, such as, *portrayed so much sorry in her face, she again described so much sorry in her, she wanted me to help her get out of the bar life*. The wife also takes action to save her marriage whereas Da is very passive as she asks for the writer to help her out of the bar life. Linguistically, the opposition between active and passive is also in their positions in the sentence. The wife is positioned in the subject position while Da is positioned as an object or in the passive form.

The representation of the Wife and Da in YSMM represents how the West is associated with the INTELLIGENT based on the representation of the wife. On the other hand, Da who represents THAILAND is portrayed as weak and passive. The lack of ability to solve her problems independently is associated with the UNINTELLIGENT in this context. Hence, the representation of these women from opposite sides of the world could give credence to the view that the writer, a Westerner, sees the West as INTELLIGENT and the Thais as UNINTELLIGENT. However, the Thai woman, Da, is a prostitute. Hence, she could be playing victim for money. If that is indeed the case, she may not be stupid after all since she knows how to exploit the situation to her advantage.

### 7.3.2 Internal oppositions

#### 7.3.2.1 CHILD/ ADULT: SAVIOUR/ VICTIM

This section focuses on the relationship between Thais and Westerners. It specifically focuses on how one is portrayed as being a saviour for the other (DEVELOPED and ADULT). The concept of INTELLIGENCE is an important part of this perception. The UNDEVELOPED in this context, refers to the situation where some lack the ability to save themselves from difficult situations (CHILD).

In table 7.3 below, the linguistic oppositions point out the distinctions between the wife, who is associated with the concept of the INTELLIGENT and Da with the UNINTELLIGENT. The linguistic representation of the wife could be used in this section because of her association with the concept of being seen as a SAVIOUR. From the table, it may be seen from the verb choice that the writer sees himself as a saviour in his relationship with the bargirl:

No	The writer as the SAVIOUR	The wife as the SAVIOUR
20.	Again in the Land of Smiles we had a great time, but I felt worse inside now, how could I go back to <b>Scotland</b> and <i>leave this beautiful creature behind, I wanted to be her knight in Shining Amour and save her from <u>the evils of bar work</u>.</i>	<b>She asked all the right questions at the right time</b> about, how much they earn, ...and they responded with all the facts that you write on your website.
	YSMM4	YSMM4
21.	“... <b>I could save her</b> from <u>all the shit in her life</u> and <b>rescue her and make her life more meaningful</b> ”.	Of course <b>my Mrs knew</b> I was crying like a new born, and of course <b>she knew</b> why, but again all <b>she tried her hardest to convince</b>

		me Da was only a <b>HOOKER</b> and there was a string of blokes giving her one night after night, ...
	YSMM4	YSMM4
22.	She portrayed so much sorry in her face it only deepened my thoughts that <b>I must rescue poor little Da from <u>this living hell</u> she was trapped in.</b>	... <i>she thought</i> I was going through a mid-life crisis and that <i>she said I should start to reflect over our married life...</i>
	YSMM6	YSMM3
23.		I just had that shadow of doubt in my head, that <b>little seed my wife had planted and the statements on your website</b> had somehow <i>started to grow in my head.</i>
		YSMM12
24.		All day long I thought of <b>how I had been so gullible</b> and <b>how brave my Mrs was being by helping me and trying to show me I was making a total C*nt of myself.</b>
		YSMM13
	<b>UNINTELLIGENT</b>	<b>INTELLIGENT</b>

**Table 7.3: association of INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT with SAVIOUR/ VICTIM**

To begin with, while the West is directly referred to as Scotland in 20, Thailand is described as a place of a problem as in ‘the Land of Smiles’ and ‘the evils of bar work’ in 20, ‘all the shit in her life’ in 21, and ‘this living hell’ in 22. Based on the concept of safety, Thailand seems to be described as a dangerous place (UNSAFE), and Scotland implied as (SAFE).



In the previous section, Thai women are described with unconventional opposition, beautiful/stupid which describes a stereotype about beautiful women who are stupid. In this example, with the repetition of the following verbs; 'I wanted **to be her Knight in Shining Armour and save her from the evils of bar work**'; '*save her ...rescue her and make her life more meaningful*,' and '**I must rescue poor little Da**', Thai women are depicted as weak, in danger, and needing to be rescued by Westerners. These verbs seem to help enforce the representation of Thais and Westerners with the concept of DEPENDENT/ INDEPENDENT focusing on the SAVIOUR/ VICTIM dichotomy in that the Thai women are portrayed as victims and the Westerners as those who save them (SAVIOUR).

However, table 7.3 shows that it is the wife that is trying to save the husband. While the writer's means of saving could be considered more interventionist, by being 'her Knight in Shining Armour', the wife's way appears to be more intellectual, as evidenced in phrases such as 'she tries her hardest to convince me', and 'trying to show me'. The wife is compared to Stickman, the owner of the website, who is treated as the wise guru of Thailand. The writer further states that his wife 'asked all the right questions ...responded with all the facts that you write on your website' and 'the statements on your websites'. As a result, in this context, the wife is represented as the true hero (SAVIOUR).

The husband on the other hand, takes on the role of the victim (VICTIM). Not only is he deceived by the bargirl, he seems to have made himself look like a fool in light of linguistic markers used to describe himself. These phrases include 'crying like a newborn', 'been so gullible' and 'making a total C\*nt of myself'. The gender role appears to be shifted in this context where the writer, a male, is portrayed as emotional and irrational. The wife, on the other hand is a rational problem solver. The writer describes himself at the beginning that he is not 'normal' as mentioned earlier in the first section where he refers to Scotland as 'normality' in his life and Thailand is where 'MY marital problem began'. In the end however, the writer points out with the transitional opposition that he turns back to his normal self. This is when the wife appears to resume her gender role as an emotional one when she cries. '**On**

**my arrival at home**, ... she was so pleased to see me home, and started crying and hugging me just making sure **I was back to my normal self**' (YSMM13). Therefore, the gender stereotypes that men are rational, and women are emotional could to an extent, be applied in this context including the association of Thailand with abnormality.

### 7.3.2.2 CHILD/ ADULT: INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT and RICH/ POOR

In discourse related to tourism, the activities that Thailand has to offer are also determined by the financial standing of the tourists. For instance, places for the rich are considered more developed than the areas available for recreational purposes for the poor. In the representation of people however, the Westerners in the Readers' Submissions do not always see the financial status and educational level as a sign of development in Thailand. In other words, Thai women are all the same regardless of their educational levels:

25.	<p><i>How many times do you say no to your gal about something she wants and then shortly afterward are asked the same thing again? How many times does she have to ask before you give in? Does this seem childish? It is not just <b>poor, uneducated country girls</b> who do this, as my experience with <b>middle-class gals</b> is similar. Apparently, <b>the man is supposed to give in, and she is supposed to be able to get her guy to do things her way</b>. If not she will pout, sulk, won't talk and <i>of course</i>, <b>no sex</b>. Sometimes it seems like <b>everything with a Thai woman requires a great deal of negotiation</b>, <i>although</i> if <b>your wife is relatively 'educated' and can appreciate western style logic</b> then it is <i>much easier to deal with these things</i>. I would be happy to try and learn <b>her Thai system of logic</b> and use that, <i>but</i> I have yet to meet a Thai who can explain their system of logic to me in a way I can understand as <b>a philosophy that seeks consistent reliable outcomes</b>.</i></p>	WINMT: W:AC3
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In WINMT, the writer establishes a sense of community at the beginning of the paragraph with three rhetorical questions that are related to problems about the relationship with Thai women. The questions and the use of the pronoun 'you' are part of Engagement marker that the writer uses to form a rapport with a Western community, based on the shared knowledge that they might have had about relationships with Thai women.

The second pair of opposition is **poor, uneducated country girls/ middle-class gals**, triggered by the semantic properties of **poor/ middle- class**. These opposite qualities differentiate them, but the oppositions have an inclusive effect that these two types of women are not exactly opposed because of their similar behavioural patterns. The opposition in itself is embedded in another form of opposition dealing with **expectation** and **reality**, namely the **expectation that only uneducated country girls have this kind of behaviours** and the **reality that all women are actually the same**. This could imply a form of generalisation that social class plays a role in women's actions and that being poor is more challenging.

This point is elaborated with another unconventional opposition in a sentence form, that **the man is supposed to give in, and she is supposed to be able to get her guy to do things her way**. The opposition is triggered by a conventional opposition **man/ she** and the parallelism which constructs an opposition between **to give in** and **to do things her ways**. This opposition between **man/ woman** could be associated with MATURE/ IMMATURE conceptual opposition with a negative connotation of women because she is selfish in the relationship, which is more likely to be a characteristic of a child.

The next opposition is another Engagement marker that reveals a common expectation that could be shared within the Western community that Thai women use the withholding of sex as a weapon as seen in '*of course, no sex*' as 'of course' could signify something obvious and already known to readers. Nonetheless, triggered by the Concessive opposition, *although*, and comparative opposition, *much easier to*, the writer then constructs another opposition between **a type of Thai women that 'requires a great deal of negotiation'** and **another type of Thai women who are relatively 'educated' and can appreciate the Western style of logic**. The

latter ones is associated with the concepts of MATURE or INTELLIGENT and the former with IMMATURE and UNINTELLIGENT. These two types of women have differing educational levels and ability to understand the Western style of logic.

The last opposition is concerned with the EAST/ WEST dichotomy. The unconventional opposition **her Thai system of logic/ a philosophy that seeks consistent, reliable outcomes** triggered by the Concessive opposition, *but*, could be associated with THAI/ WESTERN logic. To the writer, the education received in Thailand does not contribute to the Thai women's development unless it is a Western education. The following example is taken from *For Jiraporn* in which the writer constructs oppositions similar to the ones examined in this example.

26.	<p><b>In Stickman's reader submissions</b> there are many references to <b>'face' and 'family honor'</b> and that the best social level to marry into is <b>the 'middle class.'</b> <i>It does not matter</i> if you marry <b>a poor Thai girl or a Rich Thai Princess.</b> The end result is that you will always be regarded as a 'Farang' no <b>matter</b> the family dynamic or level of social hierarchy. Some families will just barely tolerate you after their daughter has died, some will get hostile and try to force you out of the family, some will even get violent to get their way. This may be <b>an overly broad generalization,</b> <i>but</i> it is mostly true from my experiences and observations. (FJ)</p>	FJ19
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The focus of the example is how financial advantage and being in a higher social class (implying higher education), are not perceived as a form of development. To the writer, the opposition, **a poor Thai girl/ a Rich Thai Princess**, constructed with semantic properties, poor/ rich, appears to have an inclusive effect that Thai women are all the same regardless of their financial status and educational level. He points out that his opinion is taken from firsthand experiences. When mentioned in the oppositional form, **an overly broad generalization/ my experiences and observations**, he justifies his point by relying on his

own experiences. He also mentions Stickman as a voice of authority, that there is a distinction between 'the middle class' and other classes in determining marital success. To Stickman, the opposition is in an exclusive form, while the writer sees all Thai women as the same, no matter which class they belong to.

## 7.4 DEGENERACY

The previous section focuses on the linguistic oppositions that point out the notion of DEVELOPMENT that underlines the distinctions between Thailand and the West. The emphasis of this section is on the linguistic oppositions that represent the negative aspects of Thai characteristics in the context of a Thai-Western relationship.

### 7.4.1 INTERNAL OPPOSITION

#### 7.4.1.1 GOOD/ BAD: THAILAND/ PROSTITUTION

The prevalence of the sex industry in Thailand is the focus of the GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE. The subject of prostitution is represented as shared knowledge within the Western community. The notion of DEGENERACY elaborates the detrimental effects of the business on society as a whole. The following example taken from *You Save My Marriage* is a good example for the section as it represents the oppositions between the positive and negative aspects of Thailand.

27.	Well all I can tell you is, Thailand is like a <b>decease</b> , when it gets you it gets you <b>bad</b> it's like the <b>Devil</b> <i>but</i> also like an <b>Angel</b> and make no mistakes <b>if screws up your senses, it fucks up your brain and it nearly fucked up my marriage</b> . I am going back to Bangkok in October this year on a <b>genuine business jolly</b> , and <b>this time I am returning with the right aspect on life over there, and make no mistakes this</b>	YSMM17
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	<b>time I will enjoy Thailand for what it is, and no Bar Girl will ruin it for me ever again.</b>	
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The example is considered part of the DEGENERACY because of the linguistic oppositions underscored with the GOOD/ BAD conceptual opposition. In this context, this conceptual opposition is associated with the unconventional oppositions between Thailand and bargirls. The conceptual binary, GOOD/ BAD, is first elaborated with a conventional opposition, Devil/ Angel. The Devil or the negative aspects of Thailand (BAD) is represented with ‘a decease (disease)’, and ‘bad’, and is pointed out by the writer with ‘make no mistakes **if screws up your senses, it fucks up your brain and it nearly fucked up my marriage**’. This negative version of Thailand refers to his firsthand experience in Thailand with Da, the bargirl. The writer sees prostitution as a source of degeneracy in Thailand.

On the other hand, the ‘Angel’ or positive side of Thailand is described as ‘this time I am returning with the right aspect on life over there’. This positive version of Thailand (GOOD) is distinctively mentioned in oppositional form, **this time I will enjoy Thailand for what it is/ no Bar Girl will ruin it for me ever again**, constructed with the Negated opposition, *no*. In this submission, the writer sees bargirls as a mutually exclusive internal opposition within Thailand as pointed out by the Devil/ Angel dichotomy. In WWTAM, the writer also discusses the issues about bargirls, however, the writer constructs oppositions in complementary form to represent Thailand and the West.

28.	One of the things I enjoy about Thailand is how <i>different the culture</i> is from <b>my own</b> , and how this forces me to reflect on and reconsider my beliefs and how they came about. <b>One of the many things that I only began to ponder once I came to Thailand and had learned more about Southeast Asian and especially Thai culture</b> , was the question “what is a prostitute”? There are <b>plenty of gold diggers in the U.S., but the Thai</b>	WINMAT, W:SL12
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	<p><b>girlfriend</b> <i>takes this idea to a different level</i> that brings about some curious questions that I can only answer for myself. <b>Often there is NOT any easy or clear differentiation between a girlfriend and a prostitute</b> &lt;Classic sentence <b>this, SO TRUE - Stick</b>&gt;. I love the way <b>Thai culture</b> forces us <b>westerners to reconsider all the values that we grew up thinking were universal. Thai and Chinese culture</b> seems <i>to be the most contrary cultures to NW European traditions</i> that I have found in the world, which makes these places fascinating to me.</p>	
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The writer repeats the fact that the oppositions between Thai and Western cultures appear to be on cultural levels. These oppositions are described in the table below:

<b>Thai Culture</b>	<b>TRIGGERS</b>	<b>Western culture</b>
The Thai culture	<i>how different</i>	My own
Thai culture	forces us westerners to reconsider	all the values that we grew up thinking were universal.
Thai and Chinese culture	<i>seem to be the most contrary cultures to</i>	NW European traditions

**Table 7.4: oppositions between Thai and Western cultures in WINMT**

In table 7.4, the writer repeats the idea that Thai and Western cultures are dramatically opposed. The external oppositions prepare the readers to the main opposition about Thai women and bargirls. The question ‘What is a prostitute?’ appears to implicate that the term ‘prostitute’ should carry different semantic features in Thailand. Then the writer constructs a gradable opposition between ‘**gold diggers in the U.S.**’ and ‘**Thai girlfriends**’ with the Concessive opposition, *but*, and the Comparative opposition, *take this idea to a different level*,

which indicates gradable oppositions that Thai girlfriends and gold diggers are opposed, but only to some degree: they both are considered bad women.

The Thai girlfriend is mentioned in an inclusive opposition form with a prostitute, constructed with the Negated and Explicit opposition, *NOT any easy or clear differentiation between*. The inclusion of Thai girlfriends with prostitutes (generally considered bad women) is an implication that Thai women are bad as well. Therefore, the distinctions between Thai and Western cultures in this example relates to the representation of women: the bad ones include Thai girlfriends, prostitutes, and (Western gold diggers). What determines these women as 'bad women' could be on the monetary values that they place on love and/or sex. Therefore, good women in this context refer to Western girlfriends who only care about true love. The unconventional, but familiar opposition that determines the qualities of women could be the one between **money** and **true love**. This claim is supported by the web owner Stickman, in the form of personal aside '<Classic sentence this, SO TRUE - Stick>'. His support indicated with 'classic sentence' could be an indication of the repetitive behavioural patterns of Thai girlfriends that are comparable to prostitutes. Sex is also a consideration with determining GOOD/ BAD women but in a different manner.

Linguistic oppositions show that to the Westerners, Thailand is perceived as an exotic country, but that it is a country with flourishing bar scenes that Westerners appear to be more than just familiar with. Considering that prostitution is a well-known aspect of the country, Thai women are still portrayed as being conservative. In *WINMAT*, one of the main distinctions between Thais and Westerners is about their views on sexuality described in the following table:



No.	Thais' view on sex	Westerners' view on sex
29.	<p>Unfortunately, once most women are married and certainly after they have children, the amount of sex diminishes and by the time the kids are in their teens or the wife is in her 40s, Thai women tend to see sexual relations as either demeaning or at least a very, very low priority.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WINMT, WSL6</p>	(There is no age limit on sex.)
30.	<p><b>Thai female friends (<i>not just my girlfriends and not bar girls</i>)</b> have stated this position to me on more than one occasion. Once <b>the kids</b> are capable of supporting their mother there is <i>no reason for them to keep having sex</i>. (After all, at a basic level they don't really need anything else from <b>their husbands</b>).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WINMT, W:SL6</p>	(sex is for pleasure, not just to reproduction or financial purposes)
31.	<p>I think one reason for this view of sexual activity for older females is related to <u>the Hindu-Buddhist tradition</u> that nurtures the idea that toward the end of life one should seek <b>spiritual</b>, otherworldly, goals that don't relate to <b>the yearnings of the flesh</b>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WINMT, W:SL7</p>	(Sex is a worldly thing.)
32.	<p><i>Almost counter to contemporary western culture, Thais tend to view sex among older people as either shocking or deviant, and in either case</i></p>	(Sex is a natural thing.)

	<u>something that no decent woman would admit to engaging in.</u> <p style="text-align: center;">WINMT, W:SL7</p>	
33.	<p>On one occasion, a western acquaintance married to a much younger Thai woman, even asked her husband if I thought that he and his wife were having sex. Amazing! Of course I assumed they were actually having sex, they were married!!! In Thailand, <b>older women (especially) and perhaps younger women married to older men</b> aren't supposed to be having sex.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WINMT, W:SL7</p>	(There's no age limit for sex.)

**Table 7.5: views on sex of Thais and Westerners in WINMT**

Table 7.5 represents the views on the sex as held by Thais which underline the opposition between Thais and Westerners. In the discourse related to tourism, Lonely Planet and Stickman portray Thai people as being conservative both in their sexual practices and in other aspects of life. This perception of the Thais appears to be contrasted with the reputation of the country as a sexual paradise. Though not explicitly mentioned, the attitude of the Thai people towards sex in this context could also implicate the opposite relation between 'ordinary Thais' and 'sex workers' in Thailand.

From the table, according to the writer, Thai women see sex as something they engage in for a reason, such as to reproduce in example 29 and to gain financial support in example 30. If true love means sex that is given freely, the Thais' intentions to have sex appear to associate them with prostitutes who engage in sex activity for a living. The oppositions give an implication that to the Westerners, the ideal form of sex is when sex is viewed as an activity that is naturally engaged in for the purposes of mutual pleasure. On the other hand, the writer

points out in examples 31 -33, that there is a perception that there is an age limit for sexual activity. Especially in example 32, sexual intercourse among old people is viewed as degenerate by the Thais. In example 31, the writer points out that the belief is related to religious views.

#### 7.4.1.2 RICH/ POOR

34.	They didn't expect that their son-in-law would provide anything else ( <u>got that guy? – I can't believe how many of the people to Stickman's site say they are avid readers of his site and yet willing give in to <b>this Thai brand of extortion.</b> Why are some of you [idiots by many Thai friends perceptions]</u> still giving money to your in-laws? ( <u>Stick has already noted this in his column.</u> ) This is <b>NOT a standard Thai tradition</b> , although it appears to perhaps be an up and coming 'Thai' tradition among a certain section of gold-digging families upcountry, only because so many desperate farangs are willing to support the practice.	WINMT, W:RH7
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The DEGENERACY is also related to internal oppositions constructed among the Westerners as well. The writer begins with an opposition between **a standard Thai tradition** (GOOD) and **a dowry** (referred to as 'this Thai brand of extortion' ) (BAD). The Westerners are associated with the type of Westerners who contribute to a dowry (BAD): 'only because so many desperate farangs are willing to support the practice'. The relationship appears to be based on the notion of the UNFAMILIAR in that they misunderstand that this is a Thai tradition and the information in the personal aside '[idiots by many Thai friends perceptions]'. These Westerners are perceived as ignorant in this context because of the lack of a true understanding of Thai culture. For this reason, there appear to be two types of Westerners in this example. One includes Stickman, referred to twice as an expert in this area. The other,

the writer who knows the true Thai tradition, (FAMILIAR) and the ones who do not (UNFAMILIAR). Besides, the mention of an opposition between **the upcountry area where the ‘Thai’ tradition flourishes** and **the rest of Thailand**, also point out the association of POOR in RICH/ POOR binary with bad as well. The following example points out the good Thai qualities that are treated as comparable to Western culture:

35.	<p><b>My Thai mother</b> would have <i>never</i> <b>asked for financial help other than perhaps help in times of absolute, incredible, and dire need</b>. She was also the Thai who first told me that ‘you don't live beyond your means,’ (I guess she was really <i>an oddity in Thailand based on Stick’s readers’ submissions</i>). <b>My European cultural traditions</b> see this exactly the same way...</p>	WINMT, W:RH9
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Example 35 refers to the internal oppositions between the correct versions of the Thai dowry tradition. In this example, the writer points out the good version of Thai practice presented by his Thai mother. An opposition is constructed between the Thai mother and the rest of the Thai people with an Explicit opposition, ‘an oddity in Thailand’ compared with a majority of Thai people ‘based on Stick's readers' submissions.’ The example is similar to the representation of services in Thailand in [Stickmanbangkok.com](http://Stickmanbangkok.com), section 6.3.1.1, that only can the best facilities in Thailand be compared with services in the West. From this example, the Thai mother possesses qualities which make her comparable to Westerners.

#### 7.4.1.3 DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED

The notion of DEVELOPMENT may even be regarded as degenerate. In *For Jiraporn*, the writer represents himself in the submission as an outsider (willingly and unwillingly) in both worlds. He describes his arrival in the States with, ‘After customs I went out into the reception area. God did this place feel alien to me. Everyone was talking English!’ (FJ16). His remark

appears to suggest his being UNFAMILIAR with the country. The DEGENERACY is summarised in the following table:

	The West	The writer (Thailand)
36.	<p>‘Where you going?’ I turned and saw a fat, bald old man. He smiled. My god it was him, my brother Steven! He was unrecognizable to me. ‘What’s up? You walked right past me!’ <b>10 years had passed since I last saw him; he had turned into an old man.</b> Geeze, <b>he</b> was only 5 years older than <b>me</b> and looked like <b>a geriatric nursing home patient!</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">FJ16</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(OLD)</p>	(YOUNG)
37.	<p><i>How could they sleep after drinking so much coffee?</i> <b>I was jumping out of my skin with caffeine.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">FJ17</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Coffee = UNNATURAL)</p>	(NATURAL)
38.	<p>I counted 38 pill bottles by the kitchen sink. Phyllis and Steve were medicated to the gills. Pills to stop aches, Pills to stop cholesterol, pills to stop heart angina, pills to make you shit, pills to stop you from shitting, pills to sleep, pills to wake up, pills to make you happy, pills to stop the side effects of other pills. There was no way <b>I</b> was going to <i>become</i> <b>a geriatric pill junkie.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">FJ20</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(medicated = UNNATURAL)</p>	(NATURAL)

39.	Hell, I did not feel old. I felt out of my element back in Arizona. Everything was too predictable, too tame, and too bland.  FJ20  (OLD)	(YOUNG)
40.	I was not right with the world; I was not ok with myself.  FJ16  (WRONG in the WEST)	(RIGHT)
	<b>DEVELOPED: BAD</b>	<b>UNDEVELOPED: GOOD</b>

**Table 7.6: Western lifestyle associated with DEVELOPMENT**

From table 7.6, the association of the West with DEVELOPMENT is elaborated by the behaviour of the writer's brother and his wife, with descriptions of drinking much coffee in example 36 and taking many pills in example 38. The medical advancement carries a positive connotation in general, but in this context, the writer refers to his Western brother as 'a generic pill junkie' in 38. Together with the reference of his brother as 'a geriatric nursing home patient'. In example 36, the writer applies the COLD/ YOUNG conceptual binary to the notion of DEVELOPMENT. He sees the Western lifestyle as something related to UNNATURAL and OLD (people should not take that much coffee and medication). On the other hand, as an outsider in Western society, he sees himself associated with the YOUNG (due to his lifestyle related to NATURAL).

## 7.5 Conclusion

Table 7.7 summarises conceptual oppositions used in the representation of a Thai-Western relationship based on the perspectives of the Westerners:

<b>CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TYPES OF OPPOSITIONS</b>	<b>MAIN CONCEPTUAL OPPOSITIONS</b>	<b>ASSOCIATED CONCEPTUAL OPPOSITIONS</b>
1. FAMILIARITY	External oppositions	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	
		NORMAL/ ABNORMAL	
		INSIDER/ OUTSIDER	
		GIVEN/ KNOW KNOWLEDGE	INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE
2. DEVELOPMENT	External oppositions	INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT	CHILD/ ADULT (beautiful/ stupid)
	Internal oppositions	SAVIOUR/ VICTIM	INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT, SAFE/UNSAFE, DEPENDENT/ INDEPENDENT
		MATURE/ IMMATURE	INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT  EAST/ WEST

		(financial and educational)	
3. DEGENERACY	External opposition	GOOD/ BAD WOMEN	GOOD/ BAD RIGHT, WRONG FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR
		DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED	OLD/ YOUNG, FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR, NATURAL/ UNNATURAL,

**Table 7.7: summary of conceptual oppositions found in chapter 7**

The chapter analyses three submissions written by Westerners. The Western views on their relationship with Thai people are categorised into the concepts of FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY. In the representation of people, the UNFAMILIAR is expressed in different forms; FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR, NORMAL/ ABNORMAL, and INSIDER/ OUTSIDER. The representation of Thai people is comparable to the representation of Thailand in discourse related to tourism in chapters 5 and 6 which displays the participation of the Western writers in the Orientalist discourse (Said 2003).

The first evidence of Orientalist influence is the differing descriptions of the concept of FAMILIARITY. The basis is that Thais and Westerners are different, the thought-process of which conforms to the second stereotype that the Orient is 'strange'. The distinction could be expressed explicitly, as in example 1 in the table above; that 'there are many significant distinctions between Thai and Western culture' and that there are 'important differences important to long-term successful relationships' (WINMAT). In YSMM, the FAMILIARITY



is presented in the form of a cause-effect binary with an emphasis on the abnormality of the Western writer. The Transitional oppositions are used to represent changes in his behaviour when he is in Thailand. The UNFAMILIAR in this context is expressed implicitly through these changes but pointing out with examples in the other sections that the writer behaves in a way that does not conform to the Western standards or stereotypes. In FJ, the UNFAMILIAR is represented through the INSIDER/ OUTSIDER conceptual binary including the exclusion of others from the family. This scenario is common to both Thai and Western families. However, the difference is that when it comes to the situation that a Westerner treats a Thai as others, the act is then referred to as a form of racism.

Following Halliday (2014), similar to the discourse related to tourism, prostitution also represents the GIVEN KNOWLEDGE about the country which points out the generalisation of the issue in context. Among others, the traces of their knowledge about this business are expressed through, Negated opposition, as in ‘my familiarity with the country is *NOT* based on the nightlife of the country’(WINMAT), or ‘4 blokes escaping to Thailand without the wives, what we *weren't* going to go’(YSMM). The GIVEN KNOWLEDGE in the Negation could be redundant considering Grice’s cooperative principles, but its use appears to give indications of the shared macro knowledge about Thailand (that it is well-known for the sex industry). The knowledge about the sex industry could be indicated through the reference of ‘the Vietnam Era R&R thing’ (WINMAT) which could be one of the cultural markers of what makes Thailand famous for the sex business.

The writers also participate in Orientalism (2003) in the concept of DEVELOPMENT, in the first stereotype that the Orient is ‘timeless’ and in the sixth that the Orient is degenerate. It is expressed through several conceptual oppositions which could be perceived as a relationship between children and adult (CHILD/ ADULT). Firstly, it is in the form of intellectual development (INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT), represented through the transitional oppositions of the Thai daughter in FJ in which her relationship with the Western stepfather leads her to be perceived as more intellectually developed. The notion of intelligence is also

expressed in a form of CHILD/ ADULT conceptual binary in which the writer of WINMAT describes his relationship with Thai women as ‘the longer I am with them the more I feel that I’m taking care of a child, not dealing with someone who is supposed to be an adult’. In this context, Thai women are portrayed with a familiar unconventional opposition, **beautiful/ stupid** (INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT). In YSMM, the writer expresses the concept of INTELLIGENCE through the representation of his Western wife (INTELLIGENT), and a bargirl (UNINTELLIGENT) see table 7.3. The wife is portrayed with a series of verbs indicating her wits, e.g. ‘know’, ‘calculating’, and ‘asked all the right questions at the right times’. The Thai bargirl is portrayed as helpless, in phrases such as ‘she wanted me to help her get out of the bar life’. Being helpless does not mean that the person is not intelligent, but when expressed in the form of opposition where the wife is a smart woman, Da is inevitably being perceived as lacking intellectual prowess to save herself from the situation she found herself caught in.

In YSMM, the internal oppositions are constructed within the writer and his wife. They are both represented as saviours. The writer as the saviour for Da, and his wife, the saviour for the writer. As the Thai woman deceives the husband, the real saviour is the Western wife. Since the wife is associated with the INTELLIGENT, the husband's role as a pseudo-saviour is unavoidably related to UNINTELLIGENT. In 7.3.2.2, the MATURE/ IMMATURE represents a form of CHILD/ ADULT relationship where the writers of WINMAT and FJ point out how social class and education, which should be a tool for intellectual development, do not seem to improve Thai women intellectually. They are, to these writers, all the same in their approach to relationship (IMMATURE).

The concept of DEGENERACY represents the negatives in the representation of Thailand. The section is titled GOOD/ BAD WOMEN as it is primarily concerned with the relationship with Thai women. In YSMM, there exists GOOD/ BAD conceptual oppositions between Thailand and Thai bargirls as displayed in the following extracts, ‘I will enjoy Thailand for what it is, and no Bar Girl will ruin it for me ever again’. In this context, prostitution (people)

is represented by comparison to the country (country), making its negative aspects ideologically significant. WWTM also attributes the problems encountered with girlfriends and prostitutes (included as a type of woman) to the cultural level. The oppositions represent how Westerners view their personal experiences as a form of collective behaviour among all Thai women (generalisation). In WINMT, the writer admires the qualities of his Thai mother about not living 'beyond your means'. This positive quality is used to underscore the negative identity of Thai people, 'an oddity in Thailand', and positive identity of the Western culture, 'My European cultural traditions see this exactly the same way'.

The last form of DEGENERACY is in the way the writer of FJ questions the normality in the West, e.g. the habits of drinking coffee and taking much medication. Through the reference of YOUNG/ OLD, FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR, and NATURAL/ UNNATURAL, the life in West appears to be associated with OLD, UNFAMILIAR, and UNNATURAL which in this context the Western civilisation is perceived as negative when compared with the backwardness of Thailand. The writer appears to challenge the positive connotation that is attached to modern progress. Therefore, Thailand is portrayed in a more positive light in this context.

**CHAPTER 8:**  
**OPPOSITIONS IN READERS' SUBMISSIONS:**  
**THAI WRITERS**

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**8.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter examines the Western representation of the Thai-Western relationship in oppositional forms. The linguistic oppositions are categorised into the domains of FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY. This chapter continues the investigation matters related to the submissions written by the Thais, selected by Stickman to represent what he perceives to be the 'the Thai perspectives.' It reveals how Thais position themselves in their relationship with the Westerners, according to Stickman. Worthy of further investigation is the binary representation of whether they conform or challenge the Western representation of Thailand as elaborated in the previous chapters. Besides, the writers' choice to write to Stickman should be taken into account considering its prominent content about sex business on the website.

**8.2 FAMILIARITY**

The section examines the linguistic oppositions that represent the differences between the Thais and Westerners. The concept of FAMILIARITY is represented in forms of an Us/ Them binary in INSIDER/ OUTSIDER, and the notion of LOGIC or NORMATIVITY in LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL.

## 8.2.1 External oppositions

### 8.2.1.1 INSIDER/ OUTSIDER

The section is titled the INSIDER/ OUTSIDER as the oppositions are related to the in-group/ out-group binaries. However, it is overlapped with the FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR: Westerners are treated as outsiders because they do not understand or are not familiar with Thai people. For instance, following the representation of the physical space in the discourse related to tourism, the notion of FAMILIARITY also underlines the relationship between Thais and Westerners. Considering the titles, *What Farangs Don't Get about Thai Women* and *What We Think Are Mistakes Western Men Make with Thai Women*, both submissions are based on the how Westerners are not familiar with Thai women.

Though randomly selected, the two submissions appear to share some similarities indicating the Westerners' lack of understanding of the Thai people. To begin with, both titles enclose linguistic markers, "Don't Get" and 'Mistakes', indicating that what the Westerners thought they know about Thai women (FAMILIAR) was eventually found to be wrong (implicating the notion of UNFAMILIAR). In an elaboration of Thai-Western relationship, the concept of FAMILIARITY could be equated into INSIDER/ OUTSIDER. Those who are knowledgeable about Thai people are included in the INSIDER and those who are not are excluded (OUTSIDER).

1.	There's a <u>well-kept secret</u> in Thailand that every Thai person seems to know but no farang does (or maybe can't grasp what it means). It boggles my mind actually because you can't <b>get three Thai people to agree on anything</b> <i>but nearly everyone agrees on this</i> , both men and women. <u>That farang men only date ugly Thai women.</u>	WFDG6
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The writer constructs a sense of belonging through the reference of 'a well-kept secret' which is the fundamentally the central idea of the paragraph, 'That farang men only date ugly Thai

women'. It influences the conceptual binary, INSIDER/ OUTSIDER, by including those who know and excluding those who do not know about this 'well-kept secret'. This point is elaborated with other linguistic oppositions, also associated with the sense of NORMALCY.

To begin with, the first opposition, **every Thai person** and **no farang**, is embedded with a conventional opposition **Thai/ farang**, modified with another conventional opposition, **every** and **no**. The dichotomy is highlighted with another opposition constructed with the Concessive opposition, *but, you can't get three Thai people to agree on anything/ nearly everyone agrees on this*. These two oppositions are allied with the INSIDER/ OUTSIDER conceptual opposition in that it is the 'well-kept' secret that determines the quality of the in-group.

These oppositions have an inclusive purpose in that they conclude that all Thai people share the same knowledge ('That farang men only date ugly Thai women') which results in an even more distinctive division between Thais and Westerners (who do not know about it). The inclusion of a conventional opposition, **(both) men/ women**, emphasises the normalcy of this piece of information as something that everyone (men or women) knows about.

The writer constructs a sense of Us and Them (INSIDER/ OUTSIDER) through the shared knowledge within the country of 'a well-kept secret'. Through linguistic opposition, the knowledge is treated as a sense of NORMALCY in that it is a common knowledge that everyone knows about, that **every Thai/ no farang** and **(both) men/ women** possess this knowledge. In this context, linguistic oppositions are used with inclusive purposes to create a sense of belonging. The following section points out the exclusive use of linguistic oppositions to represent two types of Thai women.

2.	To put it bluntly, there is <i>a huge difference between</i> a "typical Thai woman" <i>and</i> "Thai women who date farangs".	WFDG1
3.	"The average Western guy seems to have a thing for the women of Isaan, <i>as opposed to</i> women from other parts of Thailand".	WFDG2

In 2 and 3, the linguistic oppositions have an exclusive effect by creating two types of Thai women based on the kinds of men they are with. Both statements also share similar forms of oppositions and the conceptual oppositions they are related to. Firstly, they both use the Explicit opposition, *a huge difference between X and Y* in 1 and *X as opposed to Y* in 2 to construct oppositions in a complementary form indicating that X and Y are downright opposed. Therefore, because of their relationship with Farangs, the two types of women as mentioned in 1 and 2 are entirely different even though they are both Thai.

Both examples are underscored with a sense of NORMALCY. The use of a modifier 'typical' in 1 associates the differences between these two types of women with the NORMAL/ ABNORMAL conceptual opposition in that Thai-Western relationships are not common in Thailand (ABNORMAL). On the other hand, in 2, with the modifier 'average' in 'the average Western guy', the NORMAL in the NORMAL/ ABNORMAL binary is applied to the Western men in that it is common for them to fall for Isan woman, and not the one 'from other parts of Thailand'. Therefore, the relationship between Isan women and Western men is treated by both Thai and Western writers as something normal. However, at the same time due to this relationship, these women are viewed as not normal or different (OUTSIDER) from the rest of Thai women (INSIDER).

The writer uses Stickman as an authoritative figure as he is the owner of the website and also represents the Western voice in this context. On this point, the oppositions in 2 and 3 suggest that it is common for Isan women to be involved in a Thai-Western relationship (NORMAL). However, as this type of relationship is uncommon amongst the rest of Thai women (ABNORMAL), the oppositions between two types of Thai women are constructed.

The distinction between Isan and the rest of Thai women is also comparable to how in discourse related to tourism, the Isan region is portrayed as an 'out-of-place', something that is unfamiliar even to the Thai. In this context, the Isan as a woman is allied with the concept of the OUTSIDER in the same way as the Isan as a place, aligned with UNFAMILIAR.

In WFDGT, the writer also relates the relationship between Thai women and Western men with the prevalence of prostitution in Thailand. In discourse related to tourism, the commonness of prostitution is represented through oppositions as part of the GIVEN KNOWLEDGE, referring to what the Westerners are already familiar with about Thailand. In this submission written by a Thai male, the NORMALCY of the sex industry is represented through the relationship between Thai women and Western men.

4.	<p>And before you go about beating up Thais for falsely believing number 2, understand that Thais <u>know</u> what's going on in Pattaya, Phuket, and the seedier areas of Bangkok. They see <u>farang guys</u> trying <i>to pass their hookers off as girlfriends</i> and they <u>know</u>. So if you want to blame anyone, blame these true whore-chasers who are still out there every single day. It never ceases to amaze me how farangs get upset when Thai folks <u>mistakenly assume</u> their wives/GFs are hookers, <i>yet</i> see for themselves other farangs with hookers and don't even bat an eye. Thais <u>only believe that</u> Thai women with farangs are BGs/ex-BGs <u>because it's true the majority of the time</u>.</p>	WFDG3
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The writer validates his association of Thai women who date Westerners with prostitutes through the repetition of the verb *know*, mentioned twice and by ending the example with, 'it's true the majority of the time'. The linguistic evidence points out the familiarity of the Thais with this kind of relationship and the writer uses the frequency of how it happens as a form of justification (that it is true because it happens 'the majority of time').

The RIGHT/ WRONG conceptual opposition is also used alongside the FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR. As mentioned earlier in the section, the UNFAMILIAR with the country is manifested through the mistakes or the misunderstanding that the Westerners make. For



instance, the unconventional opposition, '**falsely believing**' and '**true the majority of the time**', constructed with a semantic trigger, *falsely/ true*, could serve as an indication that the GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE that the Westerners have about Thai women are wrong.

The generalisation of the relationship between Westerners and prostitutes is seen in the explicitness of the way the writer describes the situation. The writer starts his claim implicitly by only mentioning places, Pattaya, Phuket, and the seedier areas of Bangkok. He flouts the maxim of quantity by not giving enough information, but only specifies places to represent the qualities of people. After that he becomes more explicit by suggesting that 'Thais only believe that Thai women with farangs are BGs/ex-BGs because it's true the majority of the time'. However, being vague at the beginning (mentioning places instead of people) and explicit at the end of the example could be an equal indication that this type of relationship is real and prevalent in Thailand because everyone seems to know about it already. This could be an indication of the transferral of meaning of activities to people's perception of places (the same way that Thailand is known for the sex industry since Vietnam War).

The idea of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN is actually the focus of the section about DEGENERACY. These three oppositions, 'hookers/ girlfriends', 'wives/GFs/ hooker's', and 'Thai women with farangs/ BGs/ex-BGs', seem to be allied with the GOOD/ BAD conceptual opposition. Even though the semantic property of 'hookers' and 'BGS' (bargirls) should suffice to associate these women with BAD and the others with GOOD, there are also other linguistic indicators such as 'upset', 'blame', and 'beaten up' to indicate that the association of these women with BAD.

This type of Thai women and Western men is treated as NORMAL in this submission. Following up from this point, given the realm of NORMALCY, the Isan women and prostitutes are, to a certain extent, distinguished from typical Thai women because of their relationship with the Westerners and the negative connotation that comes with the prostitutes could inevitably be transferred to Isan women. The NORMALCY of the relationship between Thai women and Western men also leads to the illogical phenomenon that also sets Thailand

apart from other countries. The female writer sees the unfamiliarity between the Thais and Westerners as something constructed at the level of mindsets. She pointed it out from the perspective of the attitudes that Thai and Westerners towards the concept of LOVE:

5.	<p><b>A lot of Thai people use the word “love” very lightly. To Thai people love is just a degree a bit stronger than “like” but doesn’t necessarily have that same profound meaning as in the West. Most of us never heard of biblical definition of love. Love to a lot of us is about what we get out of a relationship with you, and not so much about what we give. We’re still confused it with infatuation, possessiveness, lust, etc, so don’t always assume that our love is your kind of love. I’m not sure how much Thai girls know about working at a relationship the way Western men who are after a meaningful relationship want to see.</b></p>	WWTM10
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The definition of ‘love’ as elaborated in ‘so don’t always assume that our love is your kind of love’ is also related to the notion of FAMILIARITY due to different perspectives to understanding love. In the section about the FAMILIARITY, the writer also involves the conceptual opposition, INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE, to point out how Westerners treat the act of an individual as the basis to form a generalisation of something that happens at the collective level. In the discussion of DEVELOPMENT, this conceptual binary similarly appears.

The writer also focuses on the different degrees of understanding the concept of love. The opposition, ‘use the word “love” very lightly’/ ‘profound meaning as in the West’ triggered by Concessive opposition, *but*, and Negated opposition, *not*, seems to associate Thai women with the CHILD/ ADULT based on the ability to understand the concept of LOVE. This relationship will be discussed in more detail in the later sections.

There is also an opposition between **love/ like** which is a gradable opposition that is constructed with the Comparative opposition in ‘just a degree a bit stronger than like’. The opposition suggests that Thai views towards love seem less profound in comparison to how Westerners perceive love. The writer sees the Thais as being selfish when it comes to love. This selfishness is also a characteristic of a child, as further evidenced in the statement ‘Love to a lot of us is about what we get out of a relationship with you, and not so much about what we give’. The adverb ‘still’ also indicate that this is something in the past that Westerners can already grow out of and be mature about (ADULT).

6.	I think this is <u>the biggest mistake you make</u> . You try to understand <b>us</b> with <b>your Western mentality</b> , and when you don’t, you think, “ <u>This must be a Thai thing</u> ”. It’s <i>NOT</i> . Take the money issue for instance. It is <b>our Asian culture that a man is the provider of the family and woman the responder</b> , <i>but NOT</i> to the extreme that you need <b>to start supporting her financially from the moment she gets the girlfriend title. Supporting her whole family is out of the question. It’s NOT in the Thai culture that I know. It’s a national scam. ...you’ll be in charge taking care of her only, not her family.</b>	WW TM 14
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In example 6, the concept of FAMILIARITY is represented through GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE. An opposition between Thailand and the West is established throughout the example with the Negated opposition, *NOT*, written in the capital form, including the use of the pronoun ‘You’ to represent the Westerners and ‘us’ to refer to the Thais. The assumption about the Thais that the Westerners make with ‘Western mentality’, equivalent to GIVEN KNOWLEDGE, is referred to as ‘the biggest mistake’ (WRONG). In this submission, the writer points out that what the Westerners thought they knew about Thai culture is wrong, and this is what makes them outsiders to the Thai.

According to the writer, the Westerners see the negative characteristics of the Thais by generalisation mistakes made by an individual to be representative of all Thai people. This is evidenced in the phrase, ‘This must be a Thai thing’. On the other hand, the writer justifies her point by her qualifying statement, ‘the Thai culture that I know’. Therefore, this example could be indicative of the premise of a version of Thailand based on Western mentality as being WRONG, referred to as ‘national scam’ and the writer's version of Thailand as being RIGHT.

The Westerners' generalisation of the situation that ‘it's must be a Thai thing’ indicates a lack of attempt to really understand Thai culture. The following table summarises what Westerners know about the Thai culture and how the writer believes to be wrong.

<b>RIGHT</b>		<b>WRONG</b>
<b>It is our Asian culture that a man is the provider of the family and woman the responder</b>	<i>But NOT</i>	<b>supporting her financially from the moment she gets the girlfriend title</b>
	<i>NOT</i>	<b>Supporting her whole family</b>
<b>the Thai culture that I know</b>		<b>a national scam</b>
<b>Taking care of her only</b>	<i>not</i>	<b>her family</b>

**Table 8.1: Western and Thai views on financial support associated with RIGHT/WRONG**

From the table, we note that the financial approach that Westerners take with their Thai partners and their family is partially wrong. The basic premise is that men should support women financially, which the Westerners appear to do. What goes wrong could be

summarised in the form of opposition between the INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE in that the Westerners feel that they should support the whole family of their partner, instead of just their Thai partner. This act appears to be diametrically opposed to what happens in the West, where couples form their own family unit void of the in-laws. Therefore, the mistakes that the Westerners make in this context is a result of the process of negative identification in that the writer sees ‘a Thai thing’ as something that is opposite to what is common practised in the West. The opposition, therefore, underlines how people make sense of an unfamiliar culture. This results in the Westerners’ misunderstanding of the Thai culture.

### 8.2.1.2 NORMAL/ ABNORMAL and LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL

This section refers to the situational aspects of familial relationships in Thailand that are considered abnormal or illogical in comparison with the rest of the world. The writer relies mostly on the assumptions that attractive people should belong together. However, it does not appear to be the case in Thailand.

In the West (NORMAL)	In Thailand (ABNORMAL)
7.	<p><i>It's almost pointless to be a <b>good-looking farang guy in Thailand.</b> Because you're going to have access to <b>the same pool of women as that fat, hairy, smelly, 55 year old German guy sitting at the end of the bar.</b> You're <i>not</i> going to have access to <b>the same type of women that I have-and I say this almost apologetically.</b></i></p>
WFDG7	
8. <b>Back in the States, you see a good-looking guy and you expect him to be with an attractive woman. And <i>he almost is.</i></b>	<p><b>But here, you see a good-looking farang guy and chances are that his GF/ wife will be the same Isaan-type woman that all the other farang guys run around with.</b></p>

WFDG7	
<p>9. There's a <b>young farang guy in my company who's got the classic GQ look</b>. I mean this guy would be a <b>serious ladies-man back in the states</b>. Nice guy too.</p>	<p><i>Yet, his girlfriend is just oh-so-typical Isaan-type.</i></p>
WFDG7	
<p>10. And <b>another guy, not as GQ, but in his late 20s, better than average looking, making solid money,</b></p>	<p><i>And his wife has two kids (not his), and of course... well, no need to beat a dead horse. Nothing <b>wrong</b> with this, by the way, if they're <b>happy</b>. Just an observation.</i></p>
WFDG7	

**Table 8.2: dating situations in Thailand and the West associated with NORMAL/ ABNORMAL**

As mentioned earlier, the two types of Thai women, prostitutes, and the typical Thai women are categorised similarly based on the kind of men they are in a relationship with. The writer treats the relationship between Western men and Thai women with NORMALCY which could lead to a generalisation that Isan women or those who are in a relationship with Westerners are prostitutes (or bad women in general).

This type of relationship that appears to be typical (NORMAL) leads to an unusual kind of situation in Thailand (ABNORMAL). Referring to the table above, the writer elaborates two types of relationship; one that is considered normal in general, that attractive people belong together, and the abnormal one in Thailand, that attractive Western men end up with unattractive Thai women. In discourse related to Tourism, the exoticness of Thailand is represented with the conceptual binary LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL indicating that what happens in Thailand is different to what is deemed logical in the West.

The table also points out what contributes to the notion of ATTRACTIVENESS. To elaborate, the description of ATTRACTIVENESS is described with an unconventional opposition, a **good-looking farang guy in Thailand/ fat, hairy, smelly, 55 year old German guy sitting at the end of the bar**. The opposition has both inclusive and exclusive functions at the same time. It is exclusive as it describes two different types of men based on their attractiveness (ATTRACTIVE/ UNATTRACTIVE), and inclusive because they end up with the same kind of women in Thailand regardless of their physical attributes. This phenomenon is considered ABNORMAL in comparison with what happens in the rest of the world.

The role of the conceptual binary, ATTRACTIVE/ UNATTRACTIVE, appears to emphasise the inferior status of Westerners in Thailand, in that that they will end up with undesirable type of Thai women regardless. Another pair of opposition is seen between **Thai men** and **Western men**, where Thai men hold a superior position in the relationship since they get to be with desirable women. The pair is constructed with a combination of Parallelism and Negated opposition in *'you're going to have access to X..., You're not going to have access to Y'*. By mentioning, 'I say this almost apologetically', the writer associates the type of women that are with Thai men with ATTRACTIVE, as he feels bad since the women the Westerners end up with are associated with the UNATTRACTIVE.

From the table, it should be noted that the Isan women fall into the notion of UNATTRACTIVE. Especially with phrases such as 'Isaan type' and 'oh so typical Isaan type' including the ellipsis in 'of course... well, no need to beat a dead horse' which suggests an association of this type of women with the NORMAL and also in relationship with the UNATTRACTIVE. The writer may justify that his comment is based on his 'observation', but he is clear about his evaluation of the situation with another opposition between something being wrong and something that makes you happy in the phrase 'Nothing wrong with this, by the way, if they're happy'. The construction of this opposition appears to, on the one hand, express his sympathy, but on the other hand, highlight the negative connotation of this situation (that he feels sympathy for).

To summarise, the section focuses on the prominent conceptual oppositions in the representation of a Thai-Western relationship in *What Farangs Don't Get about Thai Women*. Within the realm of FAMILIARITY, the writer points out that Western men fail in the relationship with Thai women for several reasons based on the concept of NORMALCY. He constructs two primary forms of linguistic oppositions. The first one is between GOOD/ BAD WOMEN. The 'bad women' is in reference to Isan women and prostitutes who are typically associated with Western men (NORMAL). Then there is an opposition between the dating formalities in Thailand and in the West, in which the one in Thailand is associated with being ABNORMAL because Western men end up with 'bad Thai women' regardless of their looks (ABNORMAL).

In this submission, the notion of the UNFAMILIAR is associated with the conceptual binary INSIDER/ OUTSIDER. The writer appears draw us through a process of negative identification by using oppositions to elaborate on the negative qualities that are considered not Thai such as the perception that Isan women and prostitutes are (BAD WOMEN). The exclusion of these women is also achieved to the normalisation of their relationship with the Western men i.e. that it is common for the Western men to be with these women.

In WWTM, the female Thai writer also points to the Westerners' unfamiliarity of the dating culture in Thailand. In discourse related to tourism, the distinction between Thailand and the Western home is also portrayed in the form of conceptual oppositions anchored between REAL/ UNREAL or LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL. The linguistic oppositions that contribute to these binaries appear to be constructed based on what deems to be logical in the Western sense. The following example points out how the Thai ways of thinking could be perceived as irrational or illogical Westerners.

11.	We're <i>not</i> a big fan of getting to the bottom of the story, to the root of the problem, trying to understand it and straighten it out from there. It's <i>painful</i> . We <i>hate</i> <b>analysis</b> . We <i>don't</i> believe <b>our</b>	WW TM 12
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	<p><b>past</b> makes us who we are <b>today</b>. If <b>we don't like it</b>, we forget about it in no time as if it has never happened. We <i>don't</i> believe in talking about problems and trying to understand and fix it so that we can put it behind us. <b>This Western way of dealing with things</b> is <i>non-existent</i> to us. It's <i>not</i> in <b>our mentality</b>.</p>	
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From the example, the writer points out how Thais and Westerners are differentiated on the level of their mentality, elaborated with a strong suggestion of mutual exclusivity; 'This Western way of dealing with things is *non-existent* to us. It's *not* in our mentality'. The Negated opposition, especially the mention of *non-existent* indicates how Thais and Westerners have completely different ways to deal with problems. Followed by the second Negated opposition, *not*, in 'It's *not* in our mentality', the opposition between the way Thais and Westerners seem to be emphasised is that it exists at the base level of mentality and in that respect, that the Thais and the Westerners are entirely different.

Without the two Negated oppositions mentioned above, the distinction between Thais and Westerners can still be constructed with a series in line with Labov's Comparator (1972), *not*. The oppositions are constructed by the explicit stating of what the Thais do not do which are actually in contrast with what Westerners do.

<b>Thai ways of dealing with things</b>	<b>Western way of dealing with things</b>
We're not a big fan... It's <i>painful</i> .	...getting to the bottom of the story, to the root of the problem, trying to understand it and straighten it out from there
We <i>hate</i> analysis.	...analysis
We don't believe...	...our past makes us who we are today

If we <i>don't like it</i> , we forget about it in no time as if it has never happened.	(confronting the problems)
We <i>don't</i> believe in...	...talking about problems and trying to understand and fix it so that we can put it behind us
<b>ILLOGICAL</b>	<b>LOGICAL</b>

**Table 8.3: Summary of how Thais and Westerners deal with problems**

The table above elaborates the way oppositions between **Thai** and **Western ways of thinking** are constructed, even though the Western ways are not explicitly mentioned. Besides Negated opposition, the use of the pronoun 'We' seems to build the sense of US/ THEM dichotomy by giving a series of examples of what the Thais do whilst implying that the Westerners should do the opposite.

From the table, the Thai way is represented with emotions such as 'painful', 'hate', and '(don't) like' while Westerners are associated with such terms as 'understand it and strengthen it', 'analysis', and 'trying to understand and fix it'. This association relates Thai people to the **ILLOGICAL**, based on the way they use emotion to deal with problems. This is in contrary to the Westerners who confront and solve the problems by reasoning (**LOGICAL**).

### **8.3 DEVELOPMENT**

This section investigates the relationship between Thais and Westerners based on the external oppositions between Thais and Westerners with the conceptual binaries, specifically associated with **CHILD/ ADULT** and **RICH/ POOR**.

### 8.3.1 External and Internal oppositions

#### 8.3.1.1 CHILD/ ADULT

To the male Thai writer, WFDGT, the association between Thai women with Western men highlights the sense of the OUTSIDER. The Thai women who are with Western men are considered outsiders in the Thai society for two related reasons. Firstly, due to their poverty. Secondly, due to their reputation of being bad (not conservative) women. The female Thai writer, WWTM, on the other hand, portrays the notion of DEVELOPMENT in the form of a CHILD/ ADULT conceptual relationship indicative of the level of maturity.

12.	<b>Girls</b> are like three year old kids... <b>You</b> need to be consistent with what is allowed and what is not in our relationship. <b>All those manipulative tools are what we've used and worked with Thai men.</b> <i>Teach us</i> that they don't work in a relationship with you. <i>Show us leadership. Don't let us lose respect</i> for you and start bossing you around or bad mouth about you with our Thai friends in your face.	WWTM 9
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The association of Thai women with the CHILD is explicitly mentioned in 'Girls are like three year old kids). The pronoun 'You' signifies the Westerners who are portrayed as adults (ADULT) as seen in the imperative form and verb choices that signify the learning process, such as 'teach us', 'show us', and 'don't let us lose respect for you'. The Westerners are assigned roles as adults in this context. Thai men, however, fail in their role as adults as explicitly stated in 'All those manipulative tools are what we've used and worked with Thai men' which points out how the Thai women manipulate Thai men and, as a result, portray Thai men as weak and passive. The Western men are portrayed in the same way, but the writer demands them to change and resume their roles as adults in the relationship which implicates that they are the more mature persons in the relationship. This point is highlighted in the

following example where the writer likens on the behaviour of Thai women with those of children:

13.	<p><b>Girls</b> are like three year old thing. <u>I agree with Stick</u> that <b>screaming and throwing things are very common in prime time soaps. Soap operas here with the best ratings are those with the loudest screaming characters.</b> <i>It's sad</i> but a lot of girls have taken that same means to express themselves and get what they want. <i>It may be true that more Thai girls are screaming and throwing things than Western girls,</i> but don't let us get away with it just because we're Thai. <u>If we can't contain our anger or deal with problems like a civilized person would, we're probably not fit to have a relationship.</u> <b>Imagine how we'd raise our kids we have with you?</b></p>	<p>WWTM 9</p>
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To begin with, the childish acts are condoned in the context of Thai 'prime time soaps'. The linguistic markers, 'prime time', 'the best ratings', and 'very common' associate this type of behaviour pattern with being NORMAL in that it is common for those in Thai soap operas to behave in this manner. The writer refers to the behaviour of grown-up women in the media. They are supposed to be role models, but in the case of Thailand they display such childish behaviour by 'throwing tantrums' and 'screaming and throwing things'. The writer points out through the adverb, 'sadly', that these are undesirable acts of Thai women that commonly occur (NORMAL) at both micro (Thai women in general) and macro-level (Thai soap stars in media).

She also allies herself with the Western side by agreeing with Stickman, who is representative of Western opinions, in stating that 'I agree with Stick'. The opposition between Thai and Western women is constructed in a gradable form in by stating that '*It may be true that more Thai girls are screaming and throwing things than Western girls*'. This form of gradation of

the opposition indicates that Western women display also to a certain extent some childish behaviour, by ‘screaming and throwing things’ as well. Hence, this gradable form of opposition shows that though not common in the West, this type of behaviour seems to be universal among Thai women in general and should be associated with the CHILD.

However, from DEVELOPMENT aspect, the reference to ‘a civilized person’ points out how Western women are still more mature or developed in their attitudes to relationships. The association of ‘a civilized person’ with the West is realised through the imperative within the question form, ‘**Imagine how we’d raise our kids we have with you?**’. The Imperative within the question form is a form of Engagement marker which involves an opposition between **the writer, a Thai**, and **the readers, the Westerners**. The Us/ Them dichotomy is realised when the writer allies herself with other Thai women with the pronoun, ‘We’. The writer uses an opposition drawing similarities between real children, ‘**kids we have with you**’ and **the Thai women who behave like children**. It highlights the role of Thai women as ‘children’ (CHILD) and then associates the Westerners with adults (ADULT). The opposite form also relates a civilised person with Westerners, as is in this case, where the West is associated with ADULT or DEVELOPED.

14.	We try to justify <b>every stupid thing we do</b> that it’s a <b>Thai thing, therefore it’s OK</b> . <i>Don’t let us</i> hide behind our Thainess. <i>You don’t let</i> your date bring another six people to join the first date <i>because it’s a Thai thing</i> to have a chaperone. <i>You don’t let</i> her ignore you for 20 minutes staying on the phone talking small talks in Thai at your dinner table <b>because it’s a Thai thing</b> . <i>You don’t let</i> yourself manipulated into sending her monthly allowance <b>because it’s a Thai thing</b> . <i>You don’t let</i> her get away with her BS or put up with her crap <b>because it’s a Thai thing</b> . <b>How many times does she give you that leeway because you are a Westerner?</b>	WWTM 20
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	<b>I'd say none. The world revolves around the Thainess, if you haven't realized that already.</b>	
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The CHILD/ ADULT is highlighted with the phrase **every stupid thing we do** and a **Thai thing**. In this case, the Thai attributes are associated with the UNINTELLIGENT. With an opposition form, the Westerners should automatically be associated with the INTELLIGENT and the ADULT. The association of Thai women with the CHILD is in a series of Negated opposition in Imperatives considering a way that the writers address Western readers. The series of '*Don't let*' indicates the Westerners' 'Mistakes' mentioned earlier, in that the problems stem from the fact that the Westerners fail to assume the role of the ADULT in the relationship.

The writer also suggests that Westerners are never able to assume the role of the ADULT, which seems to be an emphasis of the Thais and Western men's association with the CHILD/ ADULT relationship. The Engagement marker draws the writer directly to the conversation, by stating '**How many times does she give you that leeway because you are a Westerner? I'd say none. The world revolves around the Thainess if you haven't realized that already**'. This use of the engagement marker is a direct way to urge the readers to take responsibilities and resume their roles as adults in their relationship. The generalisation is seen as a form of stereotypes signifying how the Westerners think all Thai women are the same (CHILD).

15.	<i>Don't be afraid to take us to task when we do <b>something universally stupid</b>. Don't let us get away with it <b>just because we're from a different culture</b>. Don't take crap when it's the same crap you wouldn't take back home. Don't teach us <b>that being Thai can help us get away with murder</b>.</i>	WWTM 21
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First of all, the mention of ‘being Thai can help us get away with murder’ is also associated with the notion of INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE as it is a generalisation of the Westerners based on the observation by the writer that Thai people are all the same. In example 15, the concept of the CHILD that is associated with Thai women is emphasised again with a series of Engagement markers in Imperative forms; ‘*Don’t be afraid...Don’t let...Don’t take crap...Don’t teach...*’. The bad traits of Thai women, in this case, are associated with the INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT conceptual opposition in that Thai women are associated with stupidity (UNINTELLIGENT). The imperatives also suggest that unless Westerners, who should be allied with the INTELLIGENT and the ADULT, act like a grown up, these Thai-Western relationships might not work out. Moreover, the writer emphasises something ‘universally stupid’ which is synonymous with the notion of ‘common sense’ which is already mentioned as part of the LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL conceptual opposition.

Based on the idea that Thai women only think about themselves, another characteristic of their childish behaviour is that it is associated with the concepts of SELFISH in SELFISH/ SELFLESS dichotomy as well as the CHILD in the CHILD/ ADULT binary. Considering the US/ THEM constructed with the pronoun ‘us’ at the beginning of the example, as Thailand is associated with the REAL, the West (as the opposite pair to THEM) should be associated with the IDEAL. The way Westerners behave should also associate them with SELFLESSNESS and the ADULT. All in all, the writer’s opinion of the Western kind of relationship is a more developed one.

In the discourse related to tourism, the conceptual binary DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, is used in the representation of the distinctions of places within the country based on the level of development. In Lonelyplanet.com and Stickmanbangkok.com, Western influence is part of the developed part of Thailand. The notion of DEVELOPMENT also underlines the relationship between Thais and Westerners. In this chapter, the focus is on the conceptual oppositions associated with financial status and levels of maturity. In WFDGT, Westerners

still represent economic development, but the writer reveals how being wealthy Westerners, does not seem to have a positive effect on their relationship with Thai women.

16.	<p><i>Despite level of education and sophistication, the idea of bringing into a relationship is not very common to a lot of us. Being with someone is all about what we get out of it—money, better lifestyle, enjoyment, security in various ways, etc. It's hardly about what we could, should and would give, how we can enable our partner and make ourselves better for him each day.</i></p>	<p>WW TM 13</p>
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Education is usually a means for self-development. However, in this context, it does not help Thai women to become more mature in a relationship. As a result, this trait of Thai women is considered an intrinsic fact of nature. The example revolves around ‘the idea of bringing into a relationship’ which means that contributing something to the relationship. This notion is also associated with the conceptual opposition, SELFISH/ SELFLESS. The pronoun ‘us’ triggers an opposition between US/ THEM, in which case refers to the THAI/ WESTERN dichotomy. In this context considering the concept of ‘bringing into the relationship’, Thailand is associated with the ABNORMAL in that in comparison with Westerners, the Thais is more selfish in their relationships.

Along with the positive connotation of ‘education and sophistication’ as well as the opposite nature triggered by the Concessive opposition, *Despite X, Y*, Thailand (where ‘the idea’ is not common) is allied with the SELFISH and the implied West with the SELFLESS. The Concessive opposition, *Despite X, Y*, carries an expectation that ‘the level of education and sophistication’ should help Thai people to understand ‘the idea of bringing into the relationship’. However, since in reality it rarely happens, there should be something different about Thailand.



17.	<p><b>To make someone like us understand that it takes two to tango in a relationship can be difficult</b> <i>even for someone with excellent English because of a lack of understanding the concept.</i> A friend of mine had a problem with his girlfriend. When he was so busy with work and trying to quit smoking, <i>instead of her being understanding and supportive, she was being demanding for time and attention. It was all about her.</i> She's an educated Thai girl with two master's degrees and speaks very good English. She got all nasty and they finally broke up. <b>At 28 years old she was not mature enough to bring something into their relationship and make it enable.</b> Imagine how <i>much more difficult</i> it would be with <b>someone who speaks and understands only basic English.</b></p>	<p>WWTM 13</p>
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Example 21 shows that education (considered a means for intellectual development) may help, but it is not a fool-proof guarantee that the educated Thai woman will be different. It suggests that a relationship between the concept of **being educated** and **a possibility to succeed in a relationship**. Most of the oppositions in 21 is an elaboration of the main opposition in 20, “*Despite level of education and sophistication, the idea of bringing into a relationship is not very common to a lot of us.*” All in all, the example highlights the failure of education in assisting Thai women to be more mature in the relationship.

The idea of the EDUCATED/ UNEDUCATED should be one of the factors that divide Thai women. However, it has an inclusive effect here by indicating that all women are the same. The writer also elaborates the Thais’ idea of a relationship with another opposition in a clausal form, **Being with someone is all about what we get out of it... / what we could, should and would give, how we can enable our partner and make ourselves better for him each day** triggered by a Negated Opposition, *X. It's hardly about Y.* The modality, *should*, and modifier, *better*, associate the idea of GOOD/ BAD in the form of REAL/ IDEAL kind of relationship, in which the latter of the pair is allied with the IDEAL. As a result, the former of

the pair, is an interpretation of the relationship for the Thai not contributing to the relationship), which is associated with the REAL. The last section discusses the notion of the CONSERVATIVE. The male writer is adamant that there is a clear distinction between the GOOD/ BAD Thai women based on their conservative quality. However, to the female writer, the linguistic opposition between **bargirls/ good girls** is used with inclusive effects.

### 8.3.1.2 RICH/ POOR

The DEVELOPMENT in this context refers to a form of financial development. The financial status describes one group of Thai people as more developed than the other. The opposition also involves the concepts of NORMAL/ ABNORMAL, suggesting the normativity of the situation. Also, the conceptual binary, CAUSE/ EFFECT, elaborates on the effects of financial standing, on Thai women in relationships with Western men.

18.	So <b>Thai women</b> believe that <b>farangs</b> are wealthy. <i>What kind of women will this attract?</i> Well, certainly <b>women</b> who are into money. I'll say that <i>most</i> women consider this to be <b>desirable</b> , <i>but</i> only <b>a few</b> believe it to be the most <b>important</b> thing. <u>The ones who have it on the top of their priority list will certainly be after guys that have it.</u>	WFDG 4
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In 18, the sense of the NORMAL/ ABNORMAL is elaborated with the opposition triggered by the Concessive Opposition, *but*, and a conventional opposition, **most/ a few** indicating that most Thai women are not into money (NORMAL), but a few are (ABNORMAL). There is a use of Influence of Conventional Opposition in Context: a pair of conventional opposition, **most/ a few**, is considered a pair that triggers another pair of opposition, '**desirable**'/ '**important**'. The latter pair is considered a gradable opposition between what people consider a necessity in their life. The closest conventional opposition for this pair could be an opposition between 'need' and 'want' in that 'desirable' represents the 'want' because people

can live without it, and 'important' stands for 'need' which is synonymous with 'the top of their priority' mentioned in the following sentence.

Though not explicitly mentioned, because of the binary NORMAL/ ABNORMAL, it is possible to relate 'a few' women who 'believe it to be the most important thing' with Isan women (ABNORMAL) because they are considered different from 'typical' Thai women (NORMAL) as mentioned in the section about the two types of Thai women in example 1 and 2. Moreover, as these women consider money a necessity, they should be associated with the concept of POOR. Hence, in the RICH/ POOR dichotomy, Isan women should be related to the POOR and the rest of Thai women with the RICH.

The CAUSE/ EFFECT conceptual opposition also underlines a relationship between Thai women and Western men. The CAUSE is represented by the belief that farangs are rich; 'So **Thai women** believe that **farangs** are wealthy'. The EFFECT is linguistically realised with the use of the verb 'attract' in the question form; "*What kind of **women** will this attract?*". In this case, the opposition is triggered by the semantic features of the conventional opposition, '**Thai women**' and '**farangs**' which indicate the differences between these two groups of people within the framework of CAUSE/ EFFECT, that Thai women are 'attracted' to farangs because of the belief that they are rich.

An Engagement marker in the form of a question is the inclusion of readers into the discussion which should indicate the significance of this topic. The fact that the writer is Thai should also construct another level of THAI/ WESTERN binary. Unlike the explicit '**Thai women**'/ '**farangs**' mentioned in the previous paragraph, this is an implicit opposition between **the writer as a Thai** and **the readers as the Westerners**. This opposition should give rise to an implication that the Westerners are unfamiliar with this kind of relationship (in which women are with men for money) which could be another feature about the dating situation in the West that unlike Thai women, Western women do not engage in a relationship for a monetary reason.

The CAUSE/ EFFECT conceptual opposition is a significant one in that it explains the power relationship between Thai women and Westerners. The Westerners are superior as providers in this context. It has been mentioned that Isaan women are associated with the 'POOR' and it is common for them to be associated with Western men. Therefore, the women associated with the EFFECT should refer to Isaan women because they are the ones performing the act of chasing 'after guys who have it'. As mentioned in the section about FAMILIARITY, Western men are positioned in an inferior position because of their lack of choices in the relationship. From this example, their financial status is portrayed as something that draws only the poor Thai women (considered undesirable in the Thai writer's opinion).

#### **8.4 DEGENERACY**

Several conceptual oppositions are developed in addition to the ones in the DEVELOPMENT, but the section focuses on the qualities that contribute to or are considered qualities of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN (whereas the qualities of Thai women that are associated with CHILD in DEVELOPMENT are expressed as a form of the nature of Thai women). The external and internal oppositions are overlapped in this section, but the emphasis is on the division between GOOD/ BAD WOMEN. The discussion will start with the male writer first, followed by the female's points of view on GOOD/ BAD WOMEN.

##### **8.4.1 Internal oppositions**

###### **8.4.1.1 GOOD/ BAD WOMEN: ATTRACTIVE/ UNATTRACTIVE**

The physical appearances are mentioned alongside other qualities to include those with other desirable attributes. The male writer portrays specific physical attributes as a determination of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN including the consequences of their appearances on their status within the country. The emphasis is on the women of Isaan, and the process involves a reference of normativity in a NORMAL/ ABNORMAL conceptual binary.

19.	Now this is where there's <i>a huge perception difference between Thai and farang men</i> . It's <b>the Isaan factor again</b> , but let me try to explain it so that <b>the average farang</b> can relate. <b>Thais look at dark-skinned women sort of the same way that Americans look at fat white women.</b> <u>Most American guys don't dream of waking up every morning next to an obese woman, but admittedly, some guys are into that sort of thing.</u> And if you are, you've got <b>the pick of the litter</b> . And that's how it is with <b>Isaan type women</b> .	WFDG 6
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The VOLUNTARILY/ INVOLUNTARILY conceptual opposition relates to preference for certain qualities in women that are sought by Thai and Western men. This example is different from the previous ones in that both parties are portrayed as equal as they both have a choice (VOLUNTARILY). The two types of men (representing EAST/ WEST) are divided based on their perceptions. The difference is triggered by an Explicit opposition, *a huge perception difference between X and Y* which treats the pair as a mutually exclusive. In this example, the use of 'again' after 'the Isaan factor' associates these women in example 19 with the ones in example 18. The difference is that the place, 'Isaan region' is mentioned, which adds a certain connotation to the 'ugly women' in example 18. By using the term 'factor' (as well as the modifier, 'average' used to describe farangs), the association between Isaan women and 'ugly' women is generalised suggesting that all women from Isaan are ugly. Hence, the NORMAL/ ABNORMAL conceptual opposition is also allied here through the use of 'most' and 'average' to express the normalcy of the situation.

Regarding GOOD/ BAD conceptual opposition, the women mentioned in this context are all associated with the BAD, but their differences are in the EAST/ WEST conceptual opposition represented with Thais/ American guys in '**Thais look at dark-skinned women sort of the same way that Americans look at fat white women**'. In the sentence, even though they are described in a comparison form, the opposition maybe seen in the use of a somewhat

unconventional opposition, **Thais/ Americans**. Another gradable opposition is embedded within the Western side of the opposition. In this case, the writer uses the Concessive opposition, *but*, in ‘**Most American guys don’t dream of waking up every morning next to an obese woman, but admittedly, some guys are into that sort of thing.**’ The use of ‘admittedly’ highlights the fact that the previous sentence has a negative connotation.

20.	<p><b>Thai men of reasonable means are not going to be interested in these type of women and these women know it. <i>Don’t believe me?</i></b> Heck, just watch some Thai TV and see what they’re touting in the commercials. Constantly seeing products that are alleged to lighten women’s skin. Look at the Thai women soap stars. Certainly doesn’t fit <b>the profile of a girl typically seen with a farang.</b></p>	<p>WFDG 6</p>
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Example 20 represents the idea of BAD women through Isaan women in Thailand (EAST) and fat women in the States (WEST). The focus is on the portrayal of GOOD women. The oppositions mentioned in this example are also considered the effects of the ‘Isaan factor’ mentioned in example 20. The first effect is represented with an unequal relation represented with the conventional opposition, **men and women**: ‘Thai men of reasonable means are not going to be interested in these types of women and these women know it’. The Westerners are mentioned with an Engagement marker in the form of a question, *Don’t believe me?* which could be an indication of opposition between writer as a Thai and readers as Westerners and that this situation could be uncommon in the West. The rejection from Thai men indicate a conceptual opposition, VOLUNTARILY/ INVOLUNTARILY in that Thai men have a choice to reject these Thai women.

Even though the Western men are not mentioned, the association of Thai women with the GOOD/ BAD binary should implicate an unequal relationship between Thai and Western men in that Thai men are with ‘good’ women and Western men with ‘bad’. In this example, the GOOD/ BAD girls are based purely on physical appearances. The BAD is clearly associated

with ‘ugly’ Thai women that date farang or ‘the profile of a girl typically seen with a farang’, with the Negated opposition, *not*, the positive qualities of women are described with women in ‘some Thai TV’, ‘the commercials’ and ‘the Thai women soapstars’. These women are portrayed as authoritative figures that act as a standardised form of beauty in Thailand.

The example ends with an emphasis of the opposition between ‘Thai women soap stars’ and ‘the profile of a girl typically seen with a farang’ triggered by the Negated opposition, *not*. The use of ‘profile’ and the Negated opposition, ‘not’ highlights the mutual exclusivity of these two types of women. Besides the use of the terms ‘types’, ‘profile’, and ‘typically’ emphasises the nature of this relationship making it possible to associate them with the NORMAL in the NORMAL/ ABNORMAL binary. The following table summarises the representation of GOOD/ BAD qualities with physical appearances:

<b>BAD WOMEN</b>	<b>GOOD WOMEN</b>
Isaan factor again	Some Thai TV, commercials with lighten skin Thai women soap stars
Dark skinned women	
Isaan type women	
Fat, white women	
A girl typically seen with a farang	(a girl with (Thai men for reasonable means)

**Table 8.4: qualities of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN regarding physical appearances**

#### **8.4.1.2 GOOD/ BAD WOMEN: RICH/ POOR and CONSERVATIVE/ LIBERAL**

This section focuses on the financial status and sexual mannerism that evaluate female qualities. It is divided into *exclusive oppositions* which mean the application of oppositions to distinguish between GOOD and BAD WOMEN. It also includes inclusive oppositions which refer to how these qualities have inclusive functions to add that women are all the same, whether they are GOOD or BAD in other contexts.

#### 8.4.1.2.1 Exclusive oppositions

21.	<p>Something else: <b>if she says that she really likes farang guys and that's what she's looking for, don't just walk away - freakin run.</b> Because what <b>she's essentially saying is that she wants a farang guy and ANY farang will do.</b> You're <i>nothing special</i>, just <b>the target of opportunity.</b> <i>And why do you think she prefers a farang guy?</i> Hint: it's got <b>nothing to do with your charm and personality</b> (check <b>number 1 above</b>).</p>	<p>WFDG 10</p>
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This example is associated with the representation of the GOOD/ BAD women which is the focus of the section on DEGENERACY. Yet, the purpose of this example is to highlight the adverse effect of being more financially secure, which leads to other forms of negative qualities. The example is an elaboration of 'that sort of women' which represents bad women in Thailand. In this example, being rich is still considered a cause (CAUSE) that influences the behaviour of Thai women (EFFECT). There is a conventional opposition, '**walk away**'/ '**run**,' constructed with the Negated opposition within an imperative form of Engagement Marker. This form of warning associates Thai women who are into farang guys with the BAD, elaborated with the Negated opposition, *nothing*, that triggers an opposition between **special** and **the target of opportunity**. When it comes to a relationship, being special should be allied with the GOOD and being 'the target of opportunity' with the BAD. Being 'special' in the context of a relationship is associated with the idea of love (GOOD). When mentioned with the phrase 'target of opportunity' (BAD), this idea could be related to a well-known unconventional opposition, **love/ money**.

This conceptual opposition is also elaborated again with '**charm and personality**'/ '**(check number 1 above (RICH))**' triggered by Negated opposition, *nothing*. When discussing an issue of relationship, it could be said that the GOOD/ BAD dichotomy is expressed in the form of opposition between **true love** and **money**. As a result, being rich in this context is still



considered a cause (CAUSE) that affects the type of Thai women that the Westerners end up with (EFFECT). This appears to highlight the adverse effects of being rich since it prevents Western men from finding true love.

All in all, the women are bad because they chase after guys for money, which is already mentioned in DEVELOPMENT, in that their behaviour could be categorised as a form of development (due to their supposed lack of other means to better themselves, e.g., education). This quality leads to other negative characteristics which are CONSERVATIVE/ LIBERAL.

22.	Point here is that <b>they are very conservative when it comes to courtship</b> and the <u>man</u> <b>really has to be the aggressor</b> . If the woman is the aggressor, then she's really <i>not the type of woman that I'd be interested in</i> . <b>Women libbers in <i>the states</i> are going to hate this, but that's still the way it is in Thailand.</b>	WFDG9
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In 22, the writer elaborates the different gender role expectations in Thailand and the United States; particularly those that are associated with the idea of the GOOD/ BAD women. The first part is an explanation of the situation in Thailand. The conventional opposition, **women (They)/ man (I)**, is associated with a somewhat conventional opposition between **conservative** and **aggressor** respectively. The adverb 'very' and 'really' repeated twice as well as the modal verb 'has to' emphasise the significance of these qualities. The writer uses himself to represent all Thai men in the conditional, 'If **the woman is the aggressor**, then she's really *not the type of woman that I'd be interested in*'. Being rejected by Thai men is a form of punishment for women who do not conform to the Thai concept of gender roles (by being an 'aggressor' instead of 'conservative' in this case). The rejection of Thai men as a form of punishment is an important point which will be elaborated in later sections.

The focus here is that the rejection associates these women who are 'aggressors' with BAD WOMEN and this assertion is validated in the way he generalises these women by referring

to them as ‘the type of women’ and naturalises the situation with ‘that’s still the way it is in *Thailand*’. The situation is opposed to the situation in the States, and the writer is aware of differences in the expectation women’s gender roles in the two countries. In this instance, the opposite of ‘conservative’ should be ‘liberal’ since the writer refers to women in America as ‘Women libbers in the States’.

The fact that the writer expects their disapproval of the situation in ‘Women libbers in *the States* are going to hate this’, shows that he is aware of the opposite gender expectations of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ women in Thailand and the West. With the Concessive opposition, ‘but’ and the adverb ‘still’, the opposition between the situation in the States and Thailand seems to be associated with the idea of time within the PAST/ PRESENT dichotomy, Thailand is still associated with PAST. Since the situation no longer exists in the States, the area should be therefore allied with PRESENT. It should be noted that conservative behaviour appears to be closely associated with the notion of DEVELOPMENT. In this context, what seems to be desirable in Thailand (CONSERVATIVE), could be portrayed as a form of backwardness in the West.

23.	<p><b><u>Why would you want to be with a woman who’d basically take up with any other farang guy if given the opportunity?</u></b>What you really want is a <b>Thai woman who’s not interested in a farang guy. Actually prefers a Thai guy. You win over that sort of woman, and you’ve got something. Then you’ll know that she’s interested in you for you and nothing else.</b></p>	<p>WF DG 10</p>
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The GOOD/ BAD conceptual opposition that is represented by **a special/target of opportunity** and **charm and personality/ (being rich)** indicates another negative aspect of the relationship between Western men and Thai women. This type of relationship is the result (EFFECT) of the reputation that the Westerners are rich (CAUSE). An engagement marker in the form of a question in ‘**Why would you want to be with a woman who’d basically take up**

*with any other farang guy if given the opportunity?* emphasises the characteristic of bad women which is opposed to the good ‘conservative’ women. The question is either a rhetorical question that emphasises the negativity of this quality (being easy and loose) or a real question that implies an opposition between expectation and reality in that the writer expects that the readers must have this question because this situation might not exist in the Western world. Hence, the reality that women ‘take up with any other farang guy if given the opportunity’ could differ from the expectation of Westerners about Thailand.

So far, the relationship between Thai women and Western men is allied with BAD in the GOOD/ BAD dichotomy. The reason is mentioned in the question form as an Engagement marker that emphasises a bad quality of Thai women (*who 'd basically take up with any other farang guy if given the opportunity*) which is a quality that is opposed to being ‘conservative’. The writer also introduces another quality of a good woman with an opposition between ‘interested in a farang guy’ and ‘prefers a Thai guy’ triggered by Negated opposition, *not X, Actually Y*. The GOOD/ BAD conceptual opposition is elaborated with two types of relationship in that the one with a farang guy could be allied with BAD and with Thai guys as GOOD. This idea is supported by the implication of an unconventional opposition, love/ money, as mentioned earlier in that these women are ‘interested in you for you.’ This form of opposition could indicate that ‘nothing else’ could mean money which is something that the ‘bad women’ are after. This could also mean that the CAUSE/ EFFECT binary is still evident in this context.

In furtherance of this point, the writer portrays the relationship between Thai women and Western men in the form of situation where there is a lack of choice. Due to this lack of choice, Western men are chased after by Thai women. As they are generally financially poor, Thai women have to go after rich Western men for money though they may want to be with Thai men. By chasing after Western men for their money, the Thai men view this kind of behaviour as being non-conservative. As a result, these women are rejected by Thai men for their actions. Considering the notion of FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT, both Westerners (RICH) and Thai

women (POOR), when discussing ‘true love’ in the form of relationship, appears to have negative consequences.

The writer normalises the situation by treating the assigned gender roles as absolute as seen in the categorisation of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN and in the generalisation as fact that that is ‘the way it is in Thailand’. Thus, those who cannot conform to the ‘norm’ is treated like others, and the exclusion process is in the form of rejection by Thai men. With this in mind, the fact that Thai men are associated with GOOD women (the conservative ones) can not only exclude BAD women who are aggressive (or liberal in the Western perspective) from the Thai community but also ally them with Western men. The association of Thai men with good women and Western men with bad ones points out to an unequal power relationship between Thai and Western men. The following example is also about the conceptual opposition, GOOD/ BAD WOMEN, but the linguistic oppositions are constructed negatively, which means that the ‘good Thai women’ exclude themselves from the stigma of ‘bad women’.

24.	<p><i>But then there’s the number 2 rep that farangs carry around, <u>the whore-chasing thing</u>. <b>Most Thai girls are actually conservative by nature</b> and really <i>don’t want to be seen as</i>“<b>that sort of woman.</b>”<i>So that takes out the “nice” girls.</i><b>And the women that are educated and well-off –well <u>they don’t need that stigma</u></b> either. I mean, <u>why be looked at as some low-class gold-digger when you’ve already got your own money?</u> <i>So what you’re left with are the poor desperate types who really aren’t concerned about their reputation or what other people think because quite frankly, they have much more pressing problems.</i></i></p>	<p>WFDG 4</p>
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The above example introduces another aspect of Westerners, described as ‘the whore-chasing thing’ which seems to contribute to a combination of GOOD/ BAD and CAUSE/ EFFECT conceptual oppositions. In this context, the reputation is considered another reason (CAUSE)

why Isaan women could be viewed as bad women and that the Westerners only end up with this type of women (EFFECT).

The good and bad qualities of women centre on the area of education, financial status, and gender expectation. Based on the linguistic description, the 'good' women are the ones that are 'conservative', 'nice', 'educated and well-off' and 'already got your own money'. The 'bad' women, referred to as 'that sort of women', could be identified with 'the whore' based on the reputation of the Westerners as 'the whore chasing thing'. In this context, 'the whore' could refer to a real prostitute or a woman with promiscuous behaviour considering that they behave differently from women who are 'conservative'.

Another GOOD/ BAD conceptual opposition is represented with the phrases **educated and well-off/ that stigma** (as a whore/ that sort of woman). The education level seems to go hand in hand with financial status when being 'educated and well-off' is mentioned side by side which gives an indication that education is limited to the rich. However, unlike being 'conservative' which could to a certain extent be concerned with sexual behaviour, when being 'educated and well-off' is treated as opposed to 'that stigma' which is associated with 'that sort of woman', it would appear to be somewhat tenuous. This association of poverty with prostitution may also have some element of ideological significance.

For the last representation of the GOOD/ BAD binary, the 'bad' women are related to the class system and financial status because they are referred to as 'low-class gold-digger' and 'poor desperate type' and the 'good' women are described with 'already got your own money'. The modifier 'poor' and 'desperate' indicate the lack of choice to be 'concerned about their reputation or what other people think'. The comparative opposition 'much more pressing problems' could be related to the issues between face and money. The face could be considered as significantly important for Thai people as they are associated with the concept of GOOD/ BAD.

The lexical choices also trigger oppositions between two types of Thai women. The GOOD/BAD conceptual opposition seems to be expressed by an attempt of 'good' women to avoid being identified with 'bad' women who are described by following terms, '*don't want to be seen as*', '*So that takes out*', '*they don't need*', and '*why be looked at as ...?*'. For the CAUSE/EFFECT binary, the lack of education and the financial status seem to be associated with the CAUSE in that it is the reason that these women have to turn to the Westerners, who are known for being rich. The Thai-Western relationship involving poor women and prostitution could be considered as cause (CAUSE) that leads to the situation where Westerners always have to end up with these 'bad' women because the 'good' ones do not want to be identified with the 'bad.'

The lexical choice in 'conservative by nature' and 'poor desperate type' also appears to emphasise the idea that being 'conservative' is something that 'most Thai women' are born with. This idea seems to highlight the lack of choice which is also mentioned with the adjective, 'desperate'. Hence, in this submission, there seems to be no room for these women for self-development and to better themselves.

To sum it up, the concept of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN is associated with the CONSERVATIVE/ LIBERAL, RICH/ POOR, and EDUCATED/ UNEDUCATED. In Example 3 which focuses on the association between GOOD/ BAD and NORMAL/ ABNORMAL, the women who are associated with the concept of 'BAD' in example 4 above are also allied with the concepts of ABNORMAL, LIBERAL, POOR and UNEDUCATED. The concept of LIBERAL is contextualised, and it seems to involve the idea of prostitution semantically. The DEGENERACY in the following example is elaborated with a description of physical appearances.

	<b>GOOD THAI WOMEN</b>	<b>BAD THAI WOMEN</b>
Qualities	(RICH)  unlexicalized	POOR  (no other ways to make a living)
	Conservative  (when it comes to courtship and the man really have to be the aggressor)	(if the woman is the aggressor, then she's really not the type of woman that I'd be interested in)
Compared with the West	(not Westernized)	Women libbers in the States are going to hate this, but that's still the way it is in Thailand.
	The "nice" girls	Stigma = whore  (Westerners = the whore-chasing thing)
	Educated and well-off	"that sort of woman"
	When you've already got your own money	Some low-class gold-digger
	Concerned about their reputation or what other people think	Poor desperate types who really aren't concerned about their reputation or what other people think because quite frankly, they have much more pressing problems.
The partners	Thai men  (True love: interested in you, for you and nothing else)	Westerners  (Money: Target of opportunity, not charm and personality)  (the whore chasing thing)

**Table 8.5: summary of linguistic oppositions portraying qualities of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN**

#### 8.4.1.2.2 Inclusive oppositions

In WFDGAT, there are clear distinctions between GOOD and BAD WOMEN. They are primarily dependant on whether they are of Isan origin, their sexual mannerism (conservative), financial status and educational level. On the other hand, the female writer in WWTAM appears to construct comparably inclusive oppositions about the qualities of women.

25.	You think if <b>we don't work in bars</b> then <b>we're designated Good girls</b> .	WWTM 1
26.	Some people say that they respect <b>bargirls</b> <i>more than regular girls</i> because at least bargirls are honest about what they're up to. I can see why they say that.	WWTM 2
27.	<i>And juggling guys to bargain for the best offer? Yes, some of us want it all, just like your bargirls.</i>	WWTM 4

**Table 8.6: examples representing linguistic oppositions associated with GOOD/ BAD WOMEN**

In example 25, 'You think' represents the GIVEN KNOWLEDGE (FAMILIAR) about Thai women that the writer, a female Thai, assumes the readers, males Westerners, have. The GOOD/ BAD conceptual opposition may be directly applied considering the modifier, 'Good' in the opposition, '**we don't work in bars**'/ '**we're designated Good girls**' triggered with Negated opposition, *not*. According to the writer, the definition of 'good' and 'bad' women are determined by the awareness of places. In other words, those who are associated with 'bars' are inevitably considered 'bad' and those who are not are 'good'. The Negated opposition, *not*, turns these two types of women into mutual exclusivity and the modifier 'designated' seems to naturalise the situation in that those who don't work in a bar are normally good and vice versa. This seems to highlight the concepts of INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE in that the bargirls are generalised as being all bad.



In example 26, the writer introduces NEW KNOWLEDGE that is contrary to the Westerners' belief that there is a clear distinction between good and bad women in Thailand with another opposition, **bargirls/ regular girls** triggered with a Comparative opposition, *X more than Y*. She seems to distance herself from the statement by using 'some people' as a subject of the statement which seems unspecific, but at the same time, it seems to appeal to the idea of commonness in the statement in such a way that it is common knowledge. The writer then gives her approval to this point by stating, 'I can see why they say that'.

In this example, the two types of Thai women are not significantly different for several reasons. The Comparative opposition triggers a gradable opposition which should be a less conclusive form of opposition in comparison with the complementary (constructed with 'not') in the previous example. Besides, the opposition is an inclusive one in that the 'bargirls' and 'regular girls' are not completely different. Additionally, the comparison, 'respect bargirls *more than* regular girls' seems to ally the bargirls with the GOOD and regular girls with the BAD since within the realm of honesty, 'bargirls' are considered more honest.

Apart from this HONEST/ DISHONEST conceptual opposition, the NORMAL/ ABNORMAL is still used here because of the modifier 'regular'. Hence, even though the point is to say that these two types of women are not that different, the lexical choice still posits bargirls in a less conventional group (ABNORMAL) in society.

Example 27 reveals more comparison between Thai women and bargirls. The question that is immediately followed by an answer is a form of an engagement marker that includes the readers in the discussion. The conceptual binaries THAI/WESTERN and MAN/ WOMEN manifests themselves implicitly through reader-writer relationship considering that the writer is a female Thai and the expected readers are Westerners. The question seems to be expected, so it represents EXPECTATION from the Westerners which is followed by the answer that describes the REALITY or FACT about Thailand.

The question, ‘*And juggling guys to bargain for the best offer?*’ seems like an churlish statement without justification. However, it is the opposition, ‘**some of us**’/ ‘**your bargirls**,’ mentioned in the answer that seems to determine the value of the activity in the question. In this instance, the universal value of ‘your bargirls’ seems to give a negative connotation to the activity. With an inclusive form of opposition, both ‘**some of us**’ and ‘**your bargirls**’ are allied with BAD in GOOD/ BAD conceptual opposition.

Moreover, the pronoun usage, ‘us’/ ‘your,’ treats bargirls as outsiders in Thai society by allying them with the Westerners (the readers). Similar to the other submission, this process of compartmentalising Bar Girls as ‘others’ is partly achieved by allying ‘bargirls’ with the Westerners. As a direct result of this association, the Westerners end up being thought of as BAD in GOOD/ BAD dichotomy as well.

Even though the phrase ‘some of us’ triggers and leaves room for some ‘truly’ good women, the main opposition seems to still be about an unclear demarcation between bargirls who represent ‘bad’ girls and ‘regular’ Thai women who represent ‘good’ women. Even though these women are not starkly different, the use of GOOD/ BAD dichotomy to describe women seems to prove the significance of this concept in the representation of women.

28.	<p><b>These poor families</b> are taking advantage of you. Don’t let them. It’d be nice of <b>you to help them if you are genuinely inclined to</b>, but the idea of expecting someone who marries into the family to feed the whole extended family is appalling. <b>Don’t help us make it a new culture here.</b> Everyone works. Period.<i>Even though she’s working for peanuts but the idea of working is all about putting in efforts to earn something and learn to appreciate what you’ve earned. We all know that. Sleeping with someone and getting money from the guy is sheer prostitution, however subtle you make it look. (Don’t say sleeping with someone is a way to “earn” something too!)</i></p>	<p>WWTM 15</p>
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	<p><b>Don't let your girlfriend fool you that men are expected to be responsible for the Thai girlfriend's finances. <u>If she's a decent girl, she wouldn't ask you to support her like that. If she has the nerve to ask you for your financial support, do it because you feel sorry for her being a bargirl or working for peanuts, or so that you feel like a white knight in shining armor saving her from her dirt poor life, but just DON'T do it because...ok...that must be a Thai thing.</u></b></p>	
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Following the argument of the male Thai writer, being entirely financially dependent on men appears to have adverse effects on women, making them comparable to prostitutes. Even though the oppositions include the Thai people as a whole, there is also a use of GOOD/ BAD women that are associated with RICH/ POOR in this instance. The writer specifies that the problem that is mentioned in the previous example is with POOR Thai people as in ‘**These poor families** are taking advantage of you’. This could be an association of poor Thai families with BAD and the rest of the Thais with GOOD. The BAD is also represented with ‘prostitutes’ as seen in ‘**Sleeping with someone and getting money from the guy is sheer prostitution, however subtle you make it look.**’

The BAD WOMEN mentioned through a series of Negated opposition with Imperatives such as, ‘*Don't*’, in a way is an engagement marker aimed at addressing Westerners. On the other hand, the GOOD WOMEN are mentioned and described directly through the conditional in, ‘If she's a **decent** girl, she wouldn't ask you to support her like that’. This seems to be an indication that the GOOD girls are opposed to these BAD girls.

The example ends with the oppositions between the two types of reasons to help Thai women, with the statement “If she has the nerve to ask you for your financial support, do it because you feel sorry for her being a bargirl or working for peanuts, or so that you feel like a white knight in shining armor saving her from her dirt poor life, but just DON'T do it

**because...ok...that must be a Thai thing**". The reference of "the Thai things" also appears to highlight the notion of the INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE in which the Westerners assume an act of individuals as a form of collective or stereotypical behaviour of Thai people.

In terms of education, the male writer points out how it can distinguish the quality of Thai women. Ironically, Thai women point out how education does not seem to outweigh the immaturity of Thai women. The following example points out how education, which should be a form of means to intellectual development, does not apply to Thai women.

29.	If someone with limited English, and you have absolutely nothing in common with, wants to date or have a relationship with you, what is the reason or motivation behind that? Would it be <b>her genuine interest in knowing, learning and understanding about you through her limited English</b> ? Or is it <b>something extraneous—decent meals they can't afford, better lifestyle, gifts, free trips to other countries, money, passport, etc?</b>	WWTM 2
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The implicit US/ THEM is be realised throughout the example with the use of a series of questions in example 29. By using a question form as a form of Engagement marker to induce the readers into the conversation, the first opposition is an implicit one between the writer, a Thai, and the readers, Westerners. Of all these questions, only the first appears to act as a real question, whereas the rest seem to give answers in the form of oppositions triggered by a Binarised opposition, *X? Or Y?* Moreover, the semantic feature of **genuine/ extraneous** could lead to an association of the opposition, **her genuine interest in knowing, learning .../something extraneous—decent meals ...**, with the HONEST/ DISHONEST conceptual opposition, that 'genuine interest' should be an indication that the person is being honest in the relationship and 'something extraneous' points to dishonest behaviour. Hence, the idea of GOOD/ BAD women seems to be presented in the HONEST/ DISHONEST conceptual opposition. In this case, the concept of DISHONEST appears to be attached to the financial

dependence Thai women who rely on Western men to get the things that ‘they can’t afford’. Hence, the concept of CHILD/ ADULT should be applied to this relationship.

#### 8.4.1.3 NORMAL/ ABNORMAL: within the Western communities

The following section is an inclusion of Stickman’s views to highlight the two types of Western men. His opinions are included in the DEGENERACY section as they point out how Western men fail to conform to standards associated with Western men and consequently, should be treated as OUTSIDER. Given this lack, Western men fail in their relationships with the Thais. The opposition is constructed with Engagement Marker in a form of imperatives in the following examples.

30.	There sure are <b>genuine girls out there</b> <i>but you need to use your brain up there, not down there</i> , to single her out.	WWTM 4
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The opposition, **to use your brain up there/ down there**, triggered by a Negated opposition, *not*, and a semantic trigger, *up/down*, seems to trigger an opposition, **genuine/ (not genuine)** girls at the beginning of the sentence. These two types of women are allied with HONEST/ DISHONEST and also GOOD/ BAD. The **brain up there/ down there** seems to be applied to the Westerners and associated with the idea of **being smart about the situation** and **being obsessed with sexual activities**. The closest conceptual opposition for this opposite pair is INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT. The association between the idea of SEX and UNINTELLIGENT leads to a negative connotation for the sexual activities which is another reason why bargirls, whose work has strong connections to paid sexual activity, are also associated with BAD (women). To the writer, being stupid refers to how the Westerners fail to be an adult in the relationship.

31.	Brilliant! There we have it, <b>guys</b> , right from <b>a Thai woman's lips!</b> This really is <u>compulsory reading</u> for <b>every foreign guy</b> getting involved with <b>a Thai woman</b> . <u>The sad thing</u> is that if a foreign guy had written this, he would probably be called <b>a racist</b> . But it's <b>true</b> , all of it. It really is.	WWTM 22
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Stickman's validation is in the adjective, 'Brilliant!' and the way he refers to the story as 'compulsory reading' which seems to indicate the necessity for the subject piece of information to be allied with the TRUTH. The oppositions, **guys/ a Thai woman's lips** and **every foreign guy/Thai women**, is embedded with some prejudicial connotation as seen in another pair of opposition, **a racist/ true**. Stickman's comment, 'The sad thing' indicates an inequality in that even though it is considered the 'truth' if Western men had said it, it would have been considered racist.

32.	<This is oh so true. <b>The average foreigner in Thailand is so soft that I am surprised he can get a hard on.</b> <i>I am disgusted at how weak THE MAJORITY of farang men in Thailand are and <u>many even have the audacity to criticise</u> those who are strong.</i> (BKKSU wrote an excellent piece which touched on this a few months back) – Stick>	WWTM 22
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Stickman's voice emphasises the idea that this is a 'mistake' that Western men make with Thai women. He also uses the NORMAL/ ABNORMAL conceptual opposition to distinguish two types of Western men. The opposition seems to imply an opposition between two types of Western men separated by the place, THAILAND. The modifier 'average' implicates what is common in Thailand (but at the same time uncommon in the West). Hence, what happens in Thailand is contradict to what happens in the WEST. This point is emphasised again with 'THE MAJORITY' written in uppercase which emphasises the normality of the behaviour of Western men in Thailand which associated with WEAK. This highlights the idea that Western men in Thailand are associated with WEAK and at the same time Western men in the WEST

are strong. As a result, this is a way to say that people are ABNORMAL in Thailand or Thailand is a place that makes them different.

For Western men to be treated as weak has a negative connotation given the usage of phrases such as ‘I’m disgusted at’ and ‘many even have the audacity to criticise’. In this case, being weak is a characteristic of a child. As a result, being weak is a mistake of Westerners because they are supposed to assume the role of adults. He reinforces his view in the following examples.

33.	<p><i>It's time <b>foreign guys</b> started growing balls and not listening to some of the BS from some people and on some forums where the consensus is that if a Thai said something it must be right and as <b>we</b> are not <b>Thai</b> we can't possibly understand <u>their culture</u>. NONSENSE!</i></p> <p>It takes only a small amount of <u>common sense</u> to see that often <b>the wool is pulled over the spineless foreigner's eyes.</b></p>	<p>WWTM 22</p>
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Example 33 focuses on the transition of the Westerners from **being unaware of the problem** to **being aware**. The phrase, ‘It’s time’ seems to denote a specific point of transition and ‘started growing balls’ seems to indicate the transition of ‘foreign guys’ from not knowing that they can understand Thai culture, to one that makes them realise that they can, as evidenced by his statement that ‘*if a Thai said something it must be right and as **we** are not **Thai** we can't possibly understand their culture*’. The ‘NONSENSE’ acts as Negated Opposition to implicate an opposition between understanding Thailand at a cultural level and merely using common sense to understand it. The saying, ‘the wool is pulled over the spineless foreigner's eyes’ seems to represent the problem that foreigners do not understand the problem about Thai women and that it could be easily solved by exercising a modicum of ‘common sense’. The transition is highlighted again in the following example:

34	<p><b>Wake up, white man!</b> You bring plenty to the table. If you don't get <b>common decency</b> in return, call her on it and if she doesn't <b>agree to mend her ways</b>, leave!</p>	<p>WWTM 22</p>
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The imperative ‘Wake up, white man’ triggers an opposition between the writer, who is aware of the mistake’ and the readers, ‘who do not’, both of whom are Westerners. Again the notion of common sense is an integral part of the discussion in that what is needed for the relationship to work is called ‘common decency’ and for the Thai woman to ‘agree to mend her ways’. The fact that Thai women are unable to act with common decency is an indication that Thai women likened to children because they do not have a common sense.

The personal asides, as well as comments from Stickman emphasise the ‘mistakes’ of Western men by not conforming to stereotypes about Western men such as being smart and strong. In other words, these Western men in Thailand should be associated with being ABNORMAL based on the mistakes they make in their relationship. From here onwards, the writer describes the differences between Thais and Westerners which to target their level of maturity and their mentality. The whole table focuses on issues that arise in the area of financial support. In this case, the CHILD/ ADULT is closely related to being financially independent.

### 8.5 Conclusion

Chapter 8.7 summarises the conceptual oppositions used in the representation of Thailand from the Thais perspectives.

CATEGORIES	TYPES OF OPPOSITIONS	MAIN CONCEPTUAL OPPOSITIONS	ASSOCIATED CONCEPTUAL OPPOSITIONS
8.2 FAMILIARITY	External oppositions	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	INSIDER/ OUTSIDER,



			NORMAL/ ABNORMAL,  GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE,  RIGHT/ WRONG,  GOOD/ BAD  WOMEN
		NORMAL/ ABNORMAL	ATTRACTIVE/ UNATTRACTIVE
		LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL	GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE,  RIGHT/ WRONG,  INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE
	Internal oppositions	INSIDER/ OUTSIDER	COMMON/ UNCOMMON,  ACTIVE/ PASSIVE,  CHILD/ ADULT
8.3 DEVELOPMENT	External oppositions	FINANCIAL + EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	DEVELOPTED/ UNDEVELOPED,  NORMAL/ ABNORMAL,  RICH/ POOR,  CAUSE/ EFFECT,

			GOOD/ BAD
		MATURE/ IMMATURE	CHILD/ ADULT, NORMAL/ ABNORMAL, DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE, INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT, SELFISH/ SELLESS, US/ THEM
8.4 DEGENERACY	External oppositions	DESIRABLE/ UNDESIRABLE	GOOD/ BAD, CAUSE/ EFFECT, EDUCATED/ UNEDUCATED, COMMON/ UNCOMMON, CONSERVATIVE/ LIBERAL, VOLUNTARILY/ INVOLUNTARILY,
		CONSERVATIVE/ LIBERAL	GOOD/ BAD, PAST/ PRESENT,

			DEVELOPMENT
		(financial and educational)  MATURE/ IMMATURE	GOOD/ BAD,  US/ THEM,  HONEST/ DISHONEST,  CHILD/ ADULT,  RICH/ POOR,  INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE,  SELFISH/ SELFLESS,  THAI/ WESTERN,  NORMAL/ ABNORMAL,  EDUCATED/ UNEDUCATED,  REAL/ IDEAL
		GOOD/ BAD  WOMEN (bargirls/ normal girls)	GIVEN/ NEW  KNOWLEDGE,  GOOD/ BAD,  HONEST/ DISHONEST,  THAI/ WESTERN,

			NORMAL/ ABNORMAL

**Table 8.7: summary of conceptual oppositions used in chapter 8**

The chapter represents supposed Thai views on the ‘Other’ within the domains of FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY. For the concept of FAMILIARITY, both writers see the Westerners' lack of understanding of Thai culture as a cause for failure in their relationship with the Thais. In WFDGAT, the writer appears to justify his oppositions with a sense of NORMALCY, with the use of words such as ‘typical’ and ‘average’ to support his construction of INSIDER/ OUTSIDER conceptual oppositions, through exclusion with the reference of ‘every Thai person’/ ‘no farang’ or by way of inclusion with "both men and women". The concept of INSIDER/ OUTSIDER is constructed to represent the typical Thai women and the ones that date Westerners. In doing so, the writer conforms to Winitchakul (1994) and Chachavalpongpun (2005) that the Thais define themselves through negative identification of others. His oppositions between Isan and the rest of the Thais are also comparable to the discourse related to Thai social class in 1.4.2 proposed by Vorng (2017).

In WFDGAT, the OUTSIDER includes Westerners and Thai women who date Westerners. With reference to GIVEN KNOWLEDGE, as evidenced in the statement ‘because it's true the majority of time’ to generalise that this type of women are bargirls, the writer treats the relationship as something so common that it relates Thailand to the concept of the ABNORMAL. The normality of the relationship between Thai women and Western men is portrayed as something so normal that there is no room for the variations in that no matter how hard the Western research for their ideal woman, they all must end up with this type of Thai woman. In this context, the writer appears to conform to the discourse of Orientalism (2003) with assumptions that people from the Orient are all the same. Therefore, their inferior

position is justified as being part of their nature. This point is elaborated with the conceptual opposition, COLLECTIVE/ INDIVIDUAL.

In WWTAM, the UNFAMILIAR is also associated with a form of GIVEN KNOWLEDGE which means that their understanding about Thailand is a result of 'Western mentality'. The writers perceive Thailand based on what they think they know about the country. The writer also generalises Thai women by using their personal experiences (INDIVIDUAL) as a fact about Thai women as a whole (COLLECTIVE). The UNFAMILIAR is also evident in the form of logic (LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL) as seen in an emphasis on the opposition in, '**This Western way of dealing with things is non-existent to us. It's not in our mentality.**'

For DEVELOPMENT, in WWTAM, the male writer sees the financial status (RICH/ POOR) of a person as a form of development. It is cited as a reason why Thai women who fall within the concept of the OUTSIDER (POOR), use wealth as a form of social development as shown in example 3. The consequences of being poor in Thailand, as well as the GIVEN KNOWLEDGE that they are all prostitutes are considered undesirable. It also entrenches their position as outsiders in Thai society. This also includes the exclusion of the Westerners, as no "decent" woman wants the stigma of being a farang's girlfriend.

On the other hand, in WWTAM, the female Thai writer relies on the Westerners for (self) development, to lead Thai women to be more mature in their relationships (CHILD/ ADULT). The association of Thai women with the concept of the CHILD is evident with phrases such as "throwing tantrums" while the Western women are mentioned by comparison as 'a civilized person' (23). The writer also uses a series of imperatives such as 'don't let,' so that the Westerners can resume their roles as adults in the relationship. Based on this relationship, the female writer engages in the Orientalist discourse (2003) about the Oriental's need for white men to save them.

The concept of DEGENERACY, for the male writer, appears to be based on the ATTRACTIVE/ UNATTRACTIVE conceptual oppositions which are used as desirable

qualities to include good women and exclude bad women. In this context, the 'good women' need to be conservative, educated and well-off; and Isaan. As the relationship between bad Thai women and Western men are stigmatised and normalised, one of the good qualities is that they have to be more like Thai men. The writer admits that his view that women should be conservative is something of a past belief ('women libbers in the states are going to hate this'), but he maintains that 'that's still the way it is in *Thailand*'. This appears to be another association of Thailand with the past. His perspectives about Thai women is parallel to Jeffries's discussion of the stereotypical images of desirable women in nationalist discourse in which being conservative is one of the qualities of good Thai women (2002).

The female writer sees it in almost a melodramatic way in some examples. To begin with, in examples 25 and 26, she makes an association between 'bargirls' and 'regular girls' which make the demarcating line between good and bad women unclear. However, she also sees that poverty could also be a cause for practicing deception. She does not agree that women should not work. She maintains that they should and earn to support themselves and their families. The writer also views prostitution negatively and refers to women who do not work and expect to be supported as prostitutes. To the female writer, being dependent appears to be the most undesirable than being promiscuous.

Internal oppositions also apply to Western men who are considered weak and do not conform to the Western perceptions of masculinity. Stickman supports this generalisation. The section shows that within Western communities, those with abnormal behaviour are also treated as outsiders. The internal oppositions within Western society are similar to the representation of tourists from Khao San who fail to conform to the Western standard (OUTSIDER).

All in all, the male writer in WWDGAT appears to be repetitive with the use of oppositions. For instance, it takes four examples (7-10) to explain the dating situation in Thailand (ABNORMAL) that it is dramatically different from what happens in the West (NORMAL). This style of writing appears throughout his submission. Considering the context of the website, the concepts of NORMALITY and COLLECTIVITY appear to be his attempt to

distance *himself and the 'good' women* (US) from *the Westerners and the bargirls* (THEM). The writer challenges the Orientalist discourse in term of the backwardness of the East (Thailand), but reinforce the gender stereotype that women are dependant and passive: his way to show the superiority of Thailand is through the quality of 'good' Thai women. The female writer, on the other hand, reinforces both the Orientalist and gender stereotypes. Regardless of her attempts to distinguish herself from 'the other type of Thai women', she still treats dependency on (Western) men as a positive quality. Considering the linguistic evidence, she seems to be allied with the WEST in the realm of Orientalism (Said, 2003).

## CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

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### 9.1 Introduction

The first part of the chapter aims at answering the following research questions that I have asked in this thesis:

<b>RQ 1</b>	What conceptual oppositions are constructed between Thailand and the West (external)?
<b>RQ 2</b>	What conceptual oppositions are constructed within Thailand (internal)?
<b>RQ 3</b>	What are the differences between conceptual oppositions in different types of texts about Thailand?
<b>RQ 4</b>	To what extent do the conceptual oppositions in discourse about Thailand constitute an Orientalist discourse?

The main discussion focuses on the fourth research questions to which I proffer a link between the results of my research in the context of the linguistic representation of Thailand in light of Said's discourse about Orientalism (2003). The chapter ends with a discussion of some aspects of linguistic oppositions that could be related to various other cultural oppositions. This process, to a large extent, underscores and concurrently highlights the significance of this thesis and paves the way for others who may be interested in understanding cultural oppositions.



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## **9.2 What conceptual oppositions are constructed between Thailand and the West (external)?**

As established in Chapters 5 to 8, the linguistic oppositions that represent the relationship between Thailand and the West are conceptualised into three domains: FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY.

### **9.2.1 FAMILIARITY**

To the Westerners, Thailand encompasses various degrees of FAMILIARITY. In section 5.2 and 6.2, in the course of promoting tourism, the opposition is constructed with the term *exotic* to trigger and evoke a sense of the UNFAMILIAR. This sense is valued in the discourse related to tourism as it is diametrically opposed to what seems to the tourist as his/her mundane life at home. This stimulates the potential tourist to crave for a journey, extended or otherwise, and to immerse oneself in a myriad of new experiences by embarking on this journey. The exotic element ranges from unique landscapes to different ways of life lived by the locals in a given destination. This type of opposition also, to a certain extent, gives an inkling as to what is perceived as Western normality. For the purposes of discourse in tourism, exoticism is deemed as a generally positive trait. These constructions related to the exotic are often accompanied by claims about *the friendliness* of the locals. When mentioned in opposition

forms, these positives could mitigate the potentially problematic (real or imagined) side related to the concept of UNFAMILIARITY for the Western tourist.

In the context of interracial relationships, as examined in section 7.2 and 8.2, the differences are made directly and specifically as applicable to Thailand. The oft repeated sentiment that *Thailand and the West are different in so many ways* echoes frequently and consistently throughout this Thesis. The research was undertaken and from the evidence deduced, the cultural differences are cited primarily as causes for problems in relationships between Thai women and Western men. The concept of the UNFAMILIAR is also associated with the conceptual oppositions, INSIDER/ OUTSIDER and INCLUSION/ EXCLUSION.

Here, the focus is on the effects of the cultural distinctions, prejudices and preferences that manifest themselves. All these qualitative differences go towards influencing people to the extent that there is a gradual progression to the formation of in-groups who share specific characteristics, attributes and qualities and those who do not and are consequentially treated as outsiders. The process turns supposedly gradable oppositions between Us and Them into complementary with nothing in common.

In this study, one of the most well-known aspects of Thailand is the flourishing sex-industry and the wide-spread prevalence of prostitution. It is represented as a 'stereotype' or a form of GIVEN KNOWLEDGE in the GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE conceptual binary. In 5.2.1.2, 6.2.1.2, 7.2.1.4 and 8.2.1.1, this knowledge could possibly be due to an effect of a legacy that began in the past, which is possibly entrenched in the mindset of people as a direct result of the media enforcing the notion that Thailand is the definitive destination in the East for Western men to indulge in carefree and abundantly available sexual activities. This portrayal of Thailand continues until the present time. Therefore, the notion of the FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR is also part of the temporal opposition, PAST/ PRESENT. The information related to the sex industry in Thailand is considered significant when it (GIVEN KNOWLEDGE) is mentioned alongside an introduction of new information, namely dining

experiences for the rich or expensive accommodation (NEW KNOWLEDGE). Its reference may seem odd, but it does disclose shared awareness about Thailand in the Western community.

The distinctions between Thailand and the West is also partially based on the different degrees of REALITY (FANTASY/ REALITY) when Thailand is referenced with terms such as dreams or paradise. In contrast, the West represents the reality at home. In the representation of people, the REALITY is tied into the notion of LOGIC, see 5.2.1.3, 6.2.1.3, 7.2.1.2 and 8.2.1.2. In the discussion of the relationship between Thais and Westerners, Thai women are represented as being emotional and illogical. They are consequently aligned with ILLOGICAL in the LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL conceptual opposition.

The notion of ILLOGICAL is also applied to unusual circumstances in Thailand. In YSM, the Western writer behaves in a way that is considered 'abnormal' when in Thailand, by being emotional and irrational. Then, he becomes normal again once he goes back to his home in Scotland. The Thai writer in WFDGT also points out the abnormal and peculiar dating formalities and idiosyncrasies that seem to be typical of Thailand, for example, the widely held notion that attractive Western men only end up with unattractive Thai women from Isan.

### **9.2.2 DEVELOPMENT**

This concept is primarily related to the association of the West and Westerners with modernity, progress, and intelligence, whilst Thailand and its people are associated with the opposite of these qualities in a negative light. The elaborate details of the linguistic oppositions that are associated with this concept are discussed in sections 5.3, 6.3, 7.3, and 8.3. The emphasis is also on the changes that places and people undergo and the reasons that could inspire or bring about these changes.

The West is aligned with the concept of the DEVELOPED. While Thailand is associated with both the DEVELOPED and the UNDEVELOPED, there are elements of the West, especially

in the developed parts of Thailand. This is evidenced in a high level of services available in certain areas and through a description of the modern facilities, equipped in these areas. Therefore, the unequal power relationship between Thailand and the West still prevails even in the portrayal of the developed parts of Thailand, where the West is still associated as being the more developed of the two.

In the representation of space, the transitional oppositions represent the type of relationship that exists between the West and Thailand and the influences of the West that shape and encourage modern progress in Thailand.

Similarly, Western people also seems to exert a form of influence that shapes the mindset and value system of the Thai people. As an example, in FJ, the transformation of the stepdaughter's level of maturity is described as a result of the time she spent with the Western writer. However, the moment that she acts irrationally, she is described as 'still 100 % Thai'. Therefore, being Thai is portrayed with an inbuilt association with intellectual backwardness, especially in this particular context.

The DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED is intertwined with the concept of the CHILD/ ADULT in the representation of people. In the Thai-Western relationship, the association of Thai women with the concept of being a CHILD is explicitly portrayed with phrases such as 'Girls are like three-year-old kids' in WWTAM and 'taking care of a child' in WINMAT. The role of the Westerners as an adult also includes the notion of SAFETY in which the writer in YSMM describes himself as a 'Knight in Shining Armour' or linked to the concept of FINANCE where Thai women (POOR) are financially dependent on Western men (RICH).

### **9.2.3 DEGENERACY**

The concept of DEGENERACY involves linguistic oppositions related to the negativity associated with places and people. The discussion related to the concept of DEGENERACY is found in sections 5.4, 6.4, 7.4, and 8.4. In the discourse related to tourism, the oppositions

involve the concept of SAFETY in Thailand in reference to possible dangers that one could be exposed to. This concept is also related to the dangers associated with a direct connection to poverty. An example is not adequate standardised medical centre in the rural area. The connection between poverty and prostitution is also evident. In the Readers' Submissions, the concept focuses on the qualities of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN with an emphasis on the discussion of prostitution in Thailand juxtaposed with perceptions about (normal) Thai women.

At the fundamental level of discussion, the concept of UNFAMILIAR primarily and, to a significant extent, underscores the relationship that exists between Thailand and the West. These distinctions could be cultural (association of places with the dark-skinned tone with lower class), temporal (places still left to be discovered in Thailand), or realistic (description of places as dreams or as paradise). When these distinctions are related to the representation of people, the concept is also related to the concept of the INSIDER/ OUTSIDER giving rise to the Us/ Them dichotomy. The concept of DEVELOPMENT also represents an unequal relationship. However, it does not always tie-in negatives with poverty and low level of development, as these are portrayed as the essence of Thailand, for which there is much attraction for the discourse related to tourism. Concerning DEVELOPMENT attached to people, the research indicates the perception that Westerners are superior and that they also help the Thais to become more developed. The concept of DEGENERACY is primarily about the different aspects of safety among those working in the sex industry and the negative connotations that are attached to prostitutes.

### **9.3 What conceptual oppositions are constructed within Thailand (internal)?**

The linguistic binaries are also representative of the oppositions *within* Thai society. The distinctions are summarised along the lines of the concepts related to FAMILIARITY and

DEVELOPMENT, with an emphasis on the representation of Isan and on the topic of prostitution.

### 9.3.1 FAMILIARITY

To begin with, the conceptual opposition, INSIDER/ OUTSIDER, is applied to the representation of the Isan region. The notion of the OUTSIDER is contextual, as even from the perspective of the Thais, the Isan region is treated as Others (OUTSIDER). However, the Isan region and the Isan people are portrayed by Westerners as *genuine* Thai (AUTHENTIC). Therefore, the qualities of the Isan are significant to the definition of 'Thainess'. In contrary, the Thais portray Isan negatively. It is the predominant Thai view that the qualities of the Isan are not what 'Thainess' is about'. Conversely, Westerners see the region as even more different or unfamiliar than the rest of Thailand. Hence, within the realm of Us/ Them conceptual binary, Isan (described as undeveloped, free from the Western influence) are the West's notion of genuine 'Thainess'. The Isan region is the most authentic version of the real Thailand that Westerners are enthralled within tourism.

Within the realm of FAMILIARITY, the association of prostitution with the notion of the OUTSIDER is relative. From the analysis, the Westerners perceive the prevalence and legacy of prostitution in Thailand as part of the country's identity. For example, several linguistic oppositions between prostitutes and Thai women are redundant. In clarification that *these Thai women are not bargirls*, but they are vital as an indication of GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE about Thailand.

From the Thai perspective, the male writer clearly distinguishes prostitutes from the rest of the Thais and associating them with Isan women (considered an outsider within). The female writer, in contrast, acknowledges the stigma of being a bargirl in Thailand, but at the same time, points out that these women and 'normal' Thai are not mutually distinctive.

### 9.3.2 DEVELOPMENT

In the discourse related to tourism, financial distinctions are significant in determining the quality of places and the activities that take place. Overall, Thailand is portrayed as a country that has something for everyone. The differences are internal, but they also depend on the financial status of the visitors. The lifestyle activities of the poor are associated with the concept of AUTHENTIC or GIVEN KNOWLEDGE about Thailand, while experiences for the rich are introduced as NEW. For example, there is a perception that rural areas are for people who are interested in the authenticity of Thailand, while expensive dining experiences and other activities tailored for the rich offer what is termed as Western comforts for wealthier tourists.

As mentioned in the previous section, the qualities of Isan are considered vital in the definition of 'Thainess'. When the focus is on the people of Thailand, the oppositions between the Isan people and the rest of the people in Thailand are based on the differences in their educational level, financial status, food preferences and physical attributes (dark-skinned). In the representation of space, the Isan region is described as being far away from the developed urban areas of Thailand, and the people of the Isan region are portrayed as poor and uneducated. The female Thai describes this binary in the same way, but in a gradable degree by indicating that educated women are easier to deal with than uneducated Thai women. To the Westerners, education is inadequate to make a difference, unless it is a Western-styled form of education.

The notion of DEVELOPMENT is also applied to the representation of prostitutes in discussing the concept of CONSERVATIVE. Being conservative is considered a positive trait of Thai women. However, at the same time, it is also linked with the notion of the PAST or even BACKWARDNESS, especially when mentioned in comparison to Western progress. Being conservative is desirable in Thailand, but even the Thai writer is unable to deny that it also carries a negative connotation, especially from a feminist perspective. The division is

further complicated by the inclusion of bargirls, women from the younger generation, and Western women, as opposed to the conservative Thai women are also thrown into the mix. Within the PAST/ PRESENT dichotomy that is underlined in this context, the bargirls are portrayed as being more developed than the conventional Thai woman, whose mindset (CONSERVATIVE) is allied with the PAST. However, it still carries a negative connotation in the context of the desirable values of Thai women.

### **9.3.3 DEGENERACY**

The section is primarily concerned with the qualities of Thai women determined by their sexual mannerism, conservativeness, Isan origin, financial status and level of education. As discussed in section 8.4, Thai writers have conflicting views on the inclusion and exclusion of these qualities in GOOD WOMEN. Nonetheless, the fact that the writers mention both women in binary forms (GOOD/ BAD) could be an implication that they are aware of GOOD/ BAD dichotomy of Thai women, distinguished by the qualities mentioned earlier.

The notion of AUTHENTICITY also forms and shape internal oppositions. The use of oppositions points to what could be construed as a gradable degree of 'Thainess'. For instance, with Isan representing authenticity of Thailand, the country is perceived with the concepts of POOR and UNDEVELOPED. When the concept of AUTHENTIC is considered alongside RICH/ POOR dichotomy, the experiences that are available for the rich in the urban areas actually go towards mitigating the exotic nature of Thailand making those areas of Thailand less representative of authentic Thailand. On the contrary, viewed from the perspectives of the Thais, Isan people are represented as those belonging to a lower class of Thai society. They are consequently associated with the notion of the OUTSIDER.

Similarly, the authenticity of Thailand is represented by the sex industry in the form of GIVEN KNOWLEDGE. The conceptual binary, GIVEN/ NEW, indicates the stereotypical images of Thailand as a haven for sexual experiences which prevails in Western society. However, the Westerners appear to see no differences in Thai women, regardless of different financial or



educational background (unless it is a Western-style education). The Thai male writer provides the opposite view in his submission when he utilises linguistic oppositions to describe social hierarchy based on the educational and economic backgrounds of Thai women. The temporal opposition related to the concept of CONSERVATIVE, which is indicative of Thai women of the past, is seen as a good quality for Thai women to possess. The DEGENERACY is an elaboration of some concepts mentioned in association with the concept of DEVELOPMENT. Although in discourse related to tourism being undeveloped could be beneficial, being poor and uneducated are considered determining factors that influence Thai society's perception of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN.

#### **9.4 What are the differences between conceptual oppositions in different types of texts about Thailand?**

The section takes into consideration the effects of contexts and genres of Lonelyplanet.com and Stickmanbangkok.com on their representation of Thailand. To answer this question, Fairclough's approach to CDA (2001) is useful. To start with, the investigation of the linguistic oppositions through the syntactic frames, in 9.2 and 9.3, is considered *the micro-level* of oppositions. The answers to the first and second research questions already reveal the consistency of the conceptual oppositions that emerge in the representation of Thailand. This question is about the investigation at *the meso-level* to find out how the differences in the production process and the target audience influence the possible varieties in the representation of Thailand. The analysis at *the macro-level* will be the focus of the fourth research question.

To begin with, the study works on two websites: Stickmanbangkok.com (STB) and Lonelyplanet.com (LP). Considering the target audience and production process, as mentioned in 1.7, STB focuses on the matters of bargirls; both with a specific section devoted to the exploration of bargirls in Bangkok and with the types of advertisement on the first page.

All in all, the website appears to be sex-oriented and aim at offering information based on personal viewpoints. The section on tourism, *Travel in Thailand*, though lengthy (around 80,000 words) and devoted to aspects of tourism in Thailand, is still part of the sex-oriented website as a whole. Similarly, the Readers' Submissions, though focusing on Thai-Western relationship, are written from the perspectives of men who frequent this website. The content of their submissions should be, to some extent, influenced by the genre of the website.

On the other hand, LP is all about tourism. Even though it is considered a corporate website with standard to maintain, it is worth exploring how the prevalence of prostitution (the given knowledge about Thailand) is portrayed on this website. The answer to this research question centres around the matter of prostitution due to the pervasiveness of this industry in Thailand and its influences on the nature of the two websites.

To start with, subjects concerning women are highlighted on both websites. Though with entirely different objectives, each devotes a section that is specifically about women. In LP, the focus is on female solo travellers and the advice on how to stay safe in Thailand (ex. 32, section 5.4.1.1). In contrary, STB points out the danger of bargirls that Western men need to be aware of (section 6.4.2.1). The discussion about bargirls in STB appears to conform to the broader representation of Thailand as a hub for the sex industry, as discussed in 1.4.4.2. For instance, those who do not participate in the business is, in turn, referred to as an abnormal one, e.g. 'unless you are a prude' in example 41 (section 6.4.2.1).

LP also mentions 'bargirls' in LP, but the use is within the realm of CONSERVATIVE, namely in the discussion about dressing styles (ex. 34, section 5.4.1.2). To LP, Thai people are conservative in their sexual practice: even homosexuality is more acceptable than a public display of affection (ex. 33, section 5.4.1.2). This view on Thailand is aligned with the male Thai writer in WFDG who sees CONSERVATIVE as an authentic quality of Thai women (ex.22, section 8.4.1.2.1).

In Readers' Submissions, what should be kept in mind is that both readers and contributors are part of the sexist website. The section is divided into the Western writers (Ch 7) and Thai writers (Ch 8). Both of which is embedded with the sense of Us against Them, or the Westerners (from this website) against the Thais. However, their shared intention is to contribute to the website with their personal experiences.

Readers' Submissions are, therefore, aligned with INDIVIDUAL (or micro) in Chapters 7 and 8 which could be in contrast to or conform with the stereotypical knowledge about Thailand, COLLECTIVE (macro) in Chapters 1, 3, 5, and 6. In some cases, they also see their experiences as NEW in the GIVEN/ NEW conceptual opposition: what happens to them (NEW) are different from the stereotypes about the country (GIVEN). In other words, based on the five submissions used in this study, the writers either challenge or reinforce (AGREE/ DISAGREE) specific discourse about Thailand.

In Chapter 7 and 8, one of the most distinguished aspects is about the conceptual notion of AUTHENTICITY which is, to a certain degree, associated with their experiences with Thai women. For the Western writers, the portrayal of Thai women varies depending on the writers' *experiences* and/ or *conflicts* with Thai people. To elaborate, in YSMM (ex. 27, section 7.4.1.1), the writer associates his trouble with a bargirl with the identity of Thailand, namely his incorporation of **Devil/ Angle** to the description of **Thailand**. It is after his Western wife saves him from the incident that he starts to see Thailand for what it is and be able to separate the country from its relationship with prostitution. Also, in chapter 7, the writer of WINMT, based on his experiences with his ex-girlfriends, points out how Thai women are all the same regardless of their financial and educational background. Nevertheless, his Thai host mother is only one exception due to her Western-like qualities. Lastly, in FJ (Ch7), the relationship centres around the writer and his stepdaughter. The issues are mostly caused by his deceased wife' family. Of all the submissions written by Westerners, this writer seems to try the hardest to be a part of the Thai family while feeling like an outsider in his Western origin.

All in all, the Western writers in Chapter 7 are involved with different types of Thai women: a bargirl (YSMM), ex-girlfriends (WINMT), a stepdaughter (FJ). Even though the representation of these women may vary, their relationship can all be summarised with the same conceptual oppositions: GOOD/ BAD, CHILD/ ADULT, SAVIOUR/ VICTIM. This appears to point out the association of individual experiences with collective perceptions about Thai women and Thailand.

In Chapter 8, the Thai writers appear to participate in this website, firstly, to give a clarification on the given knowledge about Thailand. Then they assert their power as the 'real' insiders of the country. Nevertheless, the male and female Thai writers have different views on various subjects, particularly on the qualities of Thai women. In WWTM, the only female contributor writes to correct the 'mistakes that the Westerners make'. The linguistic analysis shows that her views on Thai women seem to ally with the Western writers': for instance, their 'mistakes' are caused by not conforming to the 'Western roles' in the Orientalist discourse (ex. 6, section 8.2.1.1, ex. 12, section 8.3.1.1). As a Thai, she also points out that one of the 'mistakes' is that the Western men treat Thai women as equal, in the same way that they treat the Western women (ex. 13, section 8.3.1.1). From this perspective, the writer does not seem to agree with the concept of gender equality. By rejecting such modern idea as feminism, she posits herself in a backward position which makes her traditional viewpoints consistent with the Orientalist discourse (DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED).

Lastly, in WFDGT, the male Thai writer considers himself a part of both worlds since he spent his childhood in the States and considered English his native language. The mentioning of his Western background seems to validate his thoughts on the Thai-Western relationship. His submission revolves around the notion of AUTHENTICITY in which the internal oppositions are constructed to identify the 'authenticity' of Thai women. The negative identification is prominent in this submission: the authenticity of Thai women is defined by everything that the Isan women and prostitutes are not.

The male writer clearly distinguishes the two types of Thai women in which the 'normal' and 'good' Thai women represent the AUTHENTICITY of Thai women. The linguistic opposition, namely *beautiful and educated Thai women/ ugly and uneducated Isaan women/ prostitutes*, is repeatedly used to emphasise his view on GOOD/ BAD women. On the other hand, he appears to challenge the Orientalist discourse in the area of dating hierarchy by emphasising that the 'bad' women are always with the Western men (ex. 2-3, section 8.2.1.1). In his view, this is what makes Thai men 'superior' to the Western men in the dating hierarchy (ex. 4, section 8.2.1.1, ex. 7-10, section 8.2.1.2, ex. 19-20, section 8.4.1.1, ex. 21 and 23, section 8.4.1.2.1).

However, his representation of Thailand as a static and unchanged place actually conforms to the discourse of Orientalism. In his submission, the women are objectified and defined by the men they are with: 'good' women are with Thai men, and 'bad' ones are rejected. Hence, these women are voiceless in the dating etiquette. To the writer, the women need to be passive to be 'perfect', while the ones that 'chase after' men are unacceptable. Besides, he is aware that the Western feminists might not agree with him, but still maintains that his value is appropriate in Thailand (ex. 22, section 8.4.1.2.1). Hence, the writer's view on gender is not different from the female writer's in WWTAM who believes men should adhere to their gender role as a leader in the relationship.

The answer takes into consideration the context of genres and how each text contributes to the similarities and differences in the representation of Thailand. The audience of the text is crucially important in explaining some of these differences, as well as the author and their aims in producing the text. In all, in Hallidayan terms (1985), this is largely a matter of Tenor, of the people involved and the relations between them. The association of the concepts with the cultural oppositions at the macro-level will be the focus of the next research question. All things considered, the textual oppositions are different depending on their contexts (canonical/ non-canonical or external/ internal): they encounter different types of experiences and interact with different kinds of Thai people (INDIVIDUAL). However, they are coherent in the

conceptual oppositions, namely FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR, DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, GOOD/ BAD, that are applied in their relationship with Thailand and Thai people. This shows that the writers seem to share the same stereotypical understandings about Thailand and Thai women, even in the two submissions written by Thai people (COLLECTIVE).

### **9.5 To what extent do the conceptual oppositions in discourse about Thailand constitute an Orientalist discourse?**

This final research question asks about the extent to which the linguistic oppositions constructed in the representation of Thailand conform to the discourse of Orientalism. I draw upon the six stereotypes of Orientalism outlined by McLeod (2012) as a framework for the discussion. For a study of the representation of Thailand in the Western websites, Said's Orientalism (2003) is considered apt for this study as it is concerned primarily with Us/ Them binary oppositions. Both Said's work and McLeod's interpretation of it were discussed in Chapter 3.

#### **9.5.1 The Orient is timeless.**

For McLeod, Orientalism suggests that:

A Westerner travelling to Oriental lands was not just moving into *space* from one location to the other, potentially they were also moving back in *time*, out of history, to an earlier, pre-modern world. Hence, in Orientalism, the Orient is presented as a timeless place, changeless and static, cut off from the progress of Western history.

McLeod 2012, p. 52

As McLeod (2012) mentions the stereotype revolves around the temporal opposition between the concept of PAST and PRESENT. Another focus is on the binary oppositions constructed on the degree of development as it is an association of the Orient with the notion of the PAST which assumes a stable condition, frozen in time, and, therefore, lacks development. The West, in contrast, stands for enlightenment and civilisation of the present day. The relationship

between the West and the Orient suggested by McLeod (2012) could be summarised with the conceptual oppositions in Table 1, both of which have been identified in my data in various parts of this Thesis. The stereotype is elaborated in the table below:

<b>The Orient</b>	<b>The West</b>
PAST	PRESENT
UNDEVELOPED	DEVELOPED

**Table 9.1: conceptual oppositions associated with the timelessness of the Orient**

My analysis reveals the conformity of the linguistic oppositions constructed in the discourse about Thailand in connection with stereotype related to Orientalism, especially in the notion of the PAST and DEVELOPMENT. The temporal opposition, PAST/ PRESENT, is applied to the representation of both places and people. The notion of the PAST is highlighted in Lonely Planet in section 5.2.2.2, under the FAMILIARITY. For instance, in the representation of Ko Lipe in example 13, the island is associated with the PRESENT with ‘more bungalows bursting out of the jungle’, which is followed by the reference of the PAST with ‘an island where not even footprints disturb the sand’. Another conceptual opposition NATURAL/ UNNATURAL is also utilised in describing the pristine natural state and the manmade infrastructure accordingly. The reference of ‘the big fear’ in example 14, to point out the flourishing nightclubs on the Island (UNNATURAL) exemplifies how the area associated with PAST, NATURAL, and UNFAMILIAR could be preferred over its counterparts as it offers a chance to travel through time and to be a pioneer in the otherwise already well-discovered country. Stickman also constructs similar oppositions in the data discussed in section 6.2.1.1. Example 3 points out how Thailand is not destroyed by stating ‘is not unduly damaged by the ravages of mass tourism’ (PRESENT and FAMILIAR) and that the visitors can still enjoy beaches ‘without anyone else in sight’ (PAST and UNFAMILIAR).

Another observed association of the PAST is the representation of the Isan region. In Lonely Planet, also in section 5.2.2.2 in example 11, the area is referred to as ‘a glimpse of the Thailand of old’. In Stickmanbangkok.com, in section 6.3.2.1, example 20, he states that it is

'a traditional rural slice of Thailand'. In both examples, Isan represents the authenticity of Thailand (AUTHENTIC). Therefore, no matter how developed the country appears to be, its essence that is admired in tourism could be a version related to the PAST.

The representation of Thai people is also associated with the PAST through the notion of the CONSERVATIVE. In Lonely Planet, the idea is expressed through clothing styles which the visitors are recommended to adhere to so as not to be guilty of 'offending Thais' modesty streak' (LP, section 5.3.1.1, example 22). In Stickmanbangkok.com, the notion is expressed in the form of sexual preference in 6.4.2.1, example 36; he states that '**Thai women do not necessarily believe in the concept of "free sex"**'. He also states that free sex is something that Thais see as "**an entirely Western concept**". I draw on the reference to the West, where access to *free sex* is thought of as a modern concept. Therefore, the Thais' traditional view on sex should be associated with the idea of the CONSERVATIVE.

The association of the CONSERVATIVE with the PAST is evident in a remark made by the male Thai writer in Chapter 8, section 8.4.1.2.1 and in example 22; he states explicitly that Thai women are 'very conservative when it comes to courtship'. He also suggests that this is an outdated idea when he mentions another pair of opposition by stating that 'Women libbers in *the states* are going to hate this, *but that's still* the way it is in *Thailand*' to indicate the traditional mind-sets of the Thais. Being conservative is considered a desirable quality of Thai women (GOOD WOMAN). Although Thailand and its people possess both modern and traditional qualities (PRESENT/ PAST), an association with the PAST is considered a more genuine (or preferred) representation of the country.

The concept of the PAST in this context carries positive connotations as they represent the authenticity of Thailand and the preferred qualities of the Thai people. However, the idea is overlapped with the notion of DEVELOPMENT. The cultural construction of timelessness is also applied *within* Thailand. This relates to *internal* oppositions, as well as *external* oppositions. For Internal oppositions, the linguistic oppositions represent two versions of



Thailand associated with DEVELOPED and UNDEVELOPED. The DEVELOPMENT in this context refers to modern facilities such as Western-style toilets, medical care and tourist centres. The association of Thailand with the DEVELOPED, on the one hand, challenges the Orientalism discourse. However, the fact that this modern progress is centred primarily on the areas devoted explicitly to the tourists could underscore the notion of the superiority of the West because the tourism space is transformed to accommodate the tourists who are familiar with modern facilities. It is a form of transitional opposition that the indirect influence of the West inspires the transformation of a particular area in Thailand to be classified as developed.

The Western influence on the development in Thailand is discussed in both Lonelyplanet.com and Stickmanbangkok.com in forms of modern standardised facilities, discussed in section 5.3.1.1, examples 18-21 and section 6.3.2.1, examples 23 - 26. The gradable degrees of 'Thainess' is embedded in the discourse related to the developed area representing a safe and comfortable experience in Thailand, while the undeveloped promises the tourist, the authentic version of Thailand (for example Isan region).

Oppositions to do with DEVELOPMENT also include the distinctions between activities for the rich and the poor. In the Lonely Planet, in section 5.3.1.2, example 24, 25, and especially 26 which associates the activities for the poor (POOR) with genuine 'Thainess' (AUTHENTIC). Stickman also associates the difficult journey on rural buses with friendly Thai people, something that could be comparable with the unconventional opposition, as **exotic/ friendly**. This terminology is used in the introduction to Thailand in both Stickmanbangkok.com (section 6.2.1.1, example 1) and Lonelyplanet.com (section 5.2.1.1 example 2). Therefore, though the country could be aligned with both RICH and POOR at the same time, its true identity is still associated with activities at the lower end of the spectrum.

The notion of DEVELOPMENT also includes intellectual development (INTELLIGENT/ UNINTELLIGENT). In section 7.3.1.1, example 12 and 13, the writer constructs transitional oppositions to describe his influences that contributed to intellectual changes in his Thai

stepdaughter (example 13). Thai education is portrayed as inadequate or inefficient in improving the condition of Thai women unless it is a Western form of education. Example 25 in chapter 7, section 7.3.2.2 elaborates this point in detail.

From a Thai perspective, the female Thai writer constructs the linguistic oppositions that support the role of the Westerners as a leader in the relationship with Thai women. In chapter 8, section 8.3.1.1 labelled CHILD/ ADULT, in example 12- 17, the writer associates the behaviour of Thai women to characteristics of children who, without the Western men, are not capable of functioning like mature adults.

The male Thai writer appears to be the only one that sees Thailand as an already developed country. This point is elaborated through the conceptual opposition, GOOD/ BAD WOMEN. In example 18 in section 8.4, the writer sees the conceptual opposition, RICH/ POOR, as a form of financial development. He points out the Thais' have this notion that all Westerners are rich and that only poor Thai women (BAD WOMEN) depend on Westerners for their financial development. He, therefore, holds a view that is contrary to the discourse related to tourism that treats poverty as one of the true identities of 'Thainess'. On the concept of DEGENERACY In section 8.4, example 24, being poor is labelled as a negative quality of BAD WOMEN. In this submission, Thailand is associated with the DEVELOPED through the representation of GOOD WOMEN as 'educated and well-off'.

To summarise, the representation of Thailand through linguistic oppositions contributes to the Orientalist stereotypes in the conceptual domain, PAST/ PRESENT and DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED. The concepts cover the discussion of natural places in tourism, namely natural tourist attractions and Isan. The concepts are also applied to the representation of people, for example, the qualities of conservativeness and poverty.

### 9.5.2 The Orient is strange.

For McLeod:

Crucial to Orientalism is the stereotype of the Orient's peculiarity. The Orient is not just different; it is *oddly* different – unusual, fantastic, bizarre. ...if the Occident is rational, sensible and familiar; then the Orient is irrational, extraordinary, bizarre.

McLeod 2012, p. 53

The concept of FAMILIARITY appears to conform with this stereotype associated with Orientalism. It includes the linguistic oppositions that represent Thailand as being unfamiliar or different from the West. This could be applied to the representation of places and people. Moreover, one aspect in which Thailand appears to be different from the West could be elaborated based on the FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR and LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL conceptual oppositions. Table 9.5 explains the stereotype with conceptual oppositions:

The West	The Orient
FAMILIAR	UNFAMILIAR
LOGICAL	ILLOGICAL

**Table 9.2: conceptual oppositions associated with the strangeness of the Orient**

The representation of Thailand concurrently conforms to and also challenges this stereotype associated with Orientalism. The country is portrayed as different from the West, and this difference extends to the representation of the people; where the Westerners and the Thais considered as being significantly different from each other. The term, *exotic* appears to be widely adopted to represent the distinctions between Thailand and home. The following table summarises the use of this term, associated with UNFAMILIAR, in conjunction with the hospitality of Thai people (UNFAMILIAR):

Lonelyplanet.com	Stickmanbangkok.com
Thailand is lucky. It has the looks, the temperament and the attractions <u>to capture the world's imagination for an exotic escape</u> . It is mysterious and	<i>...Friendly</i> , charming people. Warm weather all year round. Reasonable prices for most everything. Colourful, enchanting temples.

confounding <i>but</i> approachable and inviting.	An <i>exotic</i> culture preserved through the ages by a country that has never been colonised.  Where is this? Thailand, of course!
<i>Friendly</i> and fun-loving, <i>exotic</i> and tropical, cultured and historic, Thailand radiates a golden hue from its glittering temples and tropical beaches to <u>the ever-comforting Thai smile</u> .	Arguably the most <i>exotic</i> destination in South East Asia, Thailand offers travellers and holidaymakers a huge range of vacation possibilities.
<i>Same same, but different</i> . This Thaiish T-shirt philosophy sums up Bangkok, a city where <i>the familiar</i> and <i>the exotic</i> collide like the flavours on a plate of pàt tai.	
<b>Section 5.2.1.1, ex. 1 - 3</b>	<b>Section 6.2.1.1, ex. 1 and 2</b>

**Table 9.3: use of *exotic* in the representation of Thailand associated with FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR**

In both websites, the term *exotic* is used to represent the unfamiliarity of Thailand (UNFAMILIAR). However, the common aspects are also mentioned. These include *the flavours on a plate of pàt tai*, or *friendly Thai people* (FAMILIAR). In the discourse related to tourism, Thai people are represented as friendly, which makes the country more welcoming. However, in personal interaction, they are more aligned with the UNFAMILIAR, expressed in the INSIDER/ OUTSIDER.

The Thai writers in chapter 8 represent the relationship between Thais and Westerners with the INSIDER/ OUTSIDER conceptual opposition in section 8.2.1.1. The sense of UNFAMILIARITY is even evident in the titles of both submissions, *What Farangs Don't Get about Thai Women* and *What We Think Are Mistakes Western Men Make with Thai Women*. The writers indicate that the Westerners are wrong, with the use of phrases and words such as “Don't Get”, and “Mistakes,” in their relationship with Thai women.

The Western writers also associate their relationship with the Thais with the notion of the UNFAMILIAR. The distinctions are explicitly mentioned, and these are evidenced in statements such as ‘there are *many significant distinctions between Thai and Western culture*’ in 7.2.1.1 FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR. The UNFAMILIAR could be taken to the extent that those who do not belong to the groups are treated as outsiders (OUTSIDER/ INSIDER). Table 7.2 in chapter 7 summarises these situations that occur in both Thailand and the West. The UNFAMILIARITY aspect focuses on the notion of normality when Thailand is portrayed as being responsible for the changes in the Western writer's behaviour (NORMAL/ ABNORMAL) as pointed out in table 7.1 in section 7.2.1.2. The NORMAL/ ABNORMAL conceptual opposition is the focus of the following section.

According to McLeod (2012), in *Orientalism* (2003), the characteristics of the Orient are perceived as an oddity. In the representation of places and people in Thailand, their strangeness is constructed based on the Western perception of normality. In the discourse related to tourism, this notion is referred to as REAL/ UNREAL when the writers refer to Thailand with words such as *paradise* or *dream* in Lonelyplanet.com, in section 5.2.1.3, examples 6 - 8. Stickman also constructs similar linguistic oppositions to represent the distinctions between Thailand and home in section 6.2.1.3. The use of the word *paradise* appears to represent an ideal form of experience. For instance, in example 11, Stickman mentions that beach that looks 'pretty' is not enough and that it should also make you feel like 'you're in paradise'. Therefore, the reference of surrealism appears to embody travel experiences in Thailand.

In the representation of people, the Thai writers portray the concepts of NORMAL/ ABNORMAL and LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL in several ways by citing a number of examples in chapter 8. The writer points out in table 8.3 in section 8.2.1.2 the abnormal circumstance in Thailand where Westerners always end up with undesirable Thai women. The association of this belief with NORMAL/ ABNORMAL is based on the generalisation that attractive people should belong together.

The female writer points out in example 11, also section 8.2.1.2 that the Western and Thai way of thinking is to be associated with the LOGICAL and ILLOGICAL respectively. The writer makes it clear with a complementary constructed with the Negated opposition in the end, ‘**This Western way of dealing with things** is *non-existence* to **us**. It’s *not* in **our mentality**’. Table 4 of the same section summarises the linguistic features that associate the Thai way with the ILLOGICAL and the Western way with the LOGICAL. The distinctions between Thais and Westerners are, therefore, constructed at the level of their mentality.

Thailand and its people are, to the Westerners whose discourse I have been investigating, *unfamiliar* and *illogical*. These qualities conform to the stereotype identified in Orientalism that the Orient is ‘strange’. This notion is applied to the internal opposition between Isan and the rest of Thailand. The Isan region is represented as being foreign to Thais in the same way that Thailand is unfamiliar to Westerners. In Lonelyplanet.com, example 9 in section 5.2.2.1 refers to the area with ‘Thailand's forgotten backyard’ which excludes Isan from the rest of Thailand. The writer also relates Thais and Westerners, ‘For travellers and Thais alike’, which emphasises the exclusion of Isan as both the Thais and the Westerners share the same views on the region. In example 10, the representation of the area as ‘other’ (OUTSIDER) is emphasised by the comparison of the area with other countries, ‘The language, food and culture are *more Lao than Thai*, with hearty helpings of **Kmer** and **Vietnamese** thrown into the mix’. Isan in this context is considered foreign to the Thais due to its association with other countries. However, as mentioned in section 1.1, Isan also represents the authenticity of the country with its association with the PAST and UNDEVELOPED. Therefore, the definition of ‘Thainess’ could consist of the influences of neighbouring countries. In Stickmanbangkok.com, the area is also treated as an outsider and ‘looked down on’ in example 15 due to its association with poverty. Also, in example 16, the exclusion is based on the Isan cuisine that ‘**most Westerners and indeed most Thais not from the region do not really care for...**’ (section 6.2.2.1).

The Thai writer in chapter 8 is categorical about the exclusion of the Isan in section 8.4.1.2.1. As pointed out in section 1.2 about the DEVELOPMENT, the writer also appears to treat a good educational level and healthy financial status as desirable qualities of respectable Thai women (GOOD WOMEN). In his submission, the absence of these qualities in Isan women is one of the reasons they are treated as others (OUTSIDER). The exclusion of Isan women appears to be treated with normalcy as pointed out in table 3 of section 8.2.1.2, where the writer portrays their relationship with attractive Western men as something abnormal. At the same time, the reference of Isan women with 'Isaan-type women' and 'oh-so-typical Isaan-type', in 8, emphasises the portrayal of Isan women with the negative qualities of these women. The fact that they are categorised as a particular type could be an indication that the writer feels that the Isan is not associated with the rest of the Thais.

In summary, the textual representation of Thailand to the discourse of Orientalism with conceptual oppositions, LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL and FAMILIAR/ FAMILIAR. For instance, Thailand is portrayed as *exotic* in tourism discourse, but it is familiar with prostitution. To elaborate, FAMILIARITY is expressed through the conceptual binary between INSIDER/ OUTSIDER which associates Isan, both as a place and people, with the concept of OUTSIDER and AUTHENTIC. The association with these concept makes Isan both genuine Thai and not Thai at the same time.

### **9.5.3 Orientalism makes assumptions about people.**

McLeod tells us that:

Oriental peoples often appeared in Western representations as examples of various invidious racial, ethnic, religious and national stereotypes. Assumptions were often made about the innate characteristics and behaviours of Oriental peoples, which manifested themselves across a series of derogatory stereotypes.

McLeod 2012, p. 53

This stereotype of Orientalism is focused on stereotyping of various groups of people, namely that the Arabs are violent, that the Indians are lazy, and the Chinese are inscrutable. The generalisation could be elaborated with the distinctions between the INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE in that a cynical act of an individual could lead to a group of people stereotypically labelled with an undesirable trait as being common to them. In the representation of Thai people, certain markers like financial status and educational levels should lead to the formation of distinctions between people who have different backgrounds. However, these factors are used with inclusive effects in the study to point out that Thai people are all the same regardless of their financial and/or educational backgrounds.

This stereotype of Orientalism is also supported by a discussion on the failure of the Thai form of education in section 1.2 to refine a Thai person, which falls under the category of DEVELOPMENT. This point is supported by the female writer in example 16, who states that '*Despite level of education and sophistication, the idea of bringing into a relationship is not very common to a lot of us*' and by a Western writer in the section 7.3.2.2, example 26 who states '*...It does not matter if you marry a poor Thai girls or a RICH Thai Princess. ...you will always be regards as a "Farang" no matter the family dynamic or level of social hierarchy*'. From these examples, we could conclude that regardless of the Thai women's behaviour or social background (INDIVIDUAL), they are all categorised with the same stereotypical image (COLLECTIVE). The failure of education to inculcate Western values, or to enable Thai women to be more refined with a Western sense of etiquette also appears to emphasise the notion that they are naturally born bad. By constructing linguistic oppositions based on the generalisation of people, the writers engage in the discourse of Orientalism which makes assumptions about the negative qualities of the Oriental.



#### 9.5.4. Orientalism makes assumptions about gender.

McLeod writes that:

The exoticised Oriental female, often depicted nude or partially clothed in plenty of Western representations during the colonial period, could be represented as an immodest, immoral, active creature of sexual pleasure who held the key to mysterious erotic sexual delights.

McLeod 2012, p. 53

In Orientalism, some stereotypes make assumptions about the sexuality of the female Oriental by portraying them as being overtly sexual whilst conversely, Oriental men are represented as not being manly enough. The stereotype is explained earlier in 3.5 and can be summarised in the table below:

<b>MASCULINITY</b>	<b>FEMININITY</b>
Westerners	Oriental men and women

**Table 9.4: association of the Western men with masculine traits while both Oriental men and women are associated with FEMININITY**

In the study, this trait of Orientalism is evident in the representation of the prevalence of the sex industry in Thailand. Thailand's notoriety for the sex-industry is based on Western pre-conceived knowledge about Thailand in the form of GIVEN KNOWLEDGE, as mentioned in section 1.4.4.2. The area that is concerned with prostitution appears to challenge the Orientalist discourse. Several instances in the representation of Thailand show that whilst introducing new information about Thailand (NEW KNOWLEDGE), the writer also includes information about the sex industry (GIVEN KNOWLEDGE). The topic of prostitution is considered as a GIVEN because it is represented in the way that the Westerners are more than familiar with. In other words, it represents knowledge about Thailand that is shared within the community. Therefore, Thailand is not entirely unfamiliar after all.

In the discourse related to Tourism, the linguistic evidence of GIVEN knowledge is also ubiquitous. In section 5.2.1.2, example 4, Lonely Planet only mentioned traces of GIVEN KNOWLEDGE, as espoused in the statement 'what your dodgy uncle might have told you' while the NEW KNOWLEDGE implicates the expectation that this is what the 'good time in Thailand' should be about. This point is also evident in example 5 when the writer refers to this type of activity as 'stereotypes' as Stickman points out in example 7 in the section 6.2.1.2 with the statement, 'It's widely known that'. The writer mentions through linguistic opposition how the Westerners could unintentionally participate in the sex business in Thailand. The GIVEN KNOWLEDGE, in this context, appears to be based on prior personal experience (and probably shared within the STB Readers' community).

The GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE is also evident in the Western voice. In section 7.2.1.4, example 8, Thailand is referred to as an 'as out-of-the-way-place as you could find in the world' (UNFAMILIAR and NEW KNOWLEDGE). At the same time, the writer also mentions 'the Vietnam Era R&R thing', a historical aspect which made Thailand famous for the sex industry. The GIVEN KNOWLEDGE is also in the comparative form in example 10 in which the writer points out how his involvement with the prostitutes is something that other Westerners have engaged in before: 'I made the fatal mistake "as so many farangs do"' (ex.10, section 7.2.1.4). In this context, the GIVEN KNOWLEDGE refers to the generalisation of what Western visitors usually do in Thailand. In chapter 8, the male Thai writer also points out this form of GIVEN KNOWLEDGE in example 4, section 8.2.1.1, in which he describes the generalisation that Thai women who are with the Westerners are prostitutes. The accusation is based on the direct observation; '**Thais only believe that Thai women with farangs are BGs/ex-BGs because it's true the majority of the time**'.

In the area of personal relationships, Thai men are hardly mentioned or even when they are, they are not masculine enough. In 12, section 8.3.1.1, the writer states 'All those manipulative tools are what we've used and worked with Thai men. Teach us that they don't work in a relationship with you', the writer points out how Thai men are not equipped to take on the

role of the leader in their relationship. Therefore, in comparison with Western men, Thai men appear to be portrayed as not ‘manly’ enough.

Stickman often suggests that men should adhere to masculine traits. In chapter 8, examples 32-34, he constructs an internal opposition between Western men (in general) and Western men in Thailand. Stickman cites the latter for their weakness when in a relationship with Thai women. In this context, these Westerners in Thailand are no different from Thai men. Due to their lack of qualities to be ‘proper’ Westerners (‘those who are strong’), they too should be perceived as ‘others’.

In the discussion of sex tourism, Stickman supports the claim that the industry is male- and heterosexual- oriented mentioned in 1.4.3.2. For instance, in the representation of Samet (ex 9, section 6.2.1.2), the use of an Engagement marker, ‘Yep, you got it, the Western woman pays him!’, is embedded with the abnormality of both male prostitutes and female sex tourists, based on an implied question about the matter. Besides, the landscape in Thailand is sexualised to the extent that affects the way Thai women are perceived in general circumstances. In other words, there is a strong possibility that all Thai women are assumed to be prostitutes. This generalisation is exacerbated in the Khao San area, which is where Westerners frequent. In example 8, chapter 6, to avoid dealing with problems associated with prostitutes, some accommodation establishments in Khao San prohibit all Thai women from staying in their properties without exception. This highlights the type of relationship most Westerners have with Thai women which seems in most cases to be with prostitutes, as mentioned in WFDGAT: ‘Thais only believe that Thai women with farangs are BGs/ ex-BGs because it's true the majority of the time’. This makes it harder to distinguish Thai women from prostitutes.

Besides, the prevalence of the sex industry is evident in the sexualisation of the landscape of Thailand. As pointed out in table 6.7 in section 6.4.2.1, the transitional oppositions that represent changes in Thailand are primarily to accommodate the sex industry. The table portrays the distinction between the condition of Samui in the past and at present. The focus

is not on the stigma of the business, but on how the changes affect the identity of the cities. For example, the assertion that Samui's identity from being a place for low budget tourists (backpackers) to 'another Asian beach paradise' for 'the Wealthy Western men'. Just as the mere mention of Vietnam War could trigger an image of Thailand as a hub for the sex industry, Samui too, to an extent, is also perceived as a place home to the thriving sex industry.

To reinforce this particular point, this section focuses on the assumptions that are pre-conceived by Westerners in matters relating to the sexuality of the Orient. In this context, the association of Thailand with sex industry affects the country in both on an individual and a spatial level; mainly that Thai women are generally prostitutes and that prostitution has become a trait synonymous with the country. Through the discussion of the prevalence of the sex industry in Thailand and the weakness of both Thai men and some Westerners, the linguistic oppositions also participate in the reproduction of the discourse of Orientalism.

#### **9.5.5 The Orient is degenerate.**

McLeod tells us that:

Compositely, then, Orientalist stereotypes fixed the Orientals' typical and definitive weaknesses as (among others) cowardliness, laziness, untrustworthiness, fickleness, laxity, violence, and lust. ... Oriental peoples needed to be made civilised and made to conform to the perceived higher moral standards upheld in the West.

McLeod 2012, p. 53

The stereotype of Orientalism posits the Orient in an inferior position in the relationship by generalising and highlighting the Oriental's weakness to justify their role as a superior one. From my study, this stereotype is represented with the notion of DEVELOPMENT. One of the most apparent relationships existing between Thais and Westerners is associated with CHILD/ ADULT. As mentioned in the representation of space in the discourse related to tourism in the section 1.2 DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, Western influence in the form of tourism inspires the development in urban areas which conforms to the stereotype of Orientalism by focusing on the role of the Westerners as a superior who has taken on the role

of saviour magnanimously. The use of transitional oppositions to transfer the country from undeveloped to developed appears to be evident in the representation of the people as well. Section 7.3 and 8.3 contains a detailed discussion of this matter.

For *internal oppositions*, the notion of DEVELOPMENT also determines the distinctions between places in Thailand. As pointed out in section 1.2 DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED and 2.4 INSIDER/ OUTSIDER, the undeveloped area of the Isan is treated as 'Other' by the Thais (and some Westerners) due to its lack of modern facilities. In this context, they are considered 'not Thai'. On the other hand, the discourse related to tourism sees the area as the representative of genuine Thailand. Therefore, in this context, Thailand is associated with the notion of the past and the undeveloped. This point could also be associated with the representation of people through linguistic oppositions. This relationship may be summarised as in table 9.8:

<b>Authentic Thailand from the Westerners' perspectives</b>	<b>Authentic Thailand from the Thais' perspectives</b>
UNDEVELOPED	DEVELOPED
POOR and UNEDUCATED	RICH and EDUCATED

**Table 9.5: two versions of authentic Thailand based on the perspectives of the Westerners and the Thais**

In discourse related to tourism, the concept is also related to the conceptual opposition, SAFE/ UNSAFE. In section 5.4.1.1, Lonely Planet points out the dangers that female travellers need to be wary of when they are in Thailand. However, the opposition shows that the country is safe, but it is the female travellers that put themselves in danger by being drunk and alone at night. In Stickmanbangkok.com, the risky behaviour and circumstances in section 6.4.1.1 involve the RICH/ POOR binaries between Thais and Westerners. The poor may be tempted to attack the Westerners because they see them as easy targets of opportunity. However, linguistic features such as 'Flashing several thousand (or more) baht' in example 32 and 'foreigners throwing around more in a day than they earn in a month' in example 31 appear

to also portray the Westerners as displaying dangerous behaviour by being careless in Thailand.

As discussed above, concerning the concepts of PAST/PRESENT, linguistic oppositions to do with DEGENERACY are not all external oppositions. Many are internal to Thailand. The internal oppositions are associated with the oppositions between the concepts of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN divided into domains of sexual mannerism, financial status, educational level, and physical appearances. Section 1.1 discusses the association of the concept of the CONSERVATIVE with the representation of GOOD WOMEN. The significance of being conservative is highlighted in Lonelyplanet.com, section 5.4.1.1. In example 33, in which the writer points out how homosexuality is accepted in Thailand 'without comment'. However, it is the displays of affection in public that are considered to be 'frowned upon'. Being conservative in this context is manifested by the way people express their love in public. In Thailand, public displays of affection are considered even worse than being a homosexual (in the sense that homosexuality is still not wholly accepted in several parts of the world).

Related to the concept of INSIDER/ OUTSIDER, in WFDG, the male Thai writer points out in section 8.4.1.2.1, the exclusion of Isan women for their poverty and their lack of education. The discussion includes how these women see their relationship with the Westerners as a means to gain financial advancement. These Isan women 'chase men for money', the quality appears to be negative, not only for not being conservative but also for doing it for the money (an act of prostitute). By the use of words/phrases such as 'type' and 'that's how it is' highlights the normalcy of the situation. The generalisation of bad women also affects the reputation of the Western men in Thailand in that they are also generalised for being 'whoremongers.' This reputation also leads to the oppositions between them and 'nice' Thai women who avoid being tainted by the stigma of bargirls.

In WFDGT, the writer generalises the qualities of BAD WOMEN by associating them for with concepts of being POOR, SEXUALLY LIBERAL (not conservative and associated with prostitutes), and ISAN. The normalcy and categorisation of these women as a 'type' constructs

two types of women in complementary form, based on the concept of GOOD/BAD. On the other hand, the Thai female writer in WWTM sees these two types of women as gradable. This aspect is a highlight in section 8.4.1.2.2. Though the writer believes in inclusivity, she sees financial dependency as degenerate, and this is when a prostitute is referred to with negative connotation, as in 'Sleeping with someone and getting money from the guy is sheer prostitution, however subtle you make it look' (in example 28, chapter 8).

Physical appearances are also included in the discussion of DEGENERACY for their association with BAD WOMEN in WFDGT in 8.4.1.1 in which the preference for light-skinned women is associated with 'Thai soap stars'. Isan women within this context are also aligned with BAD WOMEN for their look, 'Certainly doesn't fit the profile of a girl typically seen with a farang'. The emphasis of Isan women as Other is in the linguistic markers, 'Certainly', 'profile', and 'typically' which once again constructs a mutual exclusivity between a concept of GOOD and BAD in Thai women. The reference of 'soap star' also implicates the utmost of desirable qualities beyond the reach of ordinary women, which widens the gap between these two types of women.

All in all, in the Orientalist stereotype indicating the degeneracy of the Orient is portrayed through conceptual oppositions, DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, GOOD/ BAD WOMEN, SAFE/ UNSAFE, ATTRACTIVE/ UNATTRACTIVE and RICH/ POOR. In an elaboration of DEGENERACY, Isan, though represents the authenticity of 'Thainess', falls into all the negative side of the binaries.

#### **9.5.6. The Orient is feminine.**

McLeod writes that:

Orientalism also subscribes to a more general gendering of the opposition between the Occident and the Orient as one between rigidly stereotypical versions of masculinity and femininity. In Orientalism, the East as a whole is 'feminised', deemed passive, submissive, exotic, luxurious, sexually mysterious and tempting;

while the West is thought of in terms of the ‘masculine’ – that is, active, dominant, heroic, rational, self-controlled and ascetic.

McLeod 2012, p. 53

This form of stereotype is about the association of supposed female qualities of the Orient with the representation of the Oriental space. This stereotype is conceptualised in the table below:

MASCULINITY	FEMININITY
The West	The Orient

**Table 9.6: association of the Orient as a whole as feminine and the West as masculine**

As mentioned in chapter 3, the association of space and people in the representation of a country is not new. For instance, the thesis discusses the studies about the sexualised landscape in the Netherlands and Thailand (McDonagh 2019) (in 1.4.3.2), the representation of Ireland with a figurative figure, *Erin*, during the English invasion (in 3.5.3), and the use of images of *Mae Ploy* to represent the desirable qualities of Thai women (3.5.4). As seen from the conceptual oppositions that emerge from the linguistic analysis, the correlation between the representation of places and people is for the economic and political purposes.

In the discourse related to tourism, the representation of Thailand also conforms to this stereotype of Orientalism. In sections 5.2, 6.2, 7.2, and 8.2, as a place, Thailand as a tourist destination is portrayed as a place of fantasy, differing significantly from the reality in the West. This appears to coincide with the conventional gender oppositions or sexual script which suggest, among others, that men are rational and active, and that women are emotional and passive (3.5.1). The prevalence of prostitution is also following the notion that the country is sexual and tempting. Both the West and Westerners in this study are associated with masculine qualities and feminine qualities for Thailand and Thai people.

The notion of FAMILIARITY is also applicable in the representation of people and places: Thailand is exotic and unfamiliar to the Westerners as are the people being considered



outsiders or others in the eyes of the Westerners. Similarly, the notion of DEVELOPMENT is also applied to both places and people. The Westerners are represented as the ones that influence the development of the area. This is similar to perceived Western roles in their relationship with Thai women.

In this study, the coherence in the representation of places and people appears to follow, to a certain extent, certain stereotypes of Orientalism. The association is primarily a type of representation of female Orientals. Thailand is also associated with the notion of FEMININITY in that the representation is concerned mainly with the Thai women, or the relationship one has with Thai women.

To summarise, the discussion on the link between the linguistic oppositions in the representation of Thailand and McLeod's stereotypes of Orientalism reveals that when seen through the lens of conceptual oppositions, the representation of Thailand in this study appears to conform to McLeod's interpretation of Orientalism.

## **9.6 Further cultural oppositions**

The study is an investigation of linguistic oppositions that represent Thailand in [Stickmanbangkok.com](http://Stickmanbangkok.com) and [Lonelyplanet.com](http://Lonelyplanet.com). It also examines the links between these oppositions constructed within the text (micro oppositions) with pre-established cultural oppositions (macro oppositions) about the Other, with particular reference to the East/ West dichotomies in Said's *Orientalism* (2003). From the answer to the fourth research question in section 9.5, questioning the extent to which linguistic representation of Thailand indicates an Orientalist discourse, the examination of the textual oppositions reveal conformity to the six stereotypes of Orientalist discourse summarised by McLeod (2012). The section is a further discussion of other cultural oppositions which are not directly covered by McLeod (2012) but do emerge from my analysis. They primarily focus on prostitution and internal oppositions between the region of Isan against the rest of Thailand.

The representation of Thailand involves a process of negative identification. People learn about themselves through the identification of negative qualities within others. In the colonial discourse, the colonised are defined by the colonisers as inferior Others (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2007). Comparatively, in Thailand, Thainess is also defined based externally against the West (Winichakul 2010) and internally within different social classes, especially between Isan and the rest of Thailand (McCargo & Hongladarom 2004, Vorng, 2017, Hessswain, 2006 & 2011, Farelly, 2016, Alexander & McCargo, 2014, Draper & Kamnuansilpa 2018). Winitchakul (2010) uses the term ‘paradoxical set of desires’ (p.135) to describes Thai-Western relationship through binary oppositions to understand both themselves and the West during the Western colonialism.

The following is a review of existing literature, not the results of my analysis. My reason for mentioning them is that there are Thai-specific cultural oppositions which are not part of Orientalism (2003) and that they are also associated with the linguistic representation of Thailand in this study. To the Thai, the West is both a colonial threat and a role model for the civilisation that they desire. However, the Thais interpretation of ‘civilisation’ appears to engage itself with the Orientalist discourse, e.g. by aligning itself with ‘spiritual, religious, and moral’ (Winitchakul 2010). These qualities that the Thais use to define themselves also posit them in opposition to the modernised West. The Thais’ interpretation of civilisation, among others, includes physical appearances, dressing styles, refined manners and etiquettes. These qualities are proposed by the Thai elites and adopted as dominant ideologies or standard practice of Thai people (Winitchakul 2000). As Sattayanuruk (2005) pointed out, the internal instruction of Thainess is in binaries, *top/ bottom* and *centre/ margin*, and they are exclusively considered the elites’ version of Thainess. The result is an exclusion of those who do not share these qualities, which at times includes cultures of the lower class (*bottom* or *margin*). Therefore, Thailand is a country with two cultures; the upper class’s versions and one that belongs to the commoners.

Lonely Planet and Stickman appear to see that there are several degrees of 'Thainess'. It is Isan that is represented as more authentic than the other (AUTHENTIC) while to the Thais, they are perceived as the 'Others' (OUTSIDER). Therefore, Isan encapsulates the essence of Thainess, and at the same time, paradoxically, it is perceived as something that does not belong to Thailand. It could be summarised from the linguistic examination that by virtue of the perception of Westerners, Thailand is conceptualised as POOR, UNDEVELOPED, and set in the PAST. On the other hand, the Isan is perceived as the 'Other' by Westerners and Thais. Through negative identification, Thailand in the eyes of the Thais is based to a lesser degree on the Isan or what the region is not; namely, RICH, DEVELOPED and MODERN.

Several studies point out that Isan is perceived as the 'Other' due to its foreign influence. The studies by Keyes (2010), Hesse-Swain (2006) and Vorng (2017) maintain that the stereotypical images of Isan include its association with foreign culture specifically Lao, especially in their physical appearances and food. They are also associated with low-income jobs such as being servants, taxi drivers, and prostitutes. Table 1 provides examples for the reference of foreign influence in Isan people in my data:

Representation of Isan in Lonelyplanet.com	Representation of Isan in Stickmanbangkok.com
For <b>travellers</b> and <b>Thaisalike</b> , the <b>northeast</b> is <b>Thailand' forgotten backyard</b> (ex 9, section 5.2.2.1).	“ ... a lot of the dishes from the Isaan region also contain bla-ra, that is fermented fish sauce, something which <b>most Westerners and indeed most Thais not from the region</b> do <i>not really care for</i> ” (ex 16, section 6.2.2.1).
The language, food and culture are <i>more Lao than Thai</i> , with hearty helpings of Khmer and Vietnamese thrown into the mix.”(ex 10, section 5.2.2.1).	Should you mention to <b>any Thai friends</b> that you intend to travel into the Isaan region, <i>you'll sure get a smile, or even a comment or two</i> , for <b>many Thais from outside the region <u>have never been there-and</u> many just wouldn't be able to comprehend why a Westerner would</b>

	<p><b>want to go there for fun.</b> Unfortunately <b>the people of Isaan</b> are looked down on by <b>much of the Thai population</b> who often view them as no more than <b>poor farmers</b> (ex 16, section 6.2.2.1).</p>

**Table 9.7: elaboration of Isan as ‘Other’ with INSIDER/ OUTSIDER**

The consistency in the representation of Isan in Lonelyplanet.com and Stickmanbangkok.com indicates a certain degree of cultural consistency. In colonial discourse, the notion of civilisation or development underlines the reasons for colonialism (Said 2003, McLeod 2012). However, as noted above, the Thai conception of civilisation has been argued to place particular emphasis on such traits as physical appearances and among other conventional signs of development such as financial status and modern facilities. The Thai upper class designates the version of Thainess that is treated as mainstream ideologies and the beauty of Isan, such as darker skin tone, is a symbolic representation of low-class people (Chaipraditkul 2013, Hesse-Swain 2006). Esara (2009) points out that *the Isan as Others within*, comes about partly through their rejection by Thai men due to the stigma attached to the Isan which partly explains their forming relationships with Western men. The Isan way of life appears to be more associated with Laos, and their relationship with the Westerners appear to strengthen the general perception as 'Other' in Thai society.

In an examination of the Readers' Submissions, the discourse about Isan is maintained in *What Farangs Don't Get about Thai Women*, through a series of oppositions. His representation of GOOD WOMEN is associated with the concept of NORMALITY indicating what should be considered as standard behaviour of Thai women. The binary oppositions between GOOD/BAD women are conceptualised in table 9.11:

<b>GOOD THAI WOMEN</b>	<b>BAD THAI WOMEN</b>
(typical) THAI WOMEN	ISAN
ATTRACTIVE	UNATTRACTIVE (dark-skinned tone)
EDUCATED	UNEDUCATED
RICH	POOR
CONSERVATIVE	UNCONSERVATIVE (chasing after men for money)
<b>INSIDER</b>	<b>OUTSIDER</b>

**Table 9.8: association of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN related to INSIDER/ OUTSIDER**

In WFDGT, what appears to be a reward for being a good girl is that they are accepted by Thai men and that they are included in the Thai society. On the other hand, bad women are rejected and end up with Westerners. The writer represents Thailand in the same way as what Suttayanurak (2005) pointed out about the Thais' construction of 'Thainess' when he treats his version of GOOD WOMEN as something mainstream or dominant through the reference to NORMALITY. As a result, his version of Thainess could be comparable to the Thai elites' mainstream ideologies (top or central rung) while BAD WOMEN including Isan women are associated with the (bottom or marginal rung) version of Thainess.

One of the qualities of Thainess is associated with social mobility. The Sakdina is a belief system that all Thais were designated spaces in Thai society. Though abolished, the system still leaves traces in the modern Thai hierarchy (Reynolds, 1994). Another more abstract form is the 'know-thy-place' concept that instils the belief that people should accept their place in society (Sattayanurak, 2005). The notion is parallel to Said's Orientalism (2003) in that the Westerners view the Oriental's inferiority as part of their nature. Therefore, it should be accepted as a form of social order. In general, social order should be achieved through education. However, in Funatsu and Kagoya (2003), though education allows some degree of an upward social movement, their background such as belonging to Isan origin, still plays a role in their ultimate social position. Likewise, in section 9.5.3, the discussion is about the assumptions that the Westerners make about the Orient. It mentions the failure of Thai

education in Thai intellectual development unless they have undergone a Western-style education.

Apart from Isan, prostitution also represents another form of 'Thainess' which is applicable to the notion of GIVEN KNOWLEDGE. Halliday (2014) refers to 'Given' as something either verbal or non-verbal that already exists in context. Therefore, it could be related to stereotypes embedded in people's minds before an introduction of the 'New'. The 'New' is seen as a less anticipated version about Thailand. Since the 'Given' refers to aspects about prostitution in Thailand, the 'New' which includes activities for the rich is considered as something that is less expected. Therefore, to a certain extent, the version of Thailand associated with the sex industry could be considered most prominent in Western minds.

The representation of prostitutes is significant in this study in the same way that Isan is since they both represent authenticity and are considered outsiders in Thai society. In the nationalist discourse, the binary oppositions between Mae Ploy and Phanni are used to represent desirable qualities of Thai women (Jeffries 2002). When compared with the representation of good/ bad women in table 9.11, it may be deduced that the characteristics of Mae Ploy/ Phanni and GOOD/ BAD WOMEN is written in the form of modern text which is comparable based on the binaries of URBAN/ RURAL, RICH/ POOR, EDUCATED/ UNEDUCATED, and CONSERVATIVE/ UNCONSERVATIVE. The similarities in the representation of GOOD/ BAD WOMEN in texts written by a nationalist during the colonial time and a modern text written to inform (or merely to entertain) could implicate the long-lasting stereotypical images of bad women in Thailand. Besides the linguistic evidence in this study, Harrison (2017) also points out a pattern of sexist slurs used to attack the former female prime minister, Yingluck Shinawatra, which could also be summarised in the characteristics of Phanni.

The opposition is also underlined with Madonna/ Whore dichotomy (Landau et al. 2006). It signifies the negative qualities of Thai women presented by the notion of virginity. However, due to the poverty and religious belief that allows men to repay gratitude to parents by ordination, some Thai women assume responsibility as breadwinners and turn to

prostitution (due to poverty and lack of education) to take care of their family. Their image as 'good' women helps mitigate the stigma that is attached to prostitution and allows them to reposition themselves in the community (Suwanphattana 1998; Mensendiek 1997). In chapter 7, *Da*, a bargirl, provides a reason why she was forced to work in the sex industry. She cited her lack of education and also said that she wanted to help out her family. This is evidenced in the statement 'she again portrayed so much sorry in her life, and how she was forced to do bar work, she only did so she could look after her Mamma and Papa and knew no other way to make a living' (table 4, example 16). The contradiction between her stigma as a bargirl (BAD) and her duty as a responsible daughter (GOOD) could reveal the conflicting and complicating roles of women in Thailand.

### **9.7 Linguistic oppositions and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

The study is also located within the field of Critical Discourse Analysis. Section 3.4.3 discusses the CDA studies that are, to a certain extent, consistent with the Orientalist discourse when considering their relation to the conceptual oppositions, e.g. DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED, RICH/ POOR, and GOOD/ BAD. The purpose of the section is to relate my examples to some of these studies.

To begin with, traces of the colonial mind-sets, concerned with the Westerners' moral obligation to save the unfortunate Oriental, are also prevalent in the study about volunteer and slum tourism (Calkin 2014, Muldoon and Mair 2016.) In these studies, tourism is about the *local/ tourist* power relation in which certain stereotypes are repeatedly reproduced, namely an emphasis on poverty and traditional ways of life. As a result, the process suppresses other aspects of the country that should be worth exploring. However, this process of negative self-identification might not be entirely problematic since at times, these stereotypical aspects about the countries are willingly promoted by the locals for tourism promotion, as in Self-

Orientalism (Dirlik 1996; Ong 1998; Zhang 2006 in Yan and Santos 2009, Wongbiasaj 2001, Feighery 2012, Wei, Qian, and Su2018, Ooi 2005, Liu 2017, Suter 2014).

In my study, similarly, the differences are highlighted in the representation of Thailand, especially in the case that the impoverished Isan is treated as a symbolic representation of the authenticity of Thailand. In terms of the personal relationship, the contributors of the Readers' Submission also establish their identity through the linguistic oppositions that put an emphasis on their differences from the Thais, namely through DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED conceptual binary.

What appears to challenge the Orientalist discourse is that some studies are not restricted to the East/ West binary which confirms Said's remark in the preface of *Orientalism* (2003). For instance, Barnardi (2019) uncovers the abstract patterns in the representation of the Sami, an ethnic group originated in European countries. One of the themes in her study is about nature and traditional ways of life. The study reveals the conformity in tourism discourse that exoticness or the opposition between modern and traditional appears to be one of the permanent themes.

In 3.5.2, the discussion involves the studies on male-centric societies in which women are treated as commodities and inferior others. Their images in tourism (Pritchard and Morgan 2000) and even in the political discourse of War on Terror (Khalid 2011) are reproduced in a way that follows the concept of Male Gaze (Mulvey 1962), Orientalist stereotypes (McLeod 2012), and the sexual script (Garcia, Reiber, Massey, & Merriwether, 2012, Simon & Gagnon, 1984, 2003). Stickman fully participates in the discourse that portrays women as commodities by flashing advertisements of escort service on the website, dedicating a section for nightlife in Bangkok, and even encouraging the readers to be open-minded about prostitution in Thailand (ex 41, STB, ACC28). The Readers' Submission provides a rich source of the negative representation of Thai women, focusing on their lack of intelligence and dependency on men in 9.5.1 and the discourse on prostitutes in 9.5.4. One of the most prominent examples is in ex.14 (Ch8, WINMT, W:IC2) in which Thai women are portrayed as an object of male



gaze, namely through the repeated lexical choice, *to look at* and *have fun with*. Unfortunately, the only voice of Thai women in this study is nothing but a reinforcement of the Thai women's illogicality (8.2.1.2).

One of the most reproduced images of Thailand in media is concerned with the concept of promiscuity in the discussion of bargirls and sex tourism (in 1.4.4.3). Within the discourse of sexuality, Lonely Planet appears to offer another view on Thailand that Thai people are actually conservative (ex. 33, section 5.4.1.2). From this perspective, Lonely Planet's representation of Thailand appears to overlap with the discourse on virginity, good women, and nationalism in 3.5.3. The differences in these images of Thai people in LP and STB show that there are, in fact, diverse representation of Thailand and its people. Nevertheless, due to the overproduction of prostitution in media, other qualities of Thai women, e.g. conservativeness, remain insignificant in tourism marketing.

The themes FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY that emerge from the investigation of textual oppositions reveal how the study fits into broader studies about tourism. To elaborate, the textual oppositions are consistent with Cohen's keywords in the representation of authenticity (1985: 16 in Salazar 2006), e.g. *imagination, escape, authentic*, to represent the tourist space as paradise. The representation of Thailand in this study also conforms with the theme about nature in Barnardi 2019, the sexualised landscapes in Sanders-McDonagh 2017, and the emphasis on poverty in the studies of Calkin 2014, Muldoon and Mair in 2016, and Butler 2010. To a certain extent, the exploration of linguistic oppositions at the micro-level and the conformity and challenges to the patterns of Orientalist discourse at the macro level can, therefore, make this study a contribution to the community of tourism studies within the CDA framework.

This thesis is primarily based on the representation of space which, as pointed out by Said (2003) and Anderson (2006), are primarily imagined. Hall (1998) also maintains that the representation is a selection of meanings. He describes it as a process of 'making things mean' (p.64). Therefore, drawing on the representation of Isan and prostitutes in the study, the poetic

space of Thailand could be conceptualised with POVERTY, PROMISCUITY, PAST and UNDEVELOPED. Though the country can offer something to all sorts of tourists, as indicated in the textual oppositions in this study, here we see that some of the things offered could be considered more Thai than others. Besides, when the same images of Thailand are repeatedly reproduced in the tourism marketing, the *authentic* version of Thailand is either part of the Orientalist discourse in which nature, past, and poverty are highlighted or the sex destination in which the representation of people and places are bombarded with the sexual matters, with nothing in between.

## **9.8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study shows that people employ linguistic oppositions, both in canonical and non-canonical forms in the representation of Thailand. The oppositions could be constructed externally indicating a form of Us/ Them dichotomy between Thailand and the West, in which the West is posited in a superior position. To a certain degree, all of the writers in this study engage in the discourse of Orientalism (Said 2003): both in the expression of their relationship with Others (external) and within Thailand (internal). The fact that the textual oppositions could be conceptualised into FAMILIARITY, DEVELOPMENT, and DEGENERACY, both in the external and internal forms of representation of Thailand, should also reveal the consistency of the writers' perceptions towards Thailand, mainly when they conform to pre-existing macro oppositions related to the country.

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LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL OPPOSITIONS  
IN DISCOURSE ABOUT THAILAND

by

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**APPENDICES**

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### Appendix 1: Identification of Oppositions in Lonelyplanet.com

The table shows the process of opposition identification in this study. It is one of the seven tables used to identify textual oppositions: there is one for each type of text. Even though the table is useful in organising thoughts and examining an overall picture of textual oppositions during the first stage of the study, the information in the table is subject to change when applied to the thesis.

No.	Opposites	Trigger(s)	Context	Conceptual oppositions	Comment/ Purpose	CC
1.	friendly/ exotic	Semantic trigger: friendly/ exotic	<i>Friendly</i> and fun-loving, <i>exotic</i> and tropical, cultured and historic, Thailand radiates a golden hue from its glittering temples and tropical beaches to the ever-comforting Thai smile.	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	The exact same opposition, friendly/ exotic, is mentioned in Stickman's introduction to Thailand as well.	FA
2.	humble homes/ monumental malls	Semantic trigger: (humble) homes/ (monumental) malls	Ancient banyan trees are ceremoniously wrapped in sacred cloth to honour the resident spirits, fortune-bringing shrines decorate <i>humble homes</i> as well as <i>monumental malls</i> , while garland-festooned dashboards ward off traffic accidents.	BIG/ SMALL  INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE		MS
3.	hedonist/ hermit	Semantic trigger and phonic parallelism of /h/: hedonist/ hermit	With a long coastline (actually, two coastlines) and jungle-topped islands anchored in azure waters,	FUN/ SERIOUS	Another use of opposition to indicate that Thailand has something for everyone. The oppositions could reveal the basis of how people are divided.	DV
4.	prince/ pauper	Semantic trigger and phonic parallelism of /p/: prince/ pauper	Thailand is a tropical getaway for <i>the hedonist</i> and <i>the hermit, the prince and the pauper</i> .	RICH/ POOR		DV
5.	the quality and bargains/ the variety	Negated contrastive: X not (especially	<b>The quality and bargains aren't especially impressive, but the allure is the variety and</b>	LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL	Negated contrastive shows that 'the quality and bargains' are expected in a	FA

	and concentration of stuff and the dexterity and patience it takes to trawl through it all ( the allure)	Impressive), but Y (is)	<b>concentration of stuff and the dexterity and patience it takes to trawl through it all.</b>	EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	tourist attraction. They could be a rational reasons to go to Thailand, not 'the variety and concentration of stuff...'	
6.	Once/ Today	Semantic trigger: once/ today	<i>Once</i> one of the world's leading capitals, Ayuthaya's myriad temples and palaces glittered from miles away. <i>Today</i> the dozens of ruins offer a tantalising glimpse into what was once a glorious city.	PAST/ PRESENT		MIS
7.	more than 70 wars/ fine diplomatic skills	Concessive opposition: X; however, Y	At one point the empire ruled over an area larger than England and France combined. Ayuthaya had 33 kings who engaged in <b>more than 70 wars during its 417-year period; however, fine diplomatic skills</b> also ensured no Western power ever ruled Siam.	PEACE/ WAR  EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	With this number of wars, it is unexpected that Siam can escape Western colonialism with fine diplomatic skills.	MIS
8.	( a masterclass of genius found in) Ayuthaya's sites/ (in) anywhere else in the world	Negation: X not Y	The Unesco listing says <b>Ayuthaya's sites</b> 'represent a masterclass of genius', the likes of which <i>cannot be found</i> anywhere else in the world.	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR		FA
9.	no more than an antiquated bridge to foreigners/ one of several crucial photo ops... to thousands of Thai tourists...	Concessive opposition: X, but Y	It may look like <b>no more than an antiquated bridge to foreigners, but to thousands of Thai tourists who stop here during the tourist season it's one of several crucial photo ops along the '762 curves' to Pai.</b>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	Thais and foreigners have different interest.  Something about Thais' obsession with photography.	FA

10.	impressive/ monkeys who may snatch belongings while you're taking a dip	Concessive opposition: X, but Y	Levels 2 and 4 are <b>impressive</b> , <i>but</i> be wary of <b>monkeys who may snatch belongings while you're taking a dip</b>	SAFE/ UNSAFE	Monkey snatching belongings is not a common danger.  'Level 2 and 4' refers to part of a waterfall.	DG
11.	no order and no escape/ arranged into relatively coherent sections	Concessive opposition: X, but Y	Once you're deep in the bowels of Chatuchack, <u>it will seem like there is no order and no escape</u> , <i>but the market is arranged into relatively coherent sections.</i>	CHAOTIC/ COHERENT  EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	'but' triggered the element of unexpectedness because the readers are led to think so with, " <u>it will seem like there is</u> "	FA
12.	Ko Lipe is this decade's poster child for untamed development .../ Ko Lipe in the past	Auto-evocation: five or six years ago	<b>Ko Lipe is this decade's poster child for untamed development in the Thai Islands.</b> Blessed with two wide white-sand beaches separated by jungled hills and within spitting distance of protected coral reefs, <i>five or six years ago the island was only spoken about in secretive</i>	PAST/ PRESENT  DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED	Ko Lipe is still undeveloped	DV
13.	secretive whispers/ small talk / a roar (with bulldozers)	Concessive opposition: X. But, Y  Transitional opposition: X became Y, X turned into Y  Semantic trigger: secretive whispers/ small talk / a roar	<b>whispers.</b>  <i>But</i> then <b>the whispers became small talk</b> , which quickly turned into <b>a roar – you know, the kind generally associated with bulldozers.</b>	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED  FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	Now it has become more well-known.  * A taxonomic sister	FA



14.	Lipe/ Phi Phi	Transitional opposition: X become Y	Back in 2009, the big fear was whether or not <b>Lipe</b> would <i>become</i> another <b>Phi Phi</b> .	GOOD/ BAD	The night club could be seen as something unnatural. The ‘big fear’ and ‘those fear’ could have negative connotation on the club in this context.	DG
15.	those fears stroked when a bass heavy nightclub.../ the club was shut down and those fears ...	Concessive opposition: X, but Y	<b>Those fears were stoked when a bass heavy nightclub arrived on Hat Pattaya, but the club was shut down and those fears have mellowed somewhat.</b>	NATURAL/ UNNATURAL	* NATURAL is more preferable than UNNATURAL  * NATURAL is equivalent to undeveloped which have positive connotation in this context.	DV
16.	(the expectation that a bass heavy nightclub might arrive on Hat Pattaya)/ the reality that there’s still plenty to love, and love deeply, about Lipe (a relief)	Auto-evocation: still	<b>Which is a relief, because there’s <i>still</i> plenty to love, and love deeply, about Lipe.</b>	NATURAL/ UNNATURAL	This emphasizes the negative connotation of night clubs that it is something opposite to something ‘to love, and love deeply about Lipe’.  ‘UNDEVELOP’ is good in the area of tourism possibly to maintain authenticity of developing country.	DV
17.	some terrific beach bars, seafood and a party vibe during the high season... spectacular Adang views/ the preponderance of	Explicit opposition: a drawback of X is Y?	The gorgeous white-sand crescent of Hat Pattaya on the southern coast has <b>some terrific beach bars, seafood and a party vibe during the high season. Windswept Sunrise Beach, another sublime long stretch of sand</b> , juts to the north where you’ll have <b>spectacular Adang views</b> . A <i>drawback</i> of both of the busy beaches is <b>the</b>	GOOD/ BAD  NATURAL/ UNNATURAL	Another example of a man-made invention being a threat to nature.  Low level of development is valued in tourism.	DV

	long-tails that crowd out swimmers		<b>preponderance of long-tails that crowd out swimmers.</b>			
18.	same/ different	Semantic trigger: same/ different	<i>Same same, but different.</i> This Thailish T-shirt philosophy sums up Bangkok, a city where <b>the familiar</b> and <b>the exotic</b> collide like the flavours on a plate of pàt tai.	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR  (SAME/ DIFFERENT)	These conventional oppositions appear in the introduction of this section.	FA
19.	familiar/ exotic	Semantic trigger: familiar/ exotic		FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR		
20.	the language barrier/ loving the Thai people	(Negated contrastive: X, but never Y?)  Semantic trigger: barrier/ loving?	<b>The language barrier</b> may seem huge, <i>but</i> it's <i>never</i> prevented anybody from <b>loving the Thai people</b> .	LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL	The problem is not exactly a problem because of the Thais.	FA
21.	a smile, a language that doesn't require words/ normal language (that requires words and hard to learn)	Auto-evocation: the language barrier, a language that doesn't require words	In Bangkok, anything worth doing should have an element of sà•nùk. Ordering food, changing money and haggling at markets will usually involve a sense of playfulness – a dash of flirtation, perhaps, and a <b>smile</b> . It's <b>a language that doesn't require words, and one that's easy to learn.</b>	LOGICAL/ ILLOGICAL	It could be uncommon for a language to 'doesn't require words'.	FA
22.	to do / to just look	Comparative: X more than Y	Wandering around these sacred spaces you'll find art, architecture and enlightenment, as many offer	PARTICIPANT/ OBSERVANT		MIS

			monk chats and meditation courses to tourists who are willing <b>to do more than just look.</b>			
23.	these dreams of a tropical paradise/ reality	Transitional opposition: X become Y  Semantic trigger: dreams, paradise/ reality	<b>These dreams of a tropical paradise become reality</b> along the coasts of southern Thailand.	REAL/ UNRAL	Thailand is a reality, but it is so beautiful that it can be identified with dreams and paradise	FA
24.	near/ far	Semantic trigger: near/ far	<u>Thailand has long been Southeast Asia's mama-san</u> , inviting foreigners from <b>near</b> and <b>far</b> to indulge in <b>the kingdom's natural splendours.</b>	NEAR/ FAR  MAN/ WOMAN	The ' Southeast Asia's mama-san almost indicates that Thailand is associated with sex tourism.  *Close association of Orientalism: the Orient is feminized. * fit into DG for its association with the sex industry	DG
25.	the hedonist/ the hermit	Parallelism of the phonic pattern /h/ and Semantic trigger: hedonist/ hermit	With two long coastlines and jungle-topped islands anchored in azure waters, Thailand is a getaway for <b>the hedonist and the hermit, the prince and the pauper</b>	FUN/ SERIOUS	This opposition is already mentioned.	
26.	the prince/ the pauper	Parallelism of the phonic pattern /p/ and Semantic trigger: prince/ pauper		RICH/ POOR	This opposition is already mentioned * considered financially developed or undeveloped	DV

27.	beaches/ food	Concessive opposition: X, but Y	It may be <b>the beaches</b> that bring you to Thailand, <i>but</i> it's <b>the food</b> that will lure you back for seconds.	EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	Again, 'but' triggers ' EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED' conceptual opposition because of the lead, ' It may be the beaches that bring you to...'	FA
28.	(eating Thai food ) in its native setting/ (eating Thai food somewhere else)	Comparative opposition: much more delicious in X (than in Y)	And it is <i>much more</i> delicious <b>in its native setting</b> .	AUTHENTIC/ UNAUTHENTIC	Eating in the native setting should give higher level of familiarity to the country.	FA
29.	the glimmering eye of the meditative wâi/ the mirthful smirk of passers-by	Binarized option: Whether X or Y	<i>Whether</i> it's <b>the glimmering eye of the meditative wâi</b> (palms-together Thai greeting) <i>or</i> <b>the mirthful smirk of passers-by</b> , <u>it's hard not to be charmed by the Land of Smiles.</u>	wâi/ smile?  (good and good qualities)	This does not seem like an opposition as it is a combination of two positive qualities of Thailand.	MISC
30.	Thailand still holds a bevy off-the-beaten- track wonders/ (Thailand no longer holds...)	Auto-evocation: still	<b>The mainland coast beyond the islands sees few foreign visitors.</b> From the pink dolphins and waterfalls of sleepy Ao Khanom to the Thai Muslim flavours of kite-flying, beach strolling Songkhla, this region will convince any naysayer that <b>Thailand still holds a bevy off-the-beaten- track wonders.</b>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	"Few" foreign visitors could implicate that it is not popular among the tourists (UNFAMILIAR).	FA
31.	the party set/ the holiday learner/ families and sightseers	Auto-evocation: there's something for everybody	<b>A traveller-friendly scene caters to the party set, the holiday learner, families and sightseers.</b> <i>There's something for everybody</i> , and many decide to call the city home for as long as possible.	fun/ serious/ family/ tourists	"There's something for everyone implicates that people have different interest.  Another use of taxonomic sister.	MISC
32.	the south/ (the north)	Comparative opposition: X is the quieter (than Y)	<u>Island hoppers</u> , this is your dreamland. <b>The south</b> is the <i>quieter</i> half of the Andaman coast; even the regional star, <b>Ko Phi-Phi</b> , <i>can't rival the glam and</i>	busy/ quiet		DV

33.	(the glam and crowds of) Phuket/ Ko Phi Phi	Explicit opposition X can't rival Y ?	<b>crowds of Phuket. Just slowly putter</b> from white-sand isle to white-sand isle – and prepare for serious relaxation, outdoor fun and chummy nights at beachside bars.	developed/ undeveloped	* the “glam and crowds” could be an implication of how Phuket is more developed for tourism.	DV
34.	party into the wee hours and meet plenty of fellow rambler on the beach/ find a peaceful strip of sand and roads less travelled...	Concessive opposition: X yet Y  Auto-evocation: still	<p><b>Social seekers will love the developed beauties,</b> such as Ko Phi-Phi and Ko Lanta, where you can <b>party into the wee hours and meet plenty of fellow rambler on the beach</b> yet still <b>find a peaceful strip of sand.</b></p> <p>And <b>roads less travelled are just next door:</b> head down through the lightly developed <b>Trang Islands</b> to the <i>even-less-visited</i> <b>Satun Province</b> to find powder-white beaches, outrageous snorkelling and plenty of spicy southern Thai culture.</p>	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED	‘Partying into the wee hours’ is associated with DEVELOPED (for tourism). When being mentioned alongside “a peaceful strip of sand”, it could be an indication of another unconventional opposition, “peaceful”/ “busy”, in this context they are equally good.	DV
35.	Trang Islands/ (developed beauties e.g. Ko Phi-Phi and Ko Lanta)	Comparative opposition: X less travelled (than Y)		FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR		FA
36.	Trang islands/ Satun Province	Comparative opposition: the even-less-visited X (than Y)		FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR		FA

37.	'tropical' ambience/ undiscovered	Comparative opposition: more X (than Y)  Concessive opposition: but	Further afield, Ko Chang and its sister islands offer <i>a more 'tropical' ambience, but are far from undiscovered.</i>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR		FA
38.	these lesser- known spots (Ko Chang and its sister islands)/ (other parts of Thailand)	Comparative opposition and Auto- evocation: lesser- known	<p><b>Travellers who take the time to explore these lesser-known spots will find remnants of Old Siam, tasty market meals and an easy-going prosperity that defines ordinary Thai life in this region.</b></p> <p><i>And while Thais have long known of the region's delights, increasing numbers of Western travellers are now falling for the combination of an unspoiled coastline and the easy pace of provincial life on offer here.</i></p>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILAIR  PAST/ PRESENT	The PAST is valued in tourism.	FA
39.	Thais knowing about the place/ Western travellers learning about it	Coordination: while X, Y		FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR		FA
40.	the combination of an unspoiled .../ (other modern places in Thailand)	Referring to the “lesser- known spots”	NATURAL/ UNNATURAL	Another example indicating that the concept of NATURE is more positive here.	DV	
41.	Whatever happens/ ... continued to feel undiscovered	Concessive opposition: But X, Y	<p><i>But whatever happens, chances are that the vast inland jungle will continue to feel undiscovered, and there will be still plenty of stunning, secluded bays in which you can string up a hammock and watch the tide roll in.</i></p>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR  NATURAL/ UNNATURAL	The “undiscovered” could be an indication that the place should remain in their natural state, free from infrastructure (UNNATURAL).	DV
42.	(expectation that there should no longer be plenty of stunning,	Auto-evocation: still		EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	“Still” could suggest that there should not be any “secluded bays...” in Thailand because of the changes.	DV

	secluded bays)/ there will be still plenty of stunning secluded bays...					
43.	Ko Samet underdeveloped with a thick jungle interior crouching beside the low-rise hotels/ its proximity and popularity	Concessive opposition: But X, Y  Auto-evocation: surprisingly	<i>But</i> considering <b>its proximity and popularity, Ko Samet is <i>surprisingly</i> underdeveloped with a thick jungle interior crouching beside the low-rise hotels.</b>	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED  EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	Another assumption that tourism (popularity and hotels) should make the place less “NATURAL”	DV
44.	(Ko Samet underdeveloped).../ plans in place to redevelop...	Concessive opposition: (X) though Y	There are, <i>though</i> , <b>plans in place to redevelop the main street that runs from the pier to Hat Sai Kaew, <u>so expect some changes</u>. Yet, the interior road around the island remains rutted and largely unpaved and most beach-hopping is done</b>	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED  PRESENT/ FUTURE		DV
45.	plans in place to redevelop .../ the interior road around the island remains rutted ...	Concessive opposition: X. Yet, Y	<b>the old-fashioned way, by foot along wooded trails skirting the coastline.</b>	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED		DV
46.	Thais are generally very understanding and hospitable/ some important taboos and social conventions	Concessive opposition: X, but Y	<b>Thais are generally very understanding and hospitable, <i>but</i> there are some important taboos and social conventions</b> to know about.	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR		FA

47.	getting into an argument with a Thai/ smile through any social friction	Negated opposition: Never X. Y	Save Face <i>Never get into an argument with a Thai. It is better to smile through any social friction.</i>	PROBLEM/ SOLUTION	It is quite uncommon to ‘smile through any social friction’. Yet, this is the tourists should do in Thailand.	DG
48.	Thais drive on the left-hand side of the road/ (Thais do not always drive...)	Engagement markers: (most of the time!)  (personal aside)	<b>Thais drive on the left-hand side of the road (most of the time!).</b>	LEGAL/ ILLEGAL	The first time seeing Personal aside ( a form of Engagement marker) which is contradictory to what is mentioned before it.  This is a communication between the readers and the writer or just an opposition between what is written and the reality? It seems more like the writer is trying to be less explicit about what is written.	MIS
49.	just about anything goes/ road signs and speed limits	Concessive opposition: X in spite of Y	Other than that, <b>just about anything goes, in spite of road signs and speed limits.</b>	LEGAL/ ILLEGAL  EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	There is an expectation that Thai people should respect the law (road signs and speed limits), but in reality they do not. This appears to suggest the contrast to what happens in the West.	DG
50.	the main rule to be aware of is that right of way goes to the bigger vehicle, the	Negated contrastive: not X, but Y	<b>The main rule to be aware of is that right of way goes to the bigger vehicle; this is <i>not</i> what it says in the Thai traffic law, <i>but</i> it’s the reality.</b>	LEGAL/ ILLEGAL		DG



	reality/ what it says in the Thai traffic law					
51.	Maximum speed limits are /on any given stretch of highway you'll see various vehicles ...	Concessive opposition: X but Y	<b>Maximum speed limits are 50km/h on urban roads and 80km/h to 100km/h on most highways – but on any given stretch of highway you'll see various vehicles travelling as <i>slowly</i> as 30km/h and as <i>fast</i> as 150km/h.</b>	LEGAL/ ILLEGAL		DG
52.	slowly/ fast	Conventional opposition: slowly/ fast		FAST/ SLOW		MIS
53.	Thailand not dangerous/ exercise caution...	Concessive opposition: Although X, Y	<i>Although Thailand is not a dangerous country to visit, it is smart to exercise caution, especially when it comes to dealing with strangers (both Thai and foreigners) and travelling alone.</i>	SAFE/ UNSAFE  FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR		DG
54.	to be ripped off or have a personal possession surreptitiously stolen/ to be physically harmed	Auto-evocation: in reality  Comparative opposition: more likely X than Y	<i>In reality, you are more likely to be ripped off or have a personal possession surreptitiously stolen than you are to be physically harmed.</i>	SAFE/ UNSAFE  NORMAL/ ABNORMAL  EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	Considering “in reality”, it should be more common to be physically harmed when it comes to danger while travelling.	DG
55.	rare/ does happen	Concessive opposition: X but Y	Assault of travellers is <b>rare</b> in Thailand, <i>but</i> it does <b>happen</b> . <b>Causing a Thai to ‘lose face’</b> (feel public	EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED		DG

			embarrassment or humiliation) can sometimes elicit an <i>inexplicably strong and violent reaction</i> .			
56.	strong and violent reaction as a result of causing a Thai to 'lose face'/ ...other forms of insult	Auto-evocation: inexplicitly		SAFE/ UNSAFE  NORMAL/ ABNORMAL  EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	inexplicably* could involve the fact that the act is so uncommon for the writer. Hence, it is different from what happens in the West?	DG
57.	bad choices/ worse outcomes	Comparative opposition X worse Y	Oftentimes alcohol is the number one contributor to <b>bad choices and worse outcomes</b> .	GOOD/ BAD		DG
58.	thinking that they've made a friend and are getting a bargain / getting ripped off	Auto-evocation: in fact	Bangkok is <u>especially good at long-involved frauds</u> that dupe travellers into <b>thinking that they've made a friend and are getting a bargain when in fact they are getting ripped off</b> .	LEGAL/ ILLEGAL  NORMAL/ ABNORMAL	* The "long-involved frauds" implicating that they are normal qualities of Bangkok.	DG
59.	... contracting exotic infectious diseases when visiting the tropics/ problems with pre-existing medical conditions ...	Concessive opposition: X, but Y  Comparative opposition: X far less common than Y	<b>Travellers tend to worry about contracting exotic infectious diseases when visiting the tropics, but these</b> are <i>far less common than</i> problems with pre-existing medical conditions such as heart disease, and accidental injury (especially as a result of traffic accidents).	SAFE/ UNSAFE  EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	The writer assumes that travellers 'tends to worry about...' This could be a form of expectation that is shared within the Western community. Hence, 'but' triggers opposition between expected/ unexpected here.	DG
60.	the cost of health care in Thailand/ in most Western countries	Explicit opposition: X compared to Y	<b>The cost of health care is relatively cheap in Thailand compared to most Western countries.</b>	CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	Even the expensive hospitals in Thailand are considered cheap when compared with those in the West.	MIS
61.	minor traffic issues/ drugs	Explicit opposition: one major exception	In general, Thai police don't hassle foreigners, especially tourists. They usually go out of their way	LEGAL/ ILLEGAL	The fact that the Thai police "don't hassle foreigners" should be associated with ILLEGAL.	DG

			to avoid having to speak English with a foreigner, especially regarding <b>minor traffic issues.</b>			
62.	a social scourge against which it's their duty to enforce the letter of the law/ an opportunity to make untaxed income via bribes	Coordinated opposition: either X or Y	<i>One major exception is <b>drugs</b>, which most Thai police view as <i>either a social scourge against which it's their duty to enforce the letter of the law, or an opportunity to make untaxed income via bribes.</i></i>	LEGAL/ ILLEGAL		
63.	the police bending the codes for foreigners / matters worse when not showing respect	Concessive opposition: X. However, Y	<b>In the case of foreigners the police are more likely to bend these codes in your favour.</b> <i>However, as with police worldwide, if you don't show respect you will make matters worse.</i>	LEGAL/ ILLEGAL		DG
64.	exotic-looking foreign children/ stuffed animals and fluffy dogs	Auto-evocation: trump	Plus Thais are serious 'cute' connoisseurs and <b>exotic-looking foreign children trump stuffed animals and fluffy dogs.</b>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	'exotic-looking' means foreign children looks unfamiliar (different from) to Thai children.	MIS
65.	babies do well with their new-found stardom/ (...not well)	Auto-evocation: surprisingly	Small children are instant celebrities in Thailand and attract paparazzi-like attention. <b>Babies do surprisingly well with their new-found stardom,</b> soaking up adoration from <b>gruff taxi drivers</b> who	EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED		MIS
66.	gruff taxi drivers/ loving uncles	Transitional opposition: X transform into Y	<i>transform into <b>loving uncles</b> wanting to play a game of peekaboo (called 'já äir').</i>	MEAN/ KIND		MIS
67.	kids developing stranger anxiety/ the	Negation: X not mix well with Y	At a certain age, <b>kids can develop stranger anxiety</b> , which <i>doesn't mix well with the Thai passion for children.</i>	SAFE/ UNSAFE		DG

	Thai passion for children					
68.	amusements galore in Phuket/ the Patong party scene  (family activities/ parties)	Concessive opposition: X, though Y	<b>Phuket has amusements galore (from theme parks to surf schools), though</b> steer clear of <b>the Patong party scene</b> . There are at least a dozen islands along this coast where families can frolic in the sea.	MARRIED/ SINGLE	Oppositions between single and married men's activities  * Could be an indication of prevalence of sex industry in Thailand that makes the area "unsafe" for children and family.	MIS
69.	standard of animal amusements abound in Thailand/ ...in the West	Concessive opposition: X, though Y	<b>Animal amusements abound in Thailand, though</b> standards are often below <b>those in the West</b> .	SAFE/ UNSAFE  DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED		DV
70.	Merit-making at a Buddhist temple/ being child friendly	Auto-evocation: surprisingly	<b>Merit-making at a Buddhist temple is surprisingly child-friendly</b> – there are the burning joss sticks, the bowing in front of the Buddha and the rubbing of gold leaf on the central image.	EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED  FUN/ SERIOUS	Merit making could be considered a serious activity; hence, it is unexpected for children to like it.	FA
71.	travellers seeking the tropical idyll of sun, sea and sand between the toes in Ko Lipe/ the island changing fast...	Concessive opposition: X, but Y	<b>Ko Lipe calls out to travellers seeking the tropical idyll of sun, sea and sand between the toes, but the island is changing fast, with more bungalows bursting out of the jungle with each passing monsoon. A short boat-ride across brilliant blue waters in almost any direction will</b>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR  NATURAL/ UNNATURAL		DV
72.	the island changing fast.../ an island where not even	Negation: X not Y ?	<b>deposit you on an island where not even footprints disturb the sand.</b>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR		FA

	footprints disturb the sand			NATURAL/ UNNATURAL		
73.	(people making) the long journey south to the islands of the Ko Tarutao Marine National Park/ (people not making)	Auto-evocation: few  Concessive opposition: but X, Y	<i>Few people make the long journey south to the islands of the Ko Tarutao Marine National Park, but if you're looking for pristine island scenery, this is certainly where you'll find it.</i>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR  NATURAL/ UNNATURAL	It could be about those who care about pristine beach and those who do not care.  * Undevelopment is good for tourism again here.	DV
74.	It's only a quick trip.../ Ko Kut receives far, far fewer visitors	Concessive opposition: X, but Y	<b>It's only a quick trip from the popular island of Ko Chang on Thailand's Gulf Coast, but Ko Kut receives far, far fewer visitors.</b>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR  EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	People should know about Ko Kut because it is close to Ko Chang, so it should be famous for the tourists. However, they do not.	DV
75.	Ko Kut being underdeveloped/ (the expectation that it should be developed because of its proximity to Ko Chang)	Auto-evocation: still	<b>It's still remarkably underdeveloped</b> - there are only around 20 small resorts dotted along its heavily forested coastline, and nearly every one has its own patch of private beach.	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED  EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED		DV
76.	mysterious and confounding /approachable and inviting	Concessive opposition X but Y	Thailand is lucky. It has the looks, the temperament and the attractions to capture the world's imagination for an exotic escape. It is <b>mysterious and confounding but approachable and inviting.</b>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	(exotic/ friendly)	FA

77.	(Thailand)/ hohum home life	Auto-evocation: bid adieu to	Confirm your flight, find a hearty book for the plane ride and <i>bid adieu to hohum home life</i> .	REAL/ UNREAL		FA
FA78.	simplicity/ complicated	Semantic trigger: simplicity/ complicated	Cooking classes reveal the <i>simplicity</i> behind the seemingly <i>complicated</i> dishes and mastering the market is an important survival skill.	SIMPLE/ COMPLICATED		MIS
79.	Tao/ the others	Negated contrastive: not X, but Y?  (Something the others don't, but Tao also has its wildcard.)	<i>But Tao also has its wildcard, something the others don't</i> : easy-to-get-to, diverse diving right off its shores.	SPECIAL/ ORDINARY	Tao and the others are different on the ground of their qualities: the others are not 'easy-to-get-to, diverse diving right off its shores.'	MIS
80.	diving/(hikers and hermits) re-enacting an episode from Lost	Contrastive and Concessive opposition: But even while X, Y	<i>But even while</i> the island may be synonymous with <b>diving, there is much more to the place. Hikers and hermits can re-enact an episode from Lost in the dripping coastal jungles.</b>  And when you're <b>Robinson Crusoe-ed out, hit the pumpin' bar scene that rages on until dawn.</b>	EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED  ORDINARY/ SPECIAL	The oppositions could be about the activities, but it also reveals the common beliefs that the readers share that the place is famous for diving. By mentioning that 'there is much more to the place', the writer reveals the unexpected elements that the tourists (hikers and hermits) can also 're-enact an episode from Lost. Hence, it could be a 'new' information and diving in this area could be 'given'.	FA
81.	...hikers and hermits) re-enacting an episode from Lost/ Robinson Crusoe-ed out	Semantic trigger: in the dripping coastal jungles/ the pumpin' bar scene		NATURAL/ UNNATURAL	It is the location that makes the two activities different: in the jungles and the pumpin' bar scene.	DV

82.	tiny/ interesting	Concessive opposition; X but Y	Also upstairs is the <b>tiny but interesting</b> Ayutthaya National Art Museum.	BIG/ SMALL  SPECIAL/ ORDINARY	'tiny' or SMALL is unmarked and usually be mentioned alongside an opposite with more positive qualities.	MIS
83.	a stretch, a small town/ a Thai island getaway without the beaches	Concessive opposition: Although X, Y  Transitional opposition: X started to resemble Y	<i>Although</i> this is definitely a <b>stretch</b> , in recent years <b>the small town has started to resemble something of a Thai island getaway without the beaches.</b>	ORDINARY/ SPECIAL (FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR)	People starts to know about it now.	FA
84.	guesthouses/ private residences	Semantic trigger: guesthouses/ private residences  Auto-evocation: X outnumber Y	<b>Guesthouses</b> appear to outnumber <i>private residences</i> in the 'downtown' area, the internet is never more than a few steps away and the nights buzz with the sound of live music and partying.	LOCAL/ TOURIST	The opposition implicates that the area is set up for the tourists: there are more modern facilities.	DV
85.	The park being increasingly threatened by the runaway development on the Western coast.../ the other islands in the group	Comparative opposition: X better (than) Y	The park is increasingly threatened by <b>the runaway development on the western coast of Ko Lanta Yai. The other islands in the group</b> have fared slightly <i>better</i> .	RESERVED/ DESTROYED	Development is portrayed as a threat to nature.	DV
86.	(the expectation that Ko Rok Nai is no longer beautiful)/ (the reality that) Ko Rak	Auto-evocation: <i>still</i>	<b>Ko Rok Nai</b> is <i>still</i> very beautiful, with a crescent-shaped bay backed by cliffs, fine coral reefs and a sparkling white-sand beach.	EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	'Still' presupposes the expectation that Ko Rok Nai should no longer be beautiful.	DV

	Nai is still very beautiful					
87.	small/ engaging	Concessive opposition: X but Y	The 2nd floor of the building is home to the Phra Buddha Maha Suwanna Patimakorn Exhibition , which has exhibits on how the statue was made, discovered and came to arrive at its current home, while the 3rd floor is home to the Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Center , a <b>small but engaging</b> museum with multimedia exhibits on the history of Bangkok's Chinatown and its residents.	SMALL/ BIG  INTERESTING/ UNINTERESTING	The unmarked quality of ‘ small’ and a more positive opposite	MIS
88.	the sale of illegal wildlife/ much of this trade been driven underground	Concessive opposition: X, although, Y  Auto-evocation: in the past	It’s also worth noting that this section has, <i>in the past</i> , been associated with <b>the sale of illegal wildlife, although much of this trade has been driven underground.</b>	PAST/ PRESENT  LEGAL/ ILLEGAL		DG
89.	Phuket/ an island	Negation: X not (feel like) Y	Firstly, the ‘h’ is silent. Ahem. And secondly, <b>Phuket</b> <i>doesn’t</i> feel like <b>an island</b> at all.	NORMAL/ ABNORMAL	Normal/ abnormal could mean ordinary/ special as well, but there is not enough context for Phuket to be special, so it is just different from other islands.	FA
90.	nature buffs/ city connoisseurs	Semantic trigger: nature/ city	It is a fine urban specimen with a much-celebrated traditional culture ideal for sightseers, <b>nature buffs and city connoisseurs.</b>	NATURAL/ UNNATURAL	It seems like the activities that are associated with nature is often opposed to something, e.g. sex or city.	DV
91.	these houses of worship... (REAL)/ (these houses) in	Auto-evocation: as if	<b>These houses of worship are adorned with mirrored mosaics, tinkling bells and gabled</b>	REAL/ UNREAL	Could ‘as if’ be included as an opposition between fantasy/ reality? If yes, it is going to be an opposition	MIS



	communication with the heavens (UNREAL)		<b>rooftops soaring skyward as if in communication with the heavens.</b>		between what is said and the true meaning behind it.	
92.	the historic centre/ a dynamic and modern place with lots of down-to-earth charm	Semantic trigger: historic/ modern	Beyond <b>the historic centre is a dynamic and modern place with lots of down-to-earth charm.</b>	OLD/ NEW  FORMAL/ INFORMAL (down- to-earth charm)		MIS
93.	rock climbers/ castaway wannabes	Semantic trigger: nirvana/ (castaway) swimming off the bleach-blond shores	<b>Rock climbers</b> will find their nirvana in Railay, <i>while castaway wannabes</i> should head to Ko Lanta, Ko Phi-Phi or any of the other 150 islands swimming off the bleach-blond shores.	ACTIVE/ LAID- BACK	Rock climbing is considered less active because of 'nirvana' and castaway wannabes are associated with 'swimming off the bleach-blond shores' which could be a more active type of activity.  Concessive opposition?: X, while Y ( could just be about two people doing two activities at the same time)	MIS
94.	small/ splendid	Concessive opposition: X but Y	His <b>small but splendid</b> Asian art collection and his personal belongings are also on display in the main house.	BIG/ SMALL  SPECIAL/ ORDINARY	Another example of unmarked 'small'	MIS

95.	a tour/ Thai visitors with cars	Concessive opposition: X, although Y	Access to transport is another reason why <b>a tour</b> might be more convenient, <i>although Thai visitors with cars are usually happy to pick up pedestrians.</i>	GENEROUS/ UNGENEROUS	Could fit into the DG as it talks about the GOOD in this Thailand, but the focus of DG is on negativity.	MIS
96.	old/ new (Chiang Mai)	Semantic trigger: old/ new	The laid-back city of Chiang Mai is an endearing mix of <b>old</b> and <b>new</b> : the moated, partially walled old quarter shelters celebrated temples that reflect the forest-inspired aesthetics of the bygone teak trade and the ethnic mixing pot born during the caravan era.	OLD/ NEW		MIS
97.	short-term visitors who wish to drive ... need an International Driving Permit/ this isn't always enforced	Auto-evocation: in theory  Concessive opposition: X however Y	<i>In theory</i> <b>short-term visitors who wish to drive vehicles (including motorcycles) in Thailand need an International Driving Permit, however this isn't always enforced.</b>	COMMON/ UNCOMMON  LEGAL/ ILLEGAL	It is unexpected for the readers that the International Driving Permit is not enforced which could mean that the Western laws are stricter.	DG
98.	local companies/ international chains	Semantic trigger: local/ international	Cars, jeeps and vans can be rented in most major cities and airports from <i>local companies</i> as well as <i>international chains</i> .	LOCAL/ INTERNATIONAL		MIS
99.	foreigners/ the Thais	Auto-evocation: outnumber	Celebrations in Bangkok are more low-key, with many Bangkokians leaving town. The main venue for throwing water around with abandon is Th Khao San, where <b>foreigners outnumber the Thais.</b>	tourists/ locals		MIS
100.	staying locked into your hotel room/ (not staying...)	Auto-evocation: Unless X, Y?	Essentials: <b>Unless you stay locked in your hotel room (and why would you?)</b> it's virtually impossible to stay dry, so come prepared to get	GOOD/ BAD (IDEA)	The question in the bracket is a form of engagement marker because the writer makes an assumption that the readers might consider staying locked in a hotel	MIS

			very wet. Arm yourself with a water gun or bucket for the most fun.		room a good idea. Hence, the question is a response to the assumed question that it is not a good idea.	
101.	riding in the back of an open tuk-tuk / racing across the waves in a longtail boat	Coordinated opposition: whether X or Y?	<i>Whether it is <b>riding in the back of an open tuk-tuk or racing across the waves in a longtail boat</b>, a journey through Thailand's islands <u>always feels like a real adventure</u>. Thailand's beauty is <b>no secret</b>, but there are still <b>a few wonders that remain relatively under wraps</b>.</i>	-	This does not appear to have contrastive properties.	MIS
102.	a journey through.../ a real adventure	Auto-evocation: feel like a real adventure		SPECIAL/ ORDINARY		MIS
103.	no secret/ a few wonders that remain...	Concessive opposition: X, but Y  Auto-evocation: still		FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR		FA
104.	Making the beach in The Beach look like a proper island paradise/ the real thing in the laid-back islands of the Tarutao Archipelago	Auto-evocation: interrogative form: why go <b>to</b> all the trouble  Engagement marker: questions ' Why go <b>to</b> ...'	It took a team of landscape gardeners to <b>make the beach in The Beach look like a proper island paradise</b> . <u>Why go <b>to</b> all that trouble when you can find the real thing in the laid-back islands of the Tarutao Archipelago?</u>	REAL/ UNREAL	The question is a form of engagement marker as it is presupposed that the readers want 'a proper island paradise.' Hence, the question is to communicate that they can find a real thing in Thailand.  * FA because it is unreal.	FA
105.	paradise/ prison	Semantic trigger: paradise/ prison	Strolling barefoot along the silver-sand beaches that line the western shore of Ko Tarutao, <i>it's hard to believe that this little piece of <b>paradise</b> was once a</i>	REAL/ UNREAL  EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED	* Fit in FA because it's reference of paradise	FA

		Negation?: It's hard to believe that  (or Auto-evocation)	notorious <b>prison</b> , holding high-profile political prisoners until 1948.			
106.	monkey/ people	Comparative opposition: more X than Y	These days, there are <i>more monkeys than people</i> on Ko Tarutao, and the only modern development is a cluster of government-run bungalows spilling onto the beach by the ranger station at Ao Pante Malacca.	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED	It should be uncommon to see more monkeys than people. However, the following sentence mentions ' the only modern development' which indicate that the place with a lot of monkey is an undeveloped area.	DV
107.	the Swiss Family Robinson option/ Castaway offers swaying hammocks, ....	Negated opposition: not (have to take) X. Y  Engagement marker: of course	<i>Of course</i> , you don't have to take <b>the Swiss Family Robinson option</b> . On sand-dusted Ko Lipe, <b>Castaway offers swaying hammocks, resident masseurs, shady waterside pavilions and thatched-topped cabins that look onto a vista of lilted waters and bobbing long-tail boats. Divers can descend to a series of submerged pinnacles which attract mantas, whale sharks and other magnificent denizens of the deep.</b>	ADVENTUROUS/ UNADVENTUROUS  ACTIVE/ LAID-BACK	Of course is a response to an assumed question that some readers might not want to take this option.	MIS
108.	active types.../ for most people ...to kick back and watch the island tides roll by	Concessive opposition: X, but Y	<b>Active types will find plenty of opportunities for diving, hiking and snorkelling, but for most people, Ko Kut is simply a place to kick back and watch the island tides roll by</b> (kokood.com).	ACTIVE/ LAID-BACK		MIS
109.	what your dodgy uncle might have told	Concessive opposition: Despite X, Y	<i>Despite what your dodgy uncle might have told you, having a good time in Thailand does not</i>	GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE		DG

	you/ (the truth as told here)		necessarily have to involve <b>ping-pong balls or the word ‘go-go’</b> .			
110.	a good time in Thailand/ ping-pong balls or the word ‘go-go’	Negation: X not Y		MORAL/ IMMORAL		DG
111.	watching the sun set over Bangkok at one of the glamorous rooftop bars / listening to reggae at bohemian beach bungalows/ getting wild with some help from cheap Thai whisky at a sloppy full moon party in Ko Phang Ngan	Auto-evocation: caters to pretty much any audience, And just about everything in between.	The drinking and partying scene in Thailand is diverse, and <i>caters to pretty much any audience</i> . You can <b>watch the sun set over Bangkok at <u>one of the glamorous rooftop bars</u> that have captured the imagination of western travellers since the Hangover II; listen to reggae at bohemian beach bungalows, or get wild with some help from cheap Thai whisky at a sloppy full moon party in Ko Phang Ngan. And just about everything in between.</b>	CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	Another use of taxonomic sister  The ‘caters to pretty much any audience’ and ‘just about anything in between’ indicates that the activities that are mentioned could be considered oppositions.  Yet, the opposition still falls within the CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE binary: one of the glamorous rooftop bars/ cheap Thai whisky at a sloppy full moon party.  What is unsure is how to categorise ‘listening to reggae at bohemian beach bungalows’. It could be part of the CHEAP or being something different such as laid-back or artistic.	DV

112.	the cluttered cities and towns/ the rural heartland	Semantic trigger: cities, towns/ rural	In between <b>the cluttered cities</b> and <b>towns</b> is <b>the rural heartland</b> , a mix of rice paddies, tropical forests and squat villages tied to the agricultural clock.	CLUTTERED/ UNCLUTTERED (DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED)		DV
113.	rural/ modern	Semantic trigger: rural/ modern	Gleaming temples and golden Buddhas frame both the <i>rural</i> and <i>modern</i> landscape.	URBAN/ RURAL TRADITIONAL/ MODERN	The opposition is used with inclusive purpose to say that Buddhism is everywhere in Thailand. Yet, “modern” is used instead of “urban” (more common opposite to “rural”) connoting the quality of the area and as a result, the rural is associated with something traditional or old.	DV
114.	Pai/ Bangkok’s Khao San Road	Comparative opposition: the comparisons between X and Y	Spend enough time in northern Thailand and eventually you'll hear <i>the comparisons between Pai and Bangkok's Khao San Road</i> .	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	Pai is similar to Bangkok. Therefore, people are familiar with it.	FA
115.	popular among only foreigners in Khao San or the islands/ among both Thais and foreigners in Pai	Concessive opposition: However, unlike X, Y	<i>However, unlike Khao San or the islands, Pai</i> (pronounced more like the English 'bye', not 'pie') <b>is just as popular among Thais as foreigners.</b>	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	The opposition is included in this theme because it involves big cities and “Pai” as remote, small and rural like city). In this case, both Thais and foreigners are familiar with this place.	FA
116.	Thais/ foreigners	Semantic trigger: Thais/ foreigners		LOCALS/ TOURISTS	It is assumed that they have different interest in terms of tourist attractions.	FA
117.	the Chatuchak Weekend Market/ a remote village in Mae Hong Son	Comparative opposition: (feel) more like X than Y	During the peak of the cool season (December and January), thousands of Thais from Bangkok crowd into the town, making parts of <i>it feel more like the Chatuchak Weekend Market than a remote village in Mae Hong Son</i> .	BUSY/ CALM	‘It’ and a remote village in Mae Hong Son refers to Pai. Having a lot of people in one place should make the place appear busy, in contrary to calm feeling that one may have in “remote village”.	MIS

118.	the popularity of Pai (that make it feel more like the Chatuchak Weekend Market) should negatively impact its nearly picture-perfect.../ (it has not)	Concessive opposition: Despite X, Y  Auto-evocation: yet	<i>Despite all this, the town's popularity</i> has yet to <b>negatively impact its nearly picture-perfect setting in a mountain valley.</b>	EXPECTED/ UNEXPECTED  NATURAL/ UNNATURAL	It is expected that the popularity (tourism) could lead to the negative impact on the place.	DV
119.	the vibe of rural Thailand, Ayuthaya/ Bangkok, the Big Mango	Semantic trigger: rural Thailand/ Bangkok	<b>Ancient ruins, the vibe of rural Thailand, tasty food, good-value accommodation</b> – and all of it only 70km from <b>Bangkok: Ayuthaya</b> is the easiest and most worthwhile <u>escape</u> from <b>the Big Mango</b> .	MODERN/ TRADITIONAL	“To escape from” is frequently used to indicate the move away from Bangkok. The semantic property of “escape” appears to have negative effects on Bangkok/ the Big Mango. Therefore, “TRADITIONAL” is more positive in this context.	DV
120.	travellers/ Thais	Semantic trigger: travellers/ Thais	For <b>travellers</b> and <b>Thais</b> alike, the northeast is Thailand's forgotten backyard.	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	The prepositional phrase ‘For <b>travellers</b> and <b>Thais</b> alike’ indicates that travellers and Thais are expected to be different, but not in this case because they are both unfamiliar with the northeast.	FA
121.	Isan (Thailand in the past) / (other parts of Thailand representing modern Thailand)	Auto-evocation: a glimpse of the Thailand of old, authentic (experiences)	<b>Isan (ee•sähn)</b> , as it's called, offers <i>a glimpse of the Thailand of old</i> : rice fields run to the horizon, water buffalo wade in muddy ponds, silk weavers work looms under their homes, and pedal-rickshaw drivers pull passengers down city streets. If you have a penchant for <u>authentic experiences</u> , it will surely be satisfied here.	MODERN/ TRADITIONAL  AUTHENTIC/ UNAUTHENTIC	Studies show that Isan people is treated as outsiders in Thai society. Yet, oppositions show that in the eyes of the Westerners, they are authentic: real Thainess could be related to backwardness and poverty, or traditional way of life.	DV

122.	Isan, this colossal corner of the country/ the rest of Thailand	Semantic trigger: differences/ similarities  Explicit opposition: as many differences as similarities to	Spend even just a little time in <b>this colossal corner of the country</b> and you'll discover as many <b>differences as similarities</b> to the rest of Thailand. The language, food and culture are <i>more Lao than Thai</i> , with hearty helpings of Khmer and Vietnamese thrown into the mix. ... <b>Thailand's tourist trail is at its bumpiest here (English is rarely spoken), but the fantastic attractions and daily interactions</b> could end up being highlights of your entire trip.	INSIDER/ OUTSIDER	Isan is both different and similar to the rest of Thailand, but only differences are mentioned in this context.	FA
123.	Lao/ Thai	Comparative: more X than Y		INSIDER/ OUTSIDER	Lao is considered non- Thai, so people from the area is considered outsiders (to the Thais).	FA
124.	the difficulty of travelling in Isan because English is rarely spoken here/ the fantastic attractions and daily interactions	Comparative: the bumpiest in X		FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR  ADVANTAGE/ DISADVANTAGE	The opposition, "exotic/ friendly," fits well with in this context because the inability to speak English should make the area even more exotic to the Westerners.	FA
125.	You/ other beach lovers...	Auto-evocation: X have to share with Y	An island idyll, Ko Samet bobs in the sea with a whole lot of scenery: small sandy bays bathed by clear aquamarine water. <b>You'll</b> have to share all this prettiness with <b>other beach lovers as it's an easy weekend escape from Bangkok, as well as a major package-tour destination</b>	INDIVIDUAL/ COLLECTIVE  FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	Another use of 'escape from Bangkok'. The place is unknown for many. The island is considered rural because it is referred in contrasted to Bangkok.	FA
126.	the vehicular traffic / ... stray chickens, dogs and water buffaloes	Concessive opposition: X but Y	In village areas <b>the vehicular traffic is lighter but you have to contend with stray chickens, dogs and water buffaloes.</b>	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED		DV



127.	small/ potentially serious risk	Concessive opposition: X but Y	Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a <b>small but potentially serious</b> risk.	SAFE/ UNSAFE		DG
128.	(the use of) ordinary buses/ air-con buses	Replacive opposition: X have been replaced by Y  Auto-evocation: still	<b>Only a few of these ordinary buses, in rural locations or for local destinations, still exist since most have been replaced by air-con buses.</b>	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED	There is an expectation that ordinary buses should no longer exist, but they do, an association of the rural with the past.	DV
129.	each bench seat is designed to seat two or three passengers/ on a crowded rural line nobody seems to care	Concessive opposition: X but Y	<b>Each bench seat is designed to seat two or three passengers, but on a crowded rural line nobody seems to care.</b>	LEGAL/ ILLEGAL	Not exactly “illegal”, but more about not following the rule and do whatever they want in the rural area. It could also be associated with backwardness or uncivilized.	DG
130.	most train stations have printed timetables in English/ this isn't always the case for smaller stations	Concessive opposition: X; although Y	<b>Most train stations have printed timetables in English; although this isn't always the case for smaller stations.</b>	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED	English language could be considered a sign of development.	DVD
131.	the Asian-style squat toilet/ the norm in Thailand	Comparative opposition: X less (than Y)	Increasingly, <b>the Asian-style squat toilet is less of the norm in Thailand.</b> There are <i>still</i> specimens <b>in rural places, provincial bus stations, older homes and modest restaurants, but the Western-</b>	NORMAL/ ABNORMAL  DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED		V

			<b>style toilet is becoming more prevalent and appears wherever foreign tourists can be found.</b>			
132.	specimens in rural places/ the Western-style toilet is becoming more prevalent ...	Concessive opposition: X but Y  Auto-evocation: still		NORMAL/ ABNORMAL  DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED		DV
133.	the majority of cities and popular tourist areas.../ travel to remote rural areas ...	Concessive opposition: X However, Y	Health risks and the quality of medical facilities vary depending on where and how you travel in Thailand. <b>The majority of cities and popular tourist areas have adequate and even excellent medical care. However, travel to remote rural areas can expose you to some health risks and less adequate medical care.</b>	safe/ unsafe	An evidence of an association of tourism with development	DG
134.	risk in Bangkok/ ...in most of the country	Concessive opposition: X but Y  Auto-evocation: still	<b>The risk in Bangkok is decreasing</b> but there is <i>still significant risk in most of the country.</i>	SAFE/ UNSAFE		DG
135.	most parts of Thailand visited by tourists/ high-risk rural areas (unlikely for most visitors)	Concessive opposition: unlikely for	<b>Most parts of Thailand visited by tourists,</b> particularly city and resort areas, have minimal to no risk of malaria, and the risk of side effects from taking antimalarial tablets is likely to outweigh the risk of getting the disease itself. If you are travelling to <b>high-risk rural areas (unlikely for most visitors)</b> , seek medical advice on the right medication and dosage for you.	SAFE/ UNSAFE	There is an expectation that visitors will not go to this area. It is less safe with less tourists.	DG

136.	climate-controlled megamalls/ 200-year-old village homes	Explicit opposition: the contradictions, these contrasts	<p>It's <b>the contradictions</b> that give the City of Angels its rich, multifaceted personality. Here <b>climate-controlled megamalls</b> sit side-by-side <b>200-year-old village homes</b>; <b>gold-spired Buddhist temples</b> share space with <b>neon-lit strips of sleaze</b>; <b>slow-moving rivers of traffic</b> are bypassed by <b>long-tail boats plying the royal river</b>; and <b>streets lined with food carts</b> are overlooked by <b>restaurants on top of skyscrapers serving exotic cocktails</b>. As Bangkok races towards the future, <i>these contrasts</i> will never stop supplying the city with its never-ending <u>Thai-ness</u>.</p>	BIG/ SMALL,  COLLECTIVE/ INDIVIDUAL  MODERN/ TRADITIONAL	<p>The topic of the section is 'Contrasts' which indicates that everything in this section is considered opposite.</p> <p>Semantic trigger plays a role here, but it is the Explicit opposition that is much more obvious?</p>	DV
137.	gold-spired Buddhist temples/ neon-lit strips of sleaze	Explicit opposition: the contradictions, these contrasts		MORAL/ IMMORAL		<p>The city of Angels refers to Bangkok. These contradictions are considered part of Thai-ness. They are almost conventional because of the trigger 'the contradictions' and 'these contrasts' that emphasize their status as oppositions.</p>
138.	slow-moving rivers of traffic/ long-tail boats plying the royal river	Explicit opposition: the contradictions, these contrasts		MODERN/ TRADITIONAL	MIS	
139.	streets lined with food carts/ restaurants on top of skyscrapers serving exotic cocktails	Explicit opposition: the contradictions, these contrasts		RICH/ POOR	DV	

140.	eating on a Bangkok street (real Thai food)/ eating Thai food somewhere else	Negation: X not Y	<b>Until you've eaten on a Bangkok street, your noodles mingling with your sweat amid a cloud of exhaust fumes, you haven't actually eaten Thai food.</b>	AUTHENTIC/ UNAUTHENTIC  CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	Authenticity of Thailand is represented with poverty.	FA
141.	an overwhelming mix.../ meat and potatoes	Negation: X not Y	It can be <b>an overwhelming mix: the underlying flavours – spicy, sour, sweet and salty – aren't exactly meat and potatoes. But for adventurous foodies who don't need white tablecloths</b> , there's probably <i>no better dining destination in the world</i> .	BASIC/ SPECIAL	Thai food is associated with poverty again. It seems to suggest that Thai food is cheap, but good and it does not seem to be suitable for the poor.	MIS
142.	the adventurous foodies.../ (those who need white table cloths and have meat and potatoes)	Auto-evocation: X (who don't need white tablecloths)		CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE  ADVENTUROUS/ UNADVENTUROUS  FORMAL/ INFORMAL		FA
143.	Thai dining/ other dining destination in the world	Negation and Comparative opposition: X no better Y		SPECIAL/ ORDINARY	Could this trigger be called 'Negated Comparative'?	FA
144.	the baby, the smallest in size/ grown up	Semantic trigger: baby, smallest in size/ grown up  Concessive opposition: X but Y	Once <b>the baby</b> of the Samui, Pha-Ngan, Tao trio, Ko Tao may still be <b>the smallest in size</b> but in many other ways it's <b>grown up</b> ....	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED	Though the semantic trigger is more prominent in this example, the Concessive opposition, but, is also significant in case that readers do not know the meaning of the conventional pairs.	DV

145.	gaining popularity and going more upscale/ for now this jungle topped cutie...	Concessive opposition: X but Y	The island is consistently <b>gaining popularity and going more upscale, but for now this jungle-topped cutie has the busy vibe of Samui mixed with the laid-back nature of Pha-Ngan.</b>	DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED  CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	The change is usually for the richer.	DV
146.	the busy vibe of Samui/ the laid-back nature of Pha-Ngan	Semantic trigger: busy/ laid-back		BUSY/ CALM	The opposition suggests that the new version of the island will no longer have the mixed quality of Samui and Pha-Nagan (which is considered a positive quality here.) Hence, the change might not be as good as the present (busy and calm).	FA
147.	(Lanta as) the domain of backpackers and sea gypsies, a luscious southern Thai backwater/ (Lanta as) a midrange getaway for French, German and Swedish...	Transitional opposition: X hasn't just gentrified, it's morphed almost completely from X into Y	<b>Once the domain of backpackers and sea gypsies, Lanta <i>hasn't just gentrified, it's morphed almost completely from a luscious southern Thai backwater into a midrange getaway for French, German and Swedish package tourists who come for her divine beaches (though the northern coast is alarmingly eroded) and nearby dive spots, Hin Daeng, Hin Muang and Ko Ha.</i></b>	PAST/ PRESENT  CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	The change is for the richer again. The 'backpackers' is also allied with POOR.  'Package tour' seems to implicate limited experiences that these tourists might have in Thailand. Therefore, activities associated with CHEAP could be more worthwhile.	DV
148.	her divine beaches/ the northern coast is alarmingly eroded	Concessive opposition: X though Y  (personal aside?)		RESERVED/ DESTROYED		DV D

149.	(the calm and real qualities of) Phi-Phi/ Lanta	Comparative: X remains far more calm and real (than) Y	Within eyeshot of <b>Phi-Phi, Lanta</b> remains far <i>more calm and real</i> , <i>however</i> , and <b>effortlessly caters to all budget types</b> .	BUSY/ CALM  REAL/ UNREAL		DV
150.	Lanta being calm and real/ effortlessly caters to all budget types	Concessive opposition: X, however, Y		CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	It is expected that the ‘calm and real’ environment is usually preserved for the rich, not the poor.	DV
151.	you/ an heiress	Negation: X not Y	Jet-setters <b>come through in droves, getting pummelled during swanky spa sessions and swigging sundowners at one of the many fashion-forward nightspots or on their rented yacht</b> . And <b>you don’t</b> have to be an heiress to tap into Phuket’s trendy to-do list. With <b>deep-sea diving, high-end dining, and white beaches all within reach</b> , it really is hard to say farewell.	CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	The readers (you) are assumed to be allied with ‘CHEAP’ because of the	DV
152.	come through in droves, getting pummelled during swanky spa ... rented yacht/ deep-sea diving, high-end dining, and white beaches all within reach	The opposition is constructed through the previous opposition” you don’t have to be an heiress.”  Hence, the trigger should also be Negation: X not Y		CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	Negation that constructs a complementary between ‘you’ and ‘an heiress’. This could construct an distinctive oppositions between two types of activities available for the rich and the poor in Phuket. Yet, the ‘high-end dining’ could indicate that ‘you’ might not fall completely into the poor category.	DV
153.	designer-villa wishes/ bamboo-hut desires/ something in between	Coordination: whether X, Y or Z  Semantic trigger: designer-villa/ bamboo-hut	Whether you’ve got <b>designer-villa wishes, bamboo-hut desires</b> or <b>something in between</b> , the northern Andaman coast serves it up hot with a shot of turquoise ocean to wash it down. Phuket, on the southern extremity, is the audacious starlet of the region, flaunting glitzy five-star hotels that grace ultrawhite beaches.	CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	a kind of taxonomic sister  It seems like whether X or Y could construct an opposition only when the semantic triggers are involved.  In this opposition, ‘ something in between’ tends to give the idea that ‘ designer-villa wishes’ and ‘ bamboo- hut desires’ are a complementary, and there	DV

					are other gradable oppositions in between.	
154.	Ko Samui is the oldest sibling, who has made it big/ Ko Pha-Ngan is the slacker middle child with tangled dreadlocks and a penchant for hammock-lazing and all-night parties/ Ko Tao is the outdoorsy...	Explicit opposition: trifecta	The Lower Gulf features Thailand's ultimate island <i>trifecta</i> : Ko Samui, Ko Pha-Ngan and Ko Tao. This family of spectacular islands lures millions of tourists every year with their powder-soft sands and emerald waters. <b>Ko Samui is the oldest sibling, who has made it big. Here, high-class resorts operate with Swiss efficiency as uniformed butlers cater to every whim. Ko Pha-Ngan is the slacker middle child with tangled dreadlocks and a penchant for hammock-lazing and all-night parties. Meanwhile Ko Tao is the outdoorsy, fun-loving kid with plenty of spirit and spunk – the island specialises in high-adrenalin activities, including world-class diving and snorkelling.</b>	(RICH/ LAID-BACK/ ACTIVE)	another taxonomic sister concerned with different types of tourists	DV
155.	Known as the 'royal' coast, the upper gulf <i>has long been</i> the favoured playground of the Bangkok monarchy and elite/ Today, domestic tourists flock to this coast in the same pursuit of leisure	Auto-evocation: Today?	<b>Known as the 'royal' coast, the upper gulf has long been the favoured playground of the Bangkok monarchy and elite. Every Thai king from Rama IV on has found an agreeable spot to build a royal getaway. Today, domestic tourists flock to this coast in the same pursuit of leisure,</b> as well as to pay homage to the revered kings whose summer palaces are now open to the public.	ORDINARY/ SPECIAL  RICH/ POOR  PAST/ PRESENT	The rich is referred to as 'the Bangkok monarchy and elite'. The other is 'domestic tourists.' Not exactly a rich/poor opposition, but when one pair 'monarchy' and 'elite', it is possible to think of the opposite pair as ordinary people.	DV

156.	a well-established Hollywood celebrity (the glossy veneer)/ the girl from the country (Ko Samui)	Semantic trigger: celebrity/ the girl from the country	<b>Ko Samui is like a well-established Hollywood celebrity:</b> she's outrageously manicured, has lovely blonde tresses and has gracefully removed all of her wrinkles without more than a peep in the tabloids. <b>She's been in the tourism business longer than</b>	ORDINARY/ SPECIAL  RICH/ POOR		DV
157.	Ko Samui/ any other Thai island in tourism business	Comparative: longer than	<b>almost any other Thai island, but rather than becoming passe, she's embraced a new generation of resort goers, many of them upscale and Russian. ..</b>	OLD/ NEW		DV
158.	becoming passé/ embracing a new generation of resort goers...upscale and Russian	Concessive opposition: X, but Y  Replacive opposition: rather than X, Y  Transitional opposition: X becoming Y	<b>Behind the glossy veneer</b> there's still <b>a glimmer of the girl from the country.</b> Look for steaming street-side food stalls beyond the beach, backpacker shanties plunked down on quiet stretches of sand and secreted Buddhist temples along the backstreets. <u>It's then that you remember</u> you're <b>in Thailand</b> and <i>not a globalisation-induced trance of a Photoshopped beach vacation.</i>	OLD/ NEW  CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	From 'It's then that you remember', it could be said that the identity (authenticity) of Thailand is actually related to poverty.	DV
159.	Thailand / a globalisation – induced trance of a photo shopped beach vacation	Negation: X not Y		REAL/ UNREAL	The authenticity of Thailand is related to poverty.	DV
160.	Slacker, hippie at heart Ko Pha-Ngan/ the wild and massive full Moon	Transitional opposition: X has become Y	<b>Slacker, hippie-at-heart Ko Pha-Ngan</b> <i>has become</i> so synonymous with <b>the wild and massive</b>	BUSY/ CALM		DV



161.	Full Moon Party on Hat Rin during full moon party/ the rest of the island and (Ko Pha-Ngan), Hat Rin outside of full moon week	Auto-evocation: gets forgotten	<b>Full Moon Party on Hat Rin that the rest of the island – and even Hat Rin outside of full moon week – gets forgotten.</b>	BUSY/ CALM		DV
162.	the wild and massive Full Moon Party on Hat Rin, some 30,000 people crammed on one beach .../ the beaches and accommodations half empty, budgeting serenity seekers can retreat into a fog ...	Explicit opposition: a strange juxtaposition	It's a <i>strange juxtaposition</i> where for one week the island has <b>some 30,000 people crammed on one beach partying their minds out</b> and then, off they all go on the next boat, leaving <b>the beaches and accommodations half empty</b> . It's at this time that <b>budgeting serenity seekers can retreat into a fog (perhaps with a slight herbal scent) of the backpacker days of old and nab a fan-cooled beach shack from 400B (on the northern beaches at least).</b>	BUSY/ CALM  CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	It is 'the backpacker days' and 'a fan-cooled beach shack from 400B' that are associated with CHEAP.	DV
163.	gorgeous island is in a sleepy sweet spot .../ the accommodation getting more expensive with the imminent opening of...	Transitional opposition: X change (into Y)  Concessive opposition: X but Y  Auto-evocation: for now	<b>This</b> will probably <i>change</i> quickly with the imminent opening of the island's airport in late 2014, <i>but for now</i> this exceptionally <b>gorgeous island is in a sleepy sweet spot where you can even find a solid bungalow on Hat Rin for around 1000B outside of full moon mania.</b>	PRESENT/ FUTURE  CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	Again the change is for the rich.	DV

164.	the more clean-cut, comfort-seeking traveller, families/ the full moon party goers	Comparative: more X (than Y)	Ko Pha-ngan has plenty to offer <b>the more clean-cut, comfort-seeking traveler as well; its peace and quiet make it a great choice for families.</b>	MAN/ WOMAN  BUSY/ CALM  MARRIED/ SINGLE	There is a distinction between activities for single guys and family men.	DV
165.	Remote Hat Thong Nai Pan Noi, miniature version of Ko Samui with its elegant resorts .../ a handful of new upscale resorts ...	Concessive opposition: X, while Y	<b>Remote Hat Thong Nai Pan Noi in particular feels like a miniature version of Ko Samui with its elegant resorts fronted by rows of cushion-clad beach loungers, while the easier-to-access west coast has attracted a handful of new upscale resorts and a few older places have been revamped to attract a more ritzy market.</b>	CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	This is not exactly about expectation, more like contrast. Both sides mention accommodation for the rich: 'elegant resorts' and 'upscale resorts.'	DV
166.	a few older places / (places for) a more ritzy market	Comparative opposition: older X (than Y), a more (X) than Y  Transitional opposition: X has been revamped ( for Y)		OLD/ NEW  CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE		DV
167.	'private infinity pool' and 'personal butler'/ magic milkshake' and 'another whisky bucket please'	Comparative: X be heard more frequently than Y	The phrase <b>'private infinity pool' and 'personal butler'</b> may soon be heard <i>more frequently than</i> <b>'magic milkshake' and 'another whisky bucket please'</b> .	CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE  ORDINARY/ SPECIAL  LEGAL/ ILLEGAL	Magic milkshake is illegal, so the poor is associated with something dirty again (dirty business).	DG

168.	private hospitals/ other medical facilities	Comparative opposition: X more expensive than Y	<b>Private hospitals are <i>more expensive than other medical facilities but offer a superior standard of care and English-speaking staff.</i></b>	CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE		DV
169.	expensive/ offer a superior standard of care and English speaking staff	Concessive opposition: X but Y		DEVELOPED/ UNDEVELOPED  CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	Expensive is supposed to be a drawback, but it is associated with benefits. In this case, English is considered a sign of development.	DV
170.	watching the sun set over Bangkok at one of the glamorous rooftop bars / listening to reggae at bohemian beach bungalows/ getting wild with some help from cheap Thai whisky at a sloppy full moon party in Ko Phang Ngan	Auto-evocation: caters to pretty much any audience, And just about everything in between.	The drinking and partying scene in Thailand is diverse, and <i>caters to pretty much any audience.</i> You can <b>watch the sun set over Bangkok at <u>one of the glamorous rooftop bars</u> that have captured the imagination of western travellers since the Hangover II; listen to reggae at bohemian beach bungalows, or get wild with some help from cheap Thai whisky at a sloppy full moon party in Ko Phang Ngan.</b> <i>And just about everything in between.</i>	CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	Another use of taxonomic sister  The ‘caters to pretty much any audience’ and ‘just about anything in between’ indicates that the activities that are mentioned could be considered oppositions. Yet, the opposition still falls within the CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE binary: one of the glamorous rooftop bars/ cheap Thai whisky at a sloppy full moon party. What is unsure is how to categorise ‘listening to reggae at bohemian beach bungalows’. It could be part of the CHEAP or being something different such as laid-back or artistic.	DV

171.	the island's sin city of Patong/ (other cities)	Comparative opposition: the busiest and biggest	<p><b>The island's sin city of Patong is the biggest town and busiest beach. It's the ultimate gong show where beachaholics sizzle off their hangovers and go-go girls play ping pong...without paddles. But ultimately the island's affinity for luxury far outshines its other stereotypes.</b></p>	BIG/ SMALL		DG
172.	the ultimate gong show ..., its other stereotypes/ the island's affinity for luxury	Coordination: X. But Y  Explicit opposition: X far outshines Y		MORAL/ IMMORAL  CHEAP/ EXPENSIVE	Indicating an association between the poor and dirty activities (sex).  Hence, poverty is associated with something dirty.	DG
173.	WOMEN, / THE OPPOSITE SEX, BE THEY THAI OR FA•RÀNG (FOREIGNERS)	Semantic trigger: women/ the opposite sex	<b>Women</b> , especially solo travellers, need to be smart and somewhat sober when interacting with <b>the opposite sex, be they Thai or fa•ràng (foreigners).</b>	ASSAILANT/ VICTIM		DG
174.	an innocent flirtation/ firmer intentions	Semantic trigger: flirtation/ intentions  Comparative opposition: firmer X (than Y)	Opportunists pounce when too many whisky buckets are involved. Also be aware that <b>an innocent flirtation</b> might convey <i>firmer intentions</i> to a recipient who does not share your culture's sexual norms.	FUN/ SERIOUS  FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR		DG
175.	(female readers)/ a recipient who does not share your culture's sexual norms	Negation: not share your culture's sexual norms	Opportunists pounce when too many whisky buckets are involved. Also be aware that <b>an innocent flirtation</b> might convey <b>firmer intentions</b> to a recipient who does not share your culture's sexual norms.	FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR  ASSAILANT/ VICTIM	Emphasis is more on the danger, so DG, not FA	DG

176.	(older) Thai women/ the younger generation	Comparative opposition: (X) younger (than Y), (X) showing more skin (than Y)	<b>Thai women, especially the younger generation,</b> are showing <i>more</i> skin <b>these days</b> .	OLD/ YOUNG  CONSERVATIVE/ LIBERAL		DG
177.	Thai women who dress like a bar girl/ Thai women who do not...	Auto- evocation: <i>almost everyone</i>	That means <i>almost everyone</i> is now <i>dressing like a bar girl</i> and you can wear spaghetti strap tops and navel-bearing shirts <b>without offending Thais’ modesty streak</b> .	CONSERVATIVE/ LIBERAL  NORMAL/ ABNORMAL		DG
178.	not offending Thais’ modesty streak/ offending ...in rural communities and ...temples	Concessive opposition: X But, Y	<i>But to be on the safe side</i> , cover up if you’re going <b>deep into rural communities</b> . And certainly cover up if visiting <b>temples</b> .	SAFE/ UNSAFE  OFFENDING/ UNOFFENDING  CONSERVATIVE/ LIBERAL  TRADITIONAL/ MODERN		DG
179.	Attacks and rapes...not common/ do occur	Negation: X not Y  Concessive opposition: X, but Y	Attacks and rapes are <i>not common</i> in Thailand, <i>but</i> incidents <b>do occur</b> , especially when <b>an attacker</b> observes <b>a vulnerable target: a drunk or solo woman</b> . If you return home from a bar alone, be sure to have your wits about <b>you</b> .	NORMAL/ ABNORMAL (SAFETY)		DG
180.	an attacker/ a vulnerable target	Semantic trigger: an attacker/ a vulnerable target		ASSAILANT/ VICTIM		DG

				NORMAL/ ABNORMAL		
181.	(readers with common sense when at home)/ in a new environment filled with hospitable people	Auto-evocation: common sense	Avoid accepting rides from strangers late at night or travelling around in isolated areas by yourself – <b>common sense stuff that might escape your notice in a new environment filled with hospitable people.</b>	NORMAL/ ABNORMAL  FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	* Having a common sense is an indication of normalcy	DG
182.	a men’s paradise, Bangkok/ foreign women find their own Romeo on the Thai beaches	Concessive opposition: while X, Y  Semantic trigger: men/ women	<i>While Bangkok</i> might be a <b>men’s paradise</b> to some, <b>foreign women</b> are finding <b>their own Romeos on the Thai beaches.</b>	NORMAL/ ABNORMAL	The normal type of relationship in Thailand is between Thai women and Western men. The Concessive opposition, while, could convey unexpected type of relationship.	DG
183.	more couple emerges, more Thai men...	Comparative, Parallelism: more X, more Y	<i>As more couples emerge, more Thai men will make themselves available.</i>	AVAILABLE/ UNAVAILABLE	In this context, availability refers to flirting or showing their sexual availability.	MIS
184.	the spurned man/ unpleasant, violent (man)	Transitional opposition: X become Y  Semantic trigger: women/ Thai men	<b>Women</b> who aren’t interested in such romantic encounters <u>should not presume</u> that <b>Thai men</b> have merely platonic motives.  Frivolous flirting could <u>unintentionally</u> cause a Thai man to feel a loss of face if attention is then diverted to another person and, in some cases	ASSAILANT/ VICTIM  FAMILIAR/ UNFAMILIAR	The UNFAMILIAR to the Thai culture is implicated with “presume”, and “unintentionally”.	DG

			where alcohol is involved, <b>the spurned man</b> may become <b>unpleasant</b> or even <b>violent</b> .			
185.	male/ female (homosexuality)	Semantic trigger: male/ female	Thai culture is <u>relatively tolerant</u> of both <i>male</i> and <i>female homosexuality</i> .	ACCEPTABLE/ UNACCEPTABLE  NORMAL/ ABNORMAL	They are equivalent on the degree of acceptance they receive from the Thais.	DG
186.	gay/ lesbian	Semantic trigger: gay/ lesbian	There is <u>a fairly prominent gay and lesbian scene in Bangkok, Pattaya and Phuket</u> .	ACCEPTABLE/ UNACCEPTABLE  NORMAL/ ABNORMAL		MIS
187.	dress or mannerism/ public display of affection	Concessive opposition: X. However, Y	With regard to <b>dress or mannerism</b> , <i>lesbians</i> and <i>gays</i> are generally <i>accepted without comment</i> . <i>However, public displays of affection</i> – whether	CONSERVATIVE / LIBERAL		DG
188.	accepted without comment/ frowned upon	Semantic trigger: accepted/ frown upon	heterosexual or homosexual – are <i>frowned upon</i> .	ACCEPTABLE/ UNACCEPTABLE		DG
189.	what your dodgy uncle might have told you/ (the truth as told here)	Concessive opposition: Despite X, Y	<i>Despite what your dodgy uncle might have told you</i> , having a good time in Thailand does not necessarily have to involve <b>ping-pong balls or the word ‘go-go’</b> .	GIVEN/ NEW KNOWLEDGE	The “Given knowledge” refers to the legend or stereotypes about Thailand that the readers are supposed to know before coming to Thailand.	DG
190.	a good time in Thailand/ ping-pong	Negation: X not Y		MORAL/ IMMORAL		DG

	balls or the word 'go-go'					
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<b>Appendix 2</b>	
<b>Lonelyplanet.com (LP)</b>	
<b>Content: Highlight, Places, and Things to do (HPT)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p><b>Introducing Thailand</b> Friendly and fun-loving, exotic and tropical, cultured and historic, Thailand radiates a golden hue from its glittering temples and tropical beaches to the ever-comforting Thai smile.</p>	<b>HPT 1</b>
<p><b>Fields &amp; Forests</b> In between the cluttered cities and towns is the rural heartland, a mix of rice paddies, tropical forests and squat villages tied to the agricultural clock. In the north, the forests and fields bump up against toothy blue mountains decorated by silvery waterfalls. In the south, scraggly limestone cliffs poke out of the cultivated landscape like prehistoric skyscrapers. The usually arid northeast beams an emerald hue during the rainy season when tender green rice shoots carpet the landscape.</p>	<b>HPT 2</b>
<p><b>A Bountiful Table</b> Adored around the world, Thai cuisine expresses fundamental aspects of Thai culture: it is generous, warm, refreshing and relaxed. Each Thai dish relies on fresh, local ingredients – pungent lemongrass, searing chillies and plump seafood. A varied national menu is built around the four fundamental flavours: spicy, sweet, salty and sour. Roving appetites go on eating tours of Bangkok noodle shacks, seafood pavilions in Phuket and Burmese market stalls in Mae Hong Son. Cooking classes reveal the simplicity behind the seemingly complicated dishes and mastering the market is an important survival skill.</p>	<b>HPT 3</b>
<p><b>Sacred Spaces</b> The celestial world is a close confidant in this Buddhist nation and religious devotion is colourful and ubiquitous. Gleaming temples and golden Buddhas frame both the rural and modern landscape. Ancient banyan trees are ceremoniously wrapped in sacred cloth to honour the resident spirits, fortune-bringing shrines decorate humble homes as well as monumental malls, while garland-festooned dashboards ward off traffic accidents. Visitors can join in on the conversation through meditation retreats in Chiang Mai, religious festivals in northeastern Thailand, underground cave shrines in Kanchanaburi and Phetchaburi and hilltop temples in northern Thailand.</p>	<b>HPT 4</b>
<p><b>Sand between Your Toes</b> With a long coastline (actually, two coastlines) and jungle-topped islands anchored in azure waters, Thailand is a tropical getaway for the hedonist and the hermit, the prince and the pauper. This paradise offers a varied menu: playing in the gentle surf of Ko Lipe, diving with whale sharks in Ko Tao, scaling the sea cliffs of Krabi, kiteboarding in Hua Hin, partying on Ko Phi Phi, recuperating at a health resort in Ko Samui and feasting on the beach wherever sand meets sea.</p>	<b>HPT 5</b>
<p><b>Chiang Mai Night Bazaar</b> SHOPPING / MARKETS, STREETS &amp; ARCADES Chiang Mai Night Bazaar is one of the city’s main night-time attractions, especially for families, and is the modern legacy of the original Yunnanese trading caravans that stopped here along the ancient trade route between Simao (in China) and Mawlamyaing (on Myanmar’s Gulf of Martaban coast). Today the night bazaar sells the usual tourist souvenirs, like what you’ll find at Bangkok’s street markets. In true market fashion, vendors form a gauntlet along the footpath of Th Chang Khlan from Th Tha Phae to Th Loi Kroh. In between are dedicated shopping buildings: the Chiang Mai Night Bazaar Building is filled mainly with antique and handicraft stores. Across the street is the Galare Night Bazaar selling upmarket clothes and home decor. Behind the collection of shops is the Galare Food Centre. The Anusan Market is less claustrophobic and filled with tables of vendors selling knitted caps, carved soaps and other cottage-industry goods. Deeper into the market is the Anusan Food Centre. The quality and bargains aren’t especially impressive, but the allure is the variety and concentration of stuff and the dexterity and patience it takes to trawl through it all.</p>	<b>HPT 6</b>

**Introducing Ko Tao**

Once the baby of the Samui, Pha-Ngan, Tao trio, Ko Tao may still be the smallest in size but in many other ways it's grown up. The island is consistently gaining popularity and going more upscale, but for now this jungle-topped cutie has the busy vibe of Samui mixed with the laid-back nature of Pha-Ngan. But Tao also has its wildcard, something the others don't: easy-to-get-to, diverse diving right off its shores. Cavort with sharks and rays in a playground of tangled neon coral, toast the day with sunset cocktails on a white beach then get up and do it all over again the next day. But even while the island may be synonymous with diving, there is much more to the place. Hikers and hermits can re-enact an episode from *Lost* in the dripping coastal jungles. And when you're Robinson Crusoe-ed out, hit the pumpin' bar scene that rages on until dawn.

**HPT 7****Wat Pho****SIGHTS / RELIGIOUS**

Bangkok, Thailand

You'll find (slightly) fewer tourists here than at Wat Phra Kaew, but Wat Pho is our personal fave among Bangkok's biggest temples. In fact, the compound incorporates a host of superlatives: the largest reclining Buddha, the largest collection of Buddha images in Thailand and the country's earliest centre for public education. Almost too big for its shelter, the genuinely impressive Reclining Buddha, 46m long and 15m high, illustrates the passing of the Buddha into nirvana (ie the Buddha's death). The figure is modelled out of plaster around a brick core and finished in gold leaf. Mother-of-pearl inlay ornaments the feet, displaying 108 different auspicious *lák•sà•nà* (characteristics of a Buddha). The Buddha images on display in the other four *wí•hähn* (sanctuary) are worth a nod. Particularly beautiful are the Phra Chinnarat and Phra Chinnachai Buddhas, both from Sukhothai, in the west and south chapels. The galleries extending between the four chapels feature no less than 394 gilded Buddha images, many of which display Ayuthaya or Sukhothai features. The remains of Rama I are interred in the base of the presiding Buddha image in the *bòht*. Wat Pho is also the national headquarters for the teaching and preservation of traditional Thai medicine, including Thai massage, a mandate legislated by Rama III when the tradition was in danger of extinction. The famous massage school has two massage pavilions located within the temple area and additional rooms within the training facility outside the temple. Nearby stone inscriptions showing yoga and massage techniques still remain in the temple grounds, serving their original purpose as visual aids. The rambling grounds of Wat Pho cover 8 hectares, with the major tourist sites occupying the northern side of Th Chetuphon and the monastic facilities found on the southern side.

**HPT 8****Introducing Ayuthaya**

Once one of the world's leading capitals, Ayuthaya's myriad temples and palaces glittered from miles away. Today the dozens of ruins offer a tantalising glimpse into what was once a glorious city. The most famous sites have been partially restored so it is easy to imagine how they must have looked in their prime, while others remain fully functioning temples.

**HPT 9**

Between 1350 and 1767 Ayuthaya was the capital of Siam. As a major trading port during the time of the trade winds, international merchants visited and were left in awe by the temples and treasure-laden palaces. At one point the empire ruled over an area larger than England and France combined. Ayuthaya had 33 kings who engaged in more than 70 wars during its 417-year period; however, fine diplomatic skills also ensured no Western power ever ruled Siam.

**HPT 10**

The last of the empire's battles was in 1767, when an invading Burmese army sacked the city, looting most of its treasures. What was left continued to crumble until major restoration work began. In 1991 Ayuthaya's ruins were designated a Unesco World Heritage Site. The Unesco listing says Ayuthaya's sites 'represent a masterclass of genius', the likes of which cannot be found anywhere else in the world. Away from the temples, Ayuthaya has a growing number of attractions and markets that focus on locally made produce and handicrafts.

**HPT 11****Wat Phanan Choeng**

Merit-making ceremonies, firecrackers and ritualistic fish feeding make this a hectic temple. The signature attraction is the 19m-high Phra Phanan Choeng, which was created in 1324 and sits in the *wí•hähn*, surrounded by 84,000 Buddha images that line the walls. The statue's broad shape

**HPT 12**

is typical of the U Thong period. Wat Phanan Choeng, southeast of the old city, can be reached by ferry (5B) from the pier near Phom Phet Fortress. Your bicycle can accompany you across.

#### **Wat Chai Wattanaram**

Just 40 years ago this temple and one-time garrison was immersed in thick jungle. Today it is one of Ayuthaya's most-photographed sites thanks to its impressive 35m-high Khmer-style central prang . Built in 1673 by King Prasat Thong, the temple is a great place to watch sunsets. The site is west of the island and can be reached by bicycle via a nearby bridge.

**HPT 13**

#### **Wat Phra Si Sanphet**

Built in the late 15th century, Wat Phra Si Sanphet was the city's largest temple and used by several kings. It once contained a 16m-high standing Buddha (Phra Si Sanphet) covered with 250kg of gold, which was melted down by Burmese conquerors. The most iconic image in Ayuthaya is of the temple's three magnificent chedi (stupas).

**HPT 14**

#### **Ayutthaya Tourist Center**

##### **SIGHTS / MUSEUMS & GALLERIES**

This should be your first stop in Ayuthaya, as the excellent upstairs exhibition hall puts everything in context and describes the city's erstwhile glories. Also upstairs is the tiny but interesting Ayutthaya National Art Museum. Downstairs, the TAT office has lots of maps and good advice.

**HPT 15**

#### **Introducing Pai**

Spend enough time in northern Thailand and eventually you'll hear the comparisons between Pai and Bangkok's Khao San Road. Although this is definitely a stretch, in recent years the small town has started to resemble something of a Thai island getaway without the beaches. Guesthouses appear to outnumber private residences in the 'downtown' area, the internet is never more than a few steps away and the nights buzz with the sound of live music and partying. However, unlike Khao San or the islands, Pai (pronounced more like the English 'bye', not 'pie') is just as popular among Thais as foreigners. During the peak of the cool season (December and January), thousands of Thais from Bangkok crowd into the town, making parts of it feel more like the Chatuchak Weekend Market than a remote village in Mae Hong Son. Traffic jams aren't unusual during this time of year, and accommodation becomes so scarce that many are forced to rough it in tents.

**HPT 16**

Despite all this, the town's popularity has yet to negatively impact its nearly picture-perfect setting in a mountain valley. There's heaps of quiet accommodation outside the main drag, a host of natural, lazy activities to keep visitors entertained, a vibrant art and music scene, and the town's Shan roots can still be seen in its temples, quiet back streets and fun afternoon market.

**HPT 17**

##### **SIGHTS / LANDMARKS & MONUMENTS**

It may look like no more than an antiquated bridge to foreigners, but to thousands of Thai tourists who stop here during the tourist season it's one of several crucial photo ops along the '762 curves' to Pai. Located 9km from Pai along the road to Chiang Mai, the bridge was originally built by Japanese soldiers during WWII.

**HPT 18**

#### **Tha Pai Hot Springs**

##### **SIGHTS / SPAS, BATHS & HOT SPRINGS**

Across the Mae Nam Pai and 7km southeast of town via a paved road is this well-kept local park. A scenic stream flows through the park; the stream mixes with the hot springs in places to make pleasant bathing areas. The water is also diverted to a couple of nearby spas.

**HPT 19**

#### **Wat Phra That Mae Yen**

##### **SIGHTS / RELIGIOUS**

This temple sits atop a hill and has good views overlooking the valley. To get there, walk 1km east from the main intersection in town to get to the stairs (353 steps) that lead to the top. Or, if you've got wheels, take the 400m sealed road that follows a different route.

**HPT 20**

<p><b>Pai Canyon</b>  <b>SIGHTS / PARKS &amp; GARDENS</b>          Located 8km from Pai along the road to Chiang Mai, a paved stairway here culminates in an elevated lookout over high rock cliffs and the Pai valley. The latter can be followed by a dirt trail, but lacking shade, is best tackled in the morning or afternoon.</p>	<p><b>HPT 21</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Surin Islands Marine National Park View gallery</b>          The five gorgeous islands that make up the Surin Islands Marine National Park sit 60km offshore, just 5km from the Thailand–Myanmar marine border. Healthy rainforest, pockets of white-sand beach in sheltered bays and rocky headlands that jut into the ocean characterise these granite-outcrop islands. The clearest of water makes for great marine life, with underwater visibility often up to 35m. The islands’ sheltered waters also attract chow lair – sea gypsies – who live in a village onshore during the monsoon season from May to November. Around here they are known as Moken, from the local word oken meaning ‘salt water’.</p>	<p><b>HPT 22</b></p>
<p>Ko Surin Neua (north) and Ko Surin Tai (south) are the two largest islands. Park headquarters and all visitor facilities are at Ao Chong Khad and Ao Mai Ngam on Ko Surin Neua, near the jetty. The shapes and colours are what you’ll remember most. The flaxen sand and sparkling blue-green bays, the purpling depths, and the sheer granite peninsulas that tumble down in a permanent geological avalanche forming arrow-like points and natural breakwaters are spectacular. Khuraburi is the jumping-off point for the park. The pier is about 9km north of town, as is the mainland national park office, with good information, maps and helpful staff.</p>	<p><b>HPT 23</b></p>
<p><b>Ban Moken</b>  <b>SIGHTS / NEIGHBOURHOODS &amp; VILLAGES</b>          Moken have long settled in this one sheltered bay on Ao Bon where a major ancestral worship ceremony (Loi Reua) takes place in April. They experienced no casualties during the tsunami that wiped the entire village away, because they read the signs and evacuated to the hilltop.</p>	<p><b>HPT 24</b></p>
<p>The national park offers a Moken Village Tour. You’ll stroll through the village where you should ask locals for permission to hike the 800m Chok Madah trail over the jungled hills to an empty beach. Tours depart at 9.15am and must be reserved the day before. You can also organise a ride from the park’s headquarters (per person 100B). Handicrafts are for sale to help support the local economy and there’s a clothing donation box at park headquarters for the Moken – this is the best place to lighten your load.</p>	<p><b>HPT 25</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Ko Lanta</b>          Once the domain of backpackers and sea gypsies, Lanta hasn’t just gentrified, it’s morphed almost completely from a luscious southern Thai backwater into a midrange getaway for French, German and Swedish package tourists who come for her divine beaches (though the northern coast is alarmingly eroded) and nearby dive spots, Hin Daeng, Hin Muang and Ko Ha. Within eyeshot of Phi-Phi, Lanta remains far more calm and real, however, and effortlessly caters to all budget types. It’s also relatively flat compared to the karst formations of its neighbours, and laced with good roads, so is easily explored by motorbike. A quick loop reveals a colourful crucible of cultures – fried-chicken stalls sit below slender minarets, stilted chow lair villages cling to the island’s east side, and small Thai wát hide within green-brown tangles of curling mangroves. Ko Lanta is technically called Ko Lanta Yai, the largest of 52 islands in an archipelago protected by the Mu Ko Lanta Marine National Park. Almost all boats pull into Ban Sala Dan, a dusty two-street town at the northern tip of the island.</p>	<p><b>HPT 26</b></p>
<p><b>Ko Lanta Marine National Park</b>  <b>SIGHTS / PARKS &amp; GARDENS</b>          Established in 1990, this marine national park protects 15 islands in the Ko Lanta group, including the southern tip of Ko Lanta Yai. The park is increasingly threatened by the runaway development on the western coast of Ko Lanta Yai. The other islands in the group have fared slightly better.</p>	<p><b>HPT 27</b></p>
<p>Ko Rok Nai is still very beautiful, with a crescent-shaped bay backed by cliffs, fine coral reefs and a sparkling white-sand beach. Camping is permitted on Ko Rok Nok and nearby Ko Haa , with permission from the national park headquarters. On the eastern side of Ko Lanta Yai, Ko</p>	<p><b>HPT 28</b></p>

Talabeng has some dramatic limestone caves that you can visit on sea-kayaking tours. The national park fee applies if you visit any of these islands. The national park headquarters is at Laem Tanod, on the southern tip of Ko Lanta Yai, reached by a steep and corrugated 7km dirt track from Hat Nui. There are some basic hiking trails and a scenic lighthouse, and you can hire long-tails here for island tours during the low season. They also offer camping facilities and bungalows for rent.

**Tham Khao Maikaeo**

**SIGHTS / NATURAL LANDMARKS**

Reached via a guided trek through the jungle, this complex of forest caverns and tunnels was created by monsoon rains pounding away at the limestone cracks and crevices for millions of years. There are chambers as large as cathedrals, thick with stalactites and stalagmites, and tiny passages that you have to squeeze through on hands and knees.

There's even a subterranean pool you can take a chilly swim in. Sensible shoes are essential, and total coverage in mud is almost guaranteed. A local family runs treks to the caves (with torches) for around 200B. The best way to get here is by rented motorcycle; alternatively, most resorts can arrange transport.

Close by, but reached by a separate track from the dirt road leading to the marine national park headquarters, Tham Seu (Tiger Cave) also has interesting tunnels to explore; elephant treks run up here from Hat Nui.

**Thailand Island Hopping**

**TOURS / NATURE & WILDLIFE**

Chao Leh Museum

**SIGHTS / MUSEUMS & GALLERIES**

If you crave information on culture, stop by this museum, where you'll find a complex of traditionally lashed bamboo homes, engaging oil canvases and exhibits detailing their myths, music and ceremonies. To find it, look for the houseboat jutting from the hillside across the road from the sea.

**Wat Phra Kaew & Grand Palace**

**SIGHTS / RELIGIOUS**

Also known as the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, Wat Phra Kaew is the colloquial name of the vast, fairy-tale compound that also includes the former residence of the Thai monarch, the Grand Palace. This ground was consecrated in 1782, the first year of Bangkok rule, and is today Bangkok's biggest tourist attraction and a pilgrimage destination for devout Buddhists and nationalists. The 94.5-hectare grounds encompass more than 100 buildings that represent 200 years of royal history and architectural experimentation. Most of the architecture, royal or sacred, can be classified as Ratanakosin (or old-Bangkok style).

Housed in a fantastically decorated bōht (chapel) and guarded by pairs of yaksha (mythical giants), the Emerald Buddha is the temple's primary attraction. It sits atop an elevated altar, barely visible amid the gilded decorations. The diminutive figure is always cloaked in royal robes, one for each season (hot, cool and rainy). In a solemn ceremony, the king (or in recent years, the crown prince) changes the garments at the beginning of each season. Recently restored Buddhist murals line the interior walls of the bōht, and the murals of the Ramakian (the Thai version of the Indian epic the Ramayana) line the inside walls of the temple compound. Originally painted during the reign of Rama I and also recently restored, the murals illustrate the epic in its entirety, beginning at the north gate and moving clockwise around the compound. Except for an anteroom here and there, the buildings of the Grand Palace (Phra Borom Maharatchawong) are now put to use by the king only for certain ceremonial occasions, such as Coronation Day.

Borombhiman Hall (eastern end), a French-inspired structure that served as a residence for Rama VI, is occasionally used to house visiting foreign dignitaries. The building to the west is Amarindra Hall, originally a hall of justice but used today for coronation ceremonies. The largest of the palace buildings is the Chakri Mahaprasat, the Grand Palace Hall. Built in 1882 by British architects using Thai labour, the exterior is a peculiar blend of Italian Renaissance and traditional

**HPT 29**

**HPT 30**

**HPT 31**

**HPT 32**

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**HPT 35**

<p>Thai architecture. It's a style often referred to as fa•ràng sài chá•dah (Westerner in a Thai crown) because each wing is topped by a mon•dòp – a heavily ornamented spire representing a Thai adaptation of the Hindu mandapa (shrine). The tallest mon•dòp, in the centre, contains the ashes of Chakri kings; the flanking mon•dòp enshrine the ashes of Chakri princes. Thai kings housed their huge harems in the inner palace area, which was guarded by combat-trained female sentries.</p>	
<p>Last, from east to west, is the Ratanakosin- style Dusit Hall, which initially served as a venue for royal audiences and later as a royal funerary hall. Guides can be hired at the ticket kiosk; ignore offers from anyone outside. An audio guide can be rented for 200B for two hours. Wat Phra Kaew and the Grand Palace are best reached either by a short walk south from Banglamphu, via Sanam Luang, or by Chao Phraya Express boat to Tha Chang. From the Siam Sq area – in front of the MBK Center , take bus 47. Admission for the complex includes entrance to Dusit Park, which includes Vimanmaek Teak Mansion and Abhisek Dusit Throne Hall.</p>	<p><b>HPT 36</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Erawan National Park</b>  Famed for its impressive seven-tiered waterfall, Erawan National Park is an extremely popular weekend spot for locals. The Erawan waterfall gets its name as the top level is said to resemble Erawan, the three-headed elephant of Hindu mythology. Walking to the first three tiers is easy, but after that good walking shoes and some endurance are needed to complete the 1.5km hike. Bring a bathing costume as you will appreciate the cool water after reaching the top. Levels 2 and 4 are impressive, but be wary of monkeys who may snatch belongings while you're taking a dip.</p>	<p><b>HPT 37</b></p>
<p>Elsewhere in this 550-sq-km park, Tham Phra That is a cave with a variety of limestone formations. Guides carrying paraffin lamps lead visitors through the gloom, pointing out the translucent rocks, glittering crystals and bat-covered caverns. Geologists find the caves of interest due to a clearly visible fault line. You will need your own transport or a guide to reach the cave, which is 12km northwest of the park entrance, or you can negotiate a ride with park staff. The approach road is a dirt track and there is a stiff walk up to the cave entrance. Another 5km north is the enormous and scenic Si Nakharin Reservoir.</p>	<p><b>HPT 38</b></p>
<p>Around 80% of Erawan is forest, and many of the park's various trees can be seen along three nature trails, which range from 1km to 2km. Bird-watchers try to spy hornbills, woodpeckers and parakeets from the camping areas and observation trails. Tigers, elephants, cobras and gibbons also call the park home.</p>	<p><b>HPT 39</b></p>
<p>Park bungalows sleep between two and 50 people. If you bring your own tent, there is a 30B service fee. Buses from Kanchanaburi stop by the entrance of the Erawan waterfall (50B, 1½ hours, every 90 minutes from 8am to 5.20pm). The last bus back to Kanchanaburi is at 4pm. Within the park, you can rent bicycles for 20B to 40B per day.</p>	<p><b>HPT 40</b></p>
<p><b>Wat Traimit (Golden Buddha)</b>  <b>SIGHTS / RELIGIOUS</b>  The attraction at Wat Traimit is undoubtedly the impressive 3m-tall, 5.5-tonne, solid-gold Buddha image , which gleams like, well, gold. Sculpted in the graceful Sukhothai style, the image was 'discovered' some 40 years ago beneath a stucco or plaster exterior, when it fell from a crane while being moved to a new building within the temple compound. It has been theorised that the covering was added to protect it from marauding hordes, either during the late Sukhothai period or later in the Ayuthaya period when the city was under siege by the Burmese. The temple itself is said to date from the early 13th century.</p>	<p><b>HPT 41</b></p>
<p>Donations and a constant flow of tourists have proven profitable, and the statue is now housed in a new four-storey marble structure. The 2nd floor of the building is home to the Phra Buddha Maha Suwanna Patimakorn Exhibition, which has exhibits on how the statue was made, discovered and came to arrive at its current home, while the 3rd floor is home to the Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Center, a small but engaging museum with multimedia exhibits on the history of Bangkok's Chinatown and its residents.</p>	<p><b>HPT 42</b></p>

<p><b>Chatuchak Weekend Market</b>  <b>SHOPPING / MARKETS, STREETS &amp; ARCADES</b></p> <p>Among the largest markets in the world, Chatuchak seems to unite everything buyable, from used vintage sneakers to baby squirrels. Plan to spend a full day, as there's plenty to see, do and buy. But come early, ideally around 9am to 10am, to beat the crowds and the heat. There is an information centre and a bank with ATMs and foreign-exchange booths at the Chatuchak Park Office, near the northern end of the market's Soi 1, Soi 2 and Soi 3. Schematic maps and toilets are located throughout the market.</p>	<p><b>HPT 43</b></p>
<p>There are a few vendors on weekday mornings, and a daily vegetable, plant and flower market opposite the market's southern side. One section of the latter, known as the Or Tor Kor Market, sells fantastically gargantuan fruit and seafood, and has a decent food court as well. Once you're deep in the bowels of Chatuchak, it will seem like there is no order and no escape, but the market is arranged into relatively coherent sections. Use the clock tower as a handy landmark.</p>	<p><b>HPT 44</b></p>
<p><b>Antiques, Handicrafts &amp; Souvenirs</b></p> <p>Section 1 is the place to go for Buddha statues, old LPs and other random antiques. More secular arts and crafts, such as musical instruments and hill-tribe items can be found in Sections 25 and 26. Baan Sin Thai sells a mixture of kohn masks and old-school Thai toys, all of which make fun souvenirs, and Kitcharoen Dountri specialises in Thai musical instruments, including flutes, whistles, drums and CDs of classical Thai music. Other quirky gifts include the life-like plastic Thai fruit and vegetables at Marché, or their scaled-down miniature counterparts nearby at Papachu.</p>	<p><b>HPT 45</b></p>
<p><b>Clothing &amp; Accessories</b></p> <p>Clothing dominates most of Chatuchak, starting in Section 8 and continuing through the even-numbered sections to 24. Sections 5 and 6 deal in used clothing for every Thai youth subculture, from punks to cowboys, while Soi 7, where it transects Sections 12 and 14, is heavy on the more underground hip-hop and skate fashions. Somewhat more sophisticated independent labels can be found in Sections 2 and 3, while tourist-sized clothes and textiles are in Sections 10 and 8. For accessories, several shops in Sections 24 and 26, such as Orange Karen Silver, specialise in chunky silver jewellery and semiprecious uncut stones.</p>	<p><b>HPT 46</b></p>
<p><b>Eating &amp; Drinking</b></p> <p>Lots of Thai-style eating and snacking will stave off Chatuchak rage (cranky behaviour brought on by dehydration or hunger), and numerous food stalls set up shop between Sections 6 and 8. Longstanding standouts include Foon Talop, an incredibly popular Isan restaurant; Café Ice, a Western-Thai fusion joint that does good pát tai and tasty fruit shakes; and Saman Islam, a Thai-Muslim restaurant that serves a tasty chicken biryani. Viva 8 features a DJ and, when we stopped by, a chef making huge platters of paella. If you need air-con, pop into Toh-Plue for all the Thai standards. And as evening draws near, down a beer at Viva's, a cafe-bar that features live music or, if it's dark, cross to the whisky bars along Th Kamphaeng Phet 2.</p>	<p><b>HPT 47</b></p>
<p><b>Housewares &amp; Decor</b></p> <p>The northern and northwestern edge of the market, particularly Sections 8 to 26, specialises in all manner of housewares, from cheap plastic buckets to expensive brass woks. This area is a particularly good place to stock up on inexpensive Thai ceramics, ranging from celadon to the traditional rooster-themed bowls from Lampang.</p>	<p><b>HPT 48</b></p>
<p>N &amp; D Tablewares has a huge variety of stainless-steel flatware, and Ton-Tan deals in coconut and sugar palm-derived plates, bowls and other utensils. Those looking to spice up the house should stop by Spice Boom, where you can find dried herbs and spices for both consumption and decoration. Other notable olfactory indulgences include the handmade soaps, lotions, salts and scrubs at D-narn and the fragrant perfumes and essential oils at AnyaDharu Scent Library. For less utilitarian goods, Section 7 is a virtual open-air gallery – we particularly liked Pariwat Anantachina's for Bangkok-themed murals. Several shops in Section 10, including Tuptim Shop sell new and antique Burmese lacquer ware. Meng features a dusty mish-mash of quirky antiques from both Thailand and Burma.</p>	<p><b>HPT 49</b></p>

<p><b>Pets</b> Possibly the most fun you'll ever have window shopping will be petting puppies and cuddling kittens in Sections 13 and 15. Soi 9 of the former features several shops that deal solely in clothing for pets. It's also worth noting that this section has, in the past, been associated with the sale of illegal wildlife, although much of this trade has been driven underground.</p>	<p><b>HPT 50</b></p>
<p><b>Plants &amp; Gardening</b> The interior perimeter of Sections 2 to 4 feature a huge variety of potted plants, flowers, herbs, fruits, and the accessories needed to maintain them. Many of these shops are also open on weekday afternoons.</p>	<p><b>HPT 51</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Ko Lipe</b> Ko Lipe is this decade's poster child for untamed development in the Thai Islands. Blessed with two wide white-sand beaches separated by jungled hills and within spitting distance of protected coral reefs, five or six years ago the island was only spoken about in secretive whispers. But then the whispers became small talk, which quickly turned into a roar – you know, the kind generally associated with bulldozers. The biggest losers have been the 700-strong community of chow lair villagers, whose ancestors had been gifted Lipe as a home base by King Rama V in 1909, but eventually sold to a Thai developer with suspected mafia ties in the 1970s. Back in 2009, the big fear was whether or not Lipe would become another Phi Phi. Those fears were stoked when a bass heavy nightclub arrived on Hat Pattaya, but the club was shut down and those fears have mellowed somewhat.</p>	<p><b>HPT 52</b></p>
<p>Which is a relief, because there's still plenty to love, and love deeply, about Lipe. The gorgeous white-sand crescent of Hat Pattaya on the southern coast has some terrific beach bars, seafood and a party vibe during the high season. Windswept Sunrise Beach, another sublime long stretch of sand, juts to the north where you'll have spectacular Adang views. A drawback of both of the busy beaches is the preponderance of long-tails that crowd out swimmers. Sunset Beach, with its golden sand, gentle jungled hills and serene bay that spills into the Adang Strait, has an altogether different feel and retains Lipe's wild soul. In between there's an ever-expanding concrete maze of cafes, travel agencies, shops and salons. More resorts are opting to stay open year-round. There are no banks or ATMs on the island, though several of the bigger resorts can change travellers cheques and cash or give advances on credit cards – all for a hefty fee. Internet is available along the cross-island path for 3B per minute and a few places behind Sunrise Beach charge 2B per minute, though most hotels and several restaurants offer free wi-fi.</p>	<p><b>HPT 53</b></p>
<p><b>Elephant Nature Park</b> ACTIVITIES / OTHER A pioneer in the new wave of elephant tourism, Khun Lek (Sangduen Chailert) runs this sanctuary for injured and rescued elephants. The park is in the Mae Taeng valley, 60km from Chiang Mai, and provides a semi-wild environment for the animals. Visitors help wash the elephants and watch the herd, but there is no show or riding. Volunteering is also available.</p>	<p><b>HPT 54</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Bangkok</b> Same same, but different. This Thailish T-shirt philosophy sums up Bangkok, a city where the familiar and the exotic collide like the flavours on a plate of pàt tai.</p>	<p><b>HPT 55</b></p>
<p><b>Fun Folks</b> The language barrier may seem huge, but it's never prevented anybody from loving the Thai people. The capital's cultural underpinnings are evident in virtually all facets of everyday life, and most enjoyably through its residents' sense of sà•nùk (fun). In Bangkok, anything worth doing should have an element of sà•nùk. Ordering food, changing money and haggling at markets will usually involve a sense of playfulness – a dash of flirtation, perhaps, and a smile. It's a language that doesn't require words, and one that's easy to learn.</p>	<p><b>HPT 56</b></p>
<p><b>Contrasts</b> It's the contradictions that give the City of Angels its rich, multifaceted personality. Here climate-controlled megamalls sit side-by-side 200-year-old village homes; gold-spired Buddhist temples share space with neon-lit strips of sleaze; slow-moving rivers of traffic are bypassed by long-tail boats plying the royal river; and streets lined with food carts are overlooked by</p>	<p><b>HPT 57</b></p>



restaurants on top of skyscrapers serving exotic cocktails. As Bangkok races towards the future, these contrasts will never stop supplying the city with its never-ending Thai-ness.

### **Full-On Food**

Until you've eaten on a Bangkok street, your noodles mingling with your sweat amid a cloud of exhaust fumes, you haven't actually eaten Thai food. It can be an overwhelming mix: the underlying flavours – spicy, sour, sweet and salty – aren't exactly meat and potatoes. But for adventurous foodies who don't need white tablecloths, there's probably no better dining destination in the world. And with immigration bringing every regional Thai and international cuisine to the capital, it's also a truly diverse experience.

**HPT 58**

### **Urban Exploration**

With so much of life conducted on the street, there are few cities in the world that reward exploration as handsomely as Bangkok. Cap off an extended boat trip with a visit to a hidden market. A stroll off Banglamphu's beaten track can wind up in a conversation with a monk. Get lost in the tiny lanes of Chinatown and stumble upon a live Chinese opera performance. After dark, let the BTS (Skytrain) escort you to Sukhumvit, where the local nightlife scene reveals a sophisticated and dynamic city.

**HPT 59**

### **Introducing Phuket Province**

The island of Phuket has long been misunderstood. Firstly, the 'h' is silent. Ahem. And secondly, Phuket doesn't feel like an island at all. It's so huge (the biggest in Thailand) that you rarely get the sense that you're surrounded by water, which is probably the reason why Ko (meaning 'island') was dropped from its name. Dubbed the 'pearl of the Andaman' by marketing execs, this is Thailand's original flavour of tailor-made fun in the sun.

**HPT 60**

The island's sin city of Patong is the biggest town and busiest beach. It's the ultimate gong show where beachaholics sizzle off their hangovers and go-go girls play ping pong...without paddles. But ultimately the island's affinity for luxury far outshines its other stereotypes. Jet-setters come through in droves, getting pummelled during swanky spa sessions and swigging sundowners at one of the many fashion-forward nightspots or on their rented yacht. And you don't have to be an heiress to tap into Phuket's trendy to-do list. With deep-sea diving, high-end dining, and white beaches all within reach, it really is hard to say farewell.

**HPT 61**

### **Introducing Chiang Mai**

Nestled into the foothills of northern Thailand, Chiang Mai is a sanctuary. The pace is laid-back, the accoutrements are international and the landscape is picturesque. It is a fine urban specimen with a much-celebrated traditional culture ideal for sightseers, nature buffs and city connoisseurs. The Lanna kings who ruled the north from ancient Chiang Mai built a moated quarter filled with a multitude of temples. These houses of worship are adorned with mirrored mosaics, tinkling bells and gabled rooftops soaring skyward as if in communication with the heavens. Wandering around these sacred spaces you'll find art, architecture and enlightenment, as many offer monk chats and meditation courses to tourists who are willing to do more than just look.

**HPT 62**

Beyond the historic centre is a dynamic and modern place with lots of down-to-earth charm. Bangkok refugees, artists, international NGO-workers and hip university students mix together, carving out creative spaces amid Thailand's ubiquitous concrete shophouses, many of which are being abandoned for the spacious suburbs. Head down to Th Nimmanhaemin and you'll glimpse the city's future movers and shakers, intent now on moving and shaking it in the nightclubs and bars.

**HPT 63**

Maintaining an ever watchful pose over the metropolis, the mountains of Doi Suthep and Doi Pui are constant and scenic reminders of the city's mythical beginnings. A journey from the steamy plains into the mountains' cloud belt is a winding and meditative escape.

**HPT 64**

The city can easily consume a week with sightseeing, holiday courses, outdoor activities and, of course, eating. Cuisine specialities of the city include sushi bars around the university, Burmese curries, Thai street food and vegetarian health food.

<p><b>Introducing Krabi Province</b> When travellers talk about the amazing Andaman, they are probably talking about Krabi, with its trademark karst formations curving along the coast like a giant limestone fortress. Rock climbers will find their nirvana in Railay, while castaway wannabes should head to Ko Lanta, Ko Phi-Phi or any of the other 150 islands swimming off the bleach-blond shores.</p>	<p><b>HPT 65</b></p>
<p><b>Wat Phra Kaew &amp; Grand Palace</b> Also known as the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, Wat Phra Kaew is the colloquial name of the vast, fairy-tale compound that also includes the former residence of the Thai monarch, the Grand Palace.</p>	<p><b>HPT 66</b></p>
<p>This ground was consecrated in 1782, the first year of Bangkok rule, and is today Bangkok's biggest tourist attraction and a pilgrimage destination for devout Buddhists and nationalists. The 94.5-hectare grounds encompass more than 100 buildings that represent 200 years of royal history and architectural experimentation. Most of the architecture, royal or sacred, can be classified as Ratanakosin (or old-Bangkok style).</p>	<p><b>HPT 67</b></p>
<p>Housed in a fantastically decorated <i>bòht</i> (chapel) and guarded by pairs of <i>yaksha</i> (mythical giants), the Emerald Buddha is the temple's primary attraction. It sits atop an elevated altar, barely visible amid the gilded decorations. The diminutive figure is always cloaked in royal robes, one for each season (hot, cool and rainy). In a solemn ceremony, the king (or in recent years, the crown prince) changes the garments at the beginning of each season. Recently restored Buddhist murals line the interior walls of the <i>bòht</i>, and the murals of the Ramakian (the Thai version of the Indian epic the Ramayana) line the inside walls of the temple compound. Originally painted during the reign of Rama I and also recently restored, the murals illustrate the epic in its entirety, beginning at the north gate and moving clockwise around the compound. Except for an anteroom here and there, the buildings of the Grand Palace (Phra Borom Maharatchawong) are now put to use by the king only for certain ceremonial occasions, such as Coronation Day.</p>	<p><b>HPT 68</b></p>
<p>Borombhiman Hall (eastern end), a French-inspired structure that served as a residence for Rama VI, is occasionally used to house visiting foreign dignitaries. The building to the west is Amarindra Hall, originally a hall of justice but used today for coronation ceremonies. The largest of the palace buildings is the Chakri Mahaprasat, the Grand Palace Hall. Built in 1882 by British architects using Thai labour, the exterior is a peculiar blend of Italian Renaissance and traditional Thai architecture. It's a style often referred to as <i>fa•ràng sài chá•dah</i> (Westerner in a Thai crown) because each wing is topped by a <i>mon•dòp</i> – a heavily ornamented spire representing a Thai adaptation of the Hindu <i>mandapa</i> (shrine). The tallest <i>mon•dòp</i>, in the centre, contains the ashes of Chakri kings; the flanking <i>mon•dòp</i> enshrine the ashes of Chakri princes. Thai kings housed their huge harems in the inner palace area, which was guarded by combat-trained female sentries. Last, from east to west, is the Ratanakosin-style Dusit Hall, which initially served as a venue for royal audiences and later as a royal funerary hall.</p>	<p><b>HPT 69</b></p>
<p>Guides can be hired at the ticket kiosk; ignore offers from anyone outside. An audio guide can be rented for 200B for two hours. Wat Phra Kaew and the Grand Palace are best reached either by a short walk south from Banglamphu, via Sanam Luang, or by Chao Phraya Express boat to Tha Chang. From the Siam Sq area – in front of the MBK Center, take bus 47. Admission for the complex includes entrance to Dusit Park, which includes Vimanmaek Teak Mansion and Abhisek Dusit Throne Hall.</p>	<p><b>HPT 70</b></p>
<p><b>Ayuthaya Historical Park</b> Ancient ruins, the vibe of rural Thailand, tasty food, good-value accommodation – and all of it only 70km from Bangkok: Ayuthaya is the easiest and most worthwhile escape from the Big Mango. The riverside city served as the seat of one of ancient Thailand's most powerful former kingdoms until 1767, when it was destroyed in warfare by the Burmese. Today, the ruins of the former capital, Ayuthaya Historical Park, are one of Thailand's biggest tourist sites. They're separated into two distinct districts: ruins 'on the island', in the central park of town west of Th Chee Kun, are most easily visited by bicycle or motorbike; those 'off the island', opposite the river from the centre, are best visited by way of an evening boat tour. For more detailed</p>	<p><b>HPT 71</b></p>

descriptions of the ruins, you can pick up the Ayuthaya booklet from the Tourist Information Centre.

### **Jim Thompson House**

#### **SIGHTS / ARCHITECTURE**

This jungly compound is the former home of the eponymous American silk entrepreneur and art collector. Born in Delaware in 1906, Thompson briefly served in the Office of Strategic Services (the forerunner of the CIA) in Thailand during WWII. Settling in Bangkok after the war, his neighbours' handmade silk caught his eye and piqued his business sense; he sent samples to fashion houses in Milan, London and Paris, gradually building a steady worldwide clientele.

In addition to textiles, Thompson also collected parts of various derelict Thai homes and had them reassembled in their current location in 1959. Some of the homes were brought from the old royal capital of Ayuthaya; others were pulled down and floated across the klong from Baan Krua, including the first building you enter on the tour. One striking departure from tradition is the way each wall has its exterior side facing the house's interior, thus exposing the wall's bracing system. His small but splendid Asian art collection and his personal belongings are also on display in the main house.

Beware well-dressed touts in soi near the Thompson house who will tell you it is closed and try to haul you off on a dodgy buying spree. Thompson's story doesn't end with his informal reign as Bangkok's best-adapted foreigner. While out for an afternoon walk in the Cameron Highlands of western Malaysia in 1967, Thompson mysteriously disappeared. That same year his sister was murdered in the USA, fuelling various conspiracy theories. Was it communist spies? Business rivals? Or a man-eating tiger? Although the mystery has never been solved, evidence revealed by American journalist Joshua Kurlantzick in his profile of Thompson, *The Ideal Man*, suggests that the vocal anti-American stance Thompson took later in his life may have made him a potential target of suppression by the CIA.

### **Khao Yai National Park**

#### **SIGHTS / PARKS & GARDENS**

Cool and lush, Khao Yai National Park is an easy escape into the primordial jungle. The 2168-sq-km park, part of a Unesco World Heritage site, spans five forest types, from rainforest to monsoon, and is the primary residence of, among many others, shy tigers and elephants, noisy gibbons, colourful tropical birds and countless audible, yet invisible, insects. Khao Yai is a major birding destination with large flocks of hornbills and several migrators, including the flycatcher from Europe. Caves in the park are the preferred resting place for wrinkle-lipped bats. In the grasslands, batik-printed butterflies dissect flowers with their surgical tongues.

The park has several accessible trails for self-tours, but birders or animal trackers should consider hiring a jungle guide to increase their appreciation of the environment and to spot more than the tree-swinging gibbons and blood-sucking leeches (the rainy season is the worst time for the latter). In total, there are 12 maintained trails criss-crossing the entire park; not ideal if you want to walk end to end. Access to transport is another reason why a tour might be more convenient, although Thai visitors with cars are usually happy to pick up pedestrians.

A two-hour walk from the visitor centre leads to the Nong Pak Chee Observation Tower, which is a good early-morning spot for seeing insect-feeding birds, occasional thirsty elephants and sambar deer; make reservations at the visitors centre. It's important to understand that spotting the park's reclusive tigers and elephants is considered a bonus, with most people happy just to admire the frothy waterfalls that drain the peaks of Big Mountain. The park's centrepiece is Nam Tok Haew, a 25m-high cascade that puts on a thundering show in the rainy season. Nam Tok Haew Narok is its larger cousin with three pooling tiers and a towering 150m drop.

### **Introducing Thailand's Islands & Beaches**

Bays of peach-tinged sand, cotton hammocks swinging lazily between palm trunks, castle-like karsts emerging from the deep. These dreams of a tropical paradise become reality along the coasts of southern Thailand.

Sun-Kissed Smiles

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**HPT 78**

<p>Whether it's the glimmering eye of the meditative wai (palms-together Thai greeting) or the mirthful smirk of passers-by, it's hard not to be charmed by the Land of Smiles. The moniker is not only apt but also well earned. Thailand has long been Southeast Asia's mama-san, inviting foreigners from near and far to indulge in the kingdom's natural splendours. This recipe is perfected along the beaches and islands where a heady mix of seascapes, limestone towers and equatorial sunshine provides the perfect backdrop to expertly run resorts catering to whimsy with a desire to please.</p>	<p><b>HPT 79</b></p>
<p><b>Best Beach Ever</b> Thailand's beaches are legendary; tall palms angle over pearlescent sand, coral gardens flourish in the shallow seas and beach parties are liberally lubricated with alcohol and fun. With two long coastlines and jungle-topped islands anchored in azure waters, Thailand is a getaway for the hedonist and the hermit, the prince and the pauper. Scale the sheer sea cliffs of Krabi, cavort with gentle whale sharks at pinnacles off Ko Tao and Ko Pha-Ngan, toe the curling tide alongside gypsy fishermen in Trang, gorge on seafood snacks among the steamy stalls of Hua Hin or relish perfectly practised butler service at your luxury digs in Phuket. The adventure awaits.</p>	<p><b>HPT 80</b></p>
<p><b>Gorge-ous Thailand</b> It may be the beaches that bring you to Thailand, but it's the food that will lure you back for seconds. Enjoyed around the world, Thai cuisine expresses fundamental aspects of Thai culture: it is generous and warm, outgoing and nuanced, refreshing and relaxed. And it is much more delicious in its native setting. Thais dishes rely on fresh and local ingredients, from pungent lemon grass and searing chillies to plump seafood and crispy fried chicken. With a tropical abundance, the varied national menu is built around the four fundamental flavours: spicy, sweet, salty and sour.</p>	<p><b>HPT 81</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Central Thailand</b> The past is never far behind in Central Thailand. Cycle around the temple ruins in Ayuthaya and you can imagine how this former majestic capital must have once looked. Visit the memorials and Death Railway in Kanchanaburi and you can discover new empathy for the WWII prisoners of war who suffered there.</p>	<p><b>HPT 82</b></p>
<p>Central Thailand doesn't just do history, though. Nature is a major player here as the jagged mountain ranges that dominate the horizons host spectacular waterfalls, vast national parks and new adventure resorts.</p>	<p><b>HPT 83</b></p>
<p>After a few days exploring the war sites in Kanchanaburi, travellers tend to head north to trek or camp in the national parks and maybe catch a glimpse of wild elephants, gibbons or even tigers. Others cycle around Ayuthaya's fabled ruins or browse for bargains at traditional markets. Lopburi tends to combine both nature and history, as dozens of monkeys scamper among the Khmer-style temples in what was once Thailand's second capital.</p>	<p><b>HPT 84</b></p>
<p>Head up to the very north of Kanchanaburi to be within touching distance of Burma (Myanmar). Sleep among the tree tops at Thong Pha Phum National Park or visit remote Sangkhlaburi, where volunteer work to help ethnic groups is hugely rewarding.</p>	<p><b>HPT 85</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Northern Thailand</b> What can't you do in northern Thailand? The region's premier draw is its nature, and northern Thailand's rugged geography is a playground for outdoor pursuits ranging from a rafting excursion in Um Phang to a hike among wild orchids in Mae Hong Son.</p>	<p><b>HPT 86</b></p>
<p>For those drawn to the human side of things, there's also northern Thailand's buffet of cultural attractions and experiences. The region is regarded as the birthplace of much of what is often associated with Thai culture, and is a great place to take part in activities ranging from exploring a Buddhist temple in Phrae to taking part in a homestay in rural Sukhothai or sampling a local dish at Lampang's evening market.</p>	<p><b>HPT 87</b></p>
<p>In the north, even niche players are catered for: intrepid explorers can head off on a hill-tribe trek in Mae Sariang or on a road trip to Phayao, history buffs can travel back in time at Sukhothai</p>	<p><b>HPT 88</b></p>

Historical Park, and we suspect that even the most devout beach bum could be converted by the inland party scene in Pai.

### **Introducing Northeastern Thailand**

For travellers and Thais alike, the northeast is Thailand's forgotten backyard. Isan (ee•sāhn), as it's called, offers a glimpse of the Thailand of old: rice fields run to the horizon, water buffalo wade in muddy ponds, silk weavers work looms under their homes, and pedal-rickshaw drivers pull passengers down city streets. If you have a penchant for authentic experiences, it will surely be satisfied here.

**HPT 89**

Spend even just a little time in this colossal corner of the country and you'll discover as many differences as similarities to the rest of Thailand. The language, food and culture are more Lao than Thai, with hearty helpings of Khmer and Vietnamese thrown into the mix. And spend time here you should, because it's home to some of Thailand's best historic sites, national parks and festivals. Thailand's tourist trail is at its bumpiest here (English is rarely spoken), but the fantastic attractions and daily interactions could end up being highlights of your entire trip.

**HPT 90**

### **Introducing Phuket & the Northern Andaman Coast**

Whether you've got designer-villa wishes, bamboo-hut desires or something in between, the northern Andaman coast serves it up hot with a shot of turquoise ocean to wash it down. Phuket, on the southern extremity, is the audacious starlet of the region, flaunting glitzy five-star hotels that grace ultrawhite beaches. Here, sleep is an afterthought to parties, water sports and spa pampering. Ranong, to the far north, is a mix of Burmese and Thais who eke out a living in an up-and-coming frontier that's opening more and more to tourism. Travel the 300km between, and you'll see it all: Muslim and Moken stilt villages and vertical limestone karsts, jaw-dropping resorts, and bays abuzz with jet skis, tangled mangrove swamps and skittish clouds of swallows.

**HPT 91**

### **Introducing Ko Samui & the Lower Gulf**

The Lower Gulf features Thailand's ultimate island trifecta: Ko Samui, Ko Pha-Ngan and Ko Tao. This family of spectacular islands lures millions of tourists every year with their powder-soft sands and emerald waters. Ko Samui is the oldest sibling, who has made it big. Here, high-class resorts operate with Swiss efficiency as uniformed butlers cater to every whim. Ko Pha-Ngan is the slacker middle child with tangled dreadlocks and a penchant for hammock-lazing and all-night parties. Meanwhile Ko Tao is the outdoorsy, fun-loving kid with plenty of spirit and spunk – the island specialises in high-adrenalin activities, including world-class diving and snorkelling.

**HPT 92**

The mainland coast beyond the islands sees few foreign visitors. From the pink dolphins and waterfalls of sleepy Ao Khanom to the Thai Muslim flavours of kite-flying, beach strolling Songkhla, this region will convince any naysayer that Thailand still holds a bevy off-the-beaten-track wonders.

**HPT 93**

### **Introducing Chiang Mai Province**

The province of Chiang Mai, with its mist-shrouded mountains and temple-filled capital city, has long been a darling on the travellers' trail. The laid-back city of Chiang Mai is an endearing mix of old and new: the moated, partially walled old quarter shelters celebrated temples that reflect the forest-inspired aesthetics of the bygone teak trade and the ethnic mixing pot born during the caravan era. A traveller-friendly scene caters to the party set, the holiday learner, families and sightseers. There's something for everybody, and many decide to call the city home for as long as possible.

**HPT 94**

Just a short jaunt outside of the city is a stunning landscape of rural farms, forested mountains and minority villages. Two of Thailand's highest peaks – Doi Inthanon (2565m) and Doi Chiang Dao (2195m) – are a few hours' drive out of Chiang Mai. And the province's extensive forest cover provides plenty of athletic escapes.

**HPT 95**

### **Introducing Ko Phi-Phi & the Southern Andaman Coast**

Island hoppers, this is your dreamland. The south is the quieter half of the Andaman coast; even the regional star, Ko Phi-Phi, can't rival the glam and crowds of Phuket. Just slowly putter from

**HPT 96**

<p>white-sand isle to white-sand isle – and prepare for serious relaxation, outdoor fun and chummy nights at beachside bars.</p>	
<p>Social seekers will love the developed beauties, such as Ko Phi-Phi and Ko Lanta, where you can party into the wee hours and meet plenty of fellow ramblers on the beach yet still find a peaceful strip of sand. And roads less travelled are just next door: head down through the lightly developed Trang Islands to the even-less-visited Satun Province to find powder-white beaches, outrageous snorkelling and plenty of spicy southern Thai culture.</p>	<p><b>HPT 97</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Ko Chang &amp; Eastern Seaboard</b>  Bangkok Thais have long escaped the urban grind with weekend escapes to the eastern seaboard. Some of the country’s first beach resorts sprang up here, starting a trend that has been replicated wherever sand meets sea. As the country has industrialised only a few beaches within reach of the capital, such as Ko Samet’s, remain spectacular specimens. Further afield, Ko Chang and its sister islands offer a more 'tropical' ambience, but are far from undiscovered.</p>	<p><b>HPT 98</b></p>
<p>Just beyond the foothills and the curving coastline is Cambodia, and the east coast provides a cultural link between the two countries. Many of the mainland Thai towns were at some point occupied by the French during the shifting border days of the colonial era. Travellers who take the time to explore these lesser-known spots will find remnants of Old Siam, tasty market meals and an easy-going prosperity that defines ordinary Thai life in this region.</p>	<p><b>HPT 99</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Krabi Province</b>  When travellers talk about the amazing Andaman, they are probably talking about Krabi, with its trademark karst formations curving along the coast like a giant limestone fortress. Rock climbers will find their nirvana in Railay, while castaway wannabes should head to Ko Lanta, Ko Phi-Phi or any of the other 150 islands swimming off the bleach-blond shores.</p>	<p><b>HPT 100</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Hua Hin &amp; the Southern Gulf</b>  Known as the ‘royal’ coast, the upper gulf has long been the favoured playground of the Bangkok monarchy and elite. Every Thai king from Rama IV on has found an agreeable spot to build a royal getaway. Today, domestic tourists flock to this coast in the same pursuit of leisure, as well as to pay homage to the revered kings whose summer palaces are now open to the public.</p>	<p><b>HPT 101</b></p>
<p>Culture meets the coast here, with historic sites, national parks and long sandy beaches ideal for swimming all an easy commute from Bangkok. And while Thais have long known of the region's delights, increasing numbers of Western travellers are now falling for the combination of an unspoiled coastline and the easy pace of provincial life on offer here. There's little diving or snorkelling here, but kiteboarders will be in paradise as this region is by far the best place in Thailand to jump above the waves</p>	<p><b>HPT 102</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Ko Samui</b>  Ko Samui is like a well-established Hollywood celebrity: she's outrageously manicured, has lovely blonde tresses and has gracefully removed all of her wrinkles without more than a peep in the tabloids. She's been in the tourism business longer than almost any other Thai island, but rather than becoming passe, she's embraced a new generation of resort goers, many of them upscale and Russian. Academy Award-winning holidays here include fine stretches of sand clogged with beach loungers, rubbish-free roads, world-class international cuisine, luxurious spas and beach bar parties for scantily clad 20-somethings that start at noon.</p>	<p><b>HPT 103</b></p>
<p>Behind the glossy veneer there's still a glimmer of the girl from the country. Look for steaming street-side food stalls beyond the beach, backpacker shanties plunked down on quiet stretches of sand and secreted Buddhist temples along the backstreets. It's then that you remember you're in Thailand and not a globalisation-induced trance of a Photoshopped beach vacation. To really get away, head to the south or the west of the island where you'll find authentic Samui family-run seafood restaurants, tourist-free towns buzzing with descendents of the original Chinese merchant settlers and long stretches of refreshingly wild and shaggy coconut palms.</p>	<p><b>HPT 104</b></p>

<p><b>Introducing Ko Pha-Ngan</b> Slacker, hippie-at-heart Ko Pha-Ngan has become so synonymous with the wild and massive Full Moon Party on Hat Rin that the rest of the island – and even Hat Rin outside of full moon week – gets forgotten. It's a strange juxtaposition where for one week the island has some 30,000 people crammed on one beach partying their minds out and then, off they all go on the next boat, leaving the beaches and accommodations half empty. It's at this time that budgeting serenity seekers can retreat into a fog (perhaps with a slight herbal scent) of the backpacker days of old and nab a fan-cooled beach shack from 400B (on the northern beaches at least). This will probably change quickly with the imminent opening of the island's airport in late 2014, but for now this exceptionally gorgeous island is in a sleepy sweet spot where you can even find a solid bungalow on Hat Rin for around 1000B outside of full moon mania.</p>	<p><b>HPT 105</b></p>
<p>Ko Pha-ngan has plenty to offer the more clean-cut, comfort-seeking traveler as well; its peace and quiet make it a great choice for families. Remote Hat Thong Nai Pan Noi in particular feels like a miniature version of Ko Samui with its elegant resorts fronted by rows of cushion-clad beach loungers, while the easier-to-access west coast has attracted a handful of new upscale resorts and a few older places have been revamped to attract a more ritzy market.</p>	<p><b>HPT 106</b></p>
<p>The phrase ‘private infinity pool’ and ‘personal butler’ may soon be heard more frequently than ‘magic milkshake’ and ‘another whisky bucket please’. But whatever happens, chances are that the vast inland jungle will continue to feel undiscovered, and there will be still plenty of stunning, secluded bays in which you can string up a hammock and watch the tide roll in. Enjoy.</p>	<p><b>HPT 107</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Ko Samet</b> An island idyll, Ko Samet bobs in the sea with a whole lot of scenery: small sandy bays bathed by clear aquamarine water. You’ll have to share all this prettiness with other beach lovers as it’s an easy weekend escape from Bangkok, as well as a major package-tour destination. But considering its proximity and popularity, Ko Samet is surprisingly underdeveloped with a thick jungle interior crouching beside the low-rise hotels. There are, though, plans in place to redevelop the main street that runs from the pier to Hat Sai Kaew, so expect some changes. Yet, the interior road around the island remains rutted and largely unpaved and most beach-hopping is done the old-fashioned way, by foot along wooded trails skirting the coastline.</p>	<p><b>HPT 108</b></p>

<b>Content: Essential Information (EI)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p><b>Etiquette</b> Thais are generally very understanding and hospitable, but there are some important taboos and social conventions to know about.</p>	<p><b>EI 1</b></p>
<p><b>Monarchy</b> Never disrespect the royal family with disparaging remarks. Treat objects depicting the king (like money) with respect. Stand when the national and king's anthems are played. <b>Temples</b> Wear clothing that covers to your knees and elbows. Remove your shoes when you enter a temple building. Sit with your feet tucked behind you to avoid pointing the bottom of</p>	<p><b>EI 2</b></p>

<p>your feet at Buddha images. Women should never touch a monk or a monk's belongings; step out of the way on footpaths and don't sit next to them on public transportation.</p>	
<p>Modesty At the beach, avoid public nudity or topless sunbathing. Wear a cover-up to and from the beach. Save Face Never get into an argument with a Thai. It is better to smile through any social friction.</p>	<p><b>EI 3</b></p>
<p><b>Getting around Thailand</b>          Buses Extensive and affordable for travel between towns. Air Cheap domestic connections on budget airlines. Trains Slow but scenic between Bangkok and Chiang Mai or Bangkok and Surat Thani. Car &amp; Motorcycle Easy to rent for local touring. Local transport Shared and chartered taxis and motorcycles are widely available; bargaining required. Meter taxis are mostly limited to Bangkok.</p>	<p><b>EI 4</b></p>
<p><b>Air</b>          Hopping around the country by air continues to be affordable. Most routes originate from Bangkok, but Chiang Mai, Ko Samui and Phuket all have a few routes to other Thai towns. See the Thai Airfares map for routes and estimated costs.          THAI, Bangkok Air, Orient Thai and Nok Air all operate many domestic routes from Bangkok to provincial capitals.</p>	<p><b>EI 5</b></p>
<p><b>Bicycle</b>          For travelling just about anywhere outside Bangkok, bicycles are an ideal form of local transport – cheap, nonpolluting and slow moving enough to allow travellers to see everything. Bicycles can be hired from guesthouses for as little as 50B per day, though they aren't always high-quality. A security deposit isn't usually required.</p>	<p><b>EI 6</b></p>
<p>Bicycle touring is also a popular way to see the country, and most roads are sealed and have roomy shoulders. Because duties are high on imported bikes, you'll do better to bring your own bike to Thailand rather than purchasing locally. No special permits are needed for bringing a bicycle into the country, although it may be registered by customs – which means if you don't leave the country with your bicycle, you'll have to pay a customs duty. It's advisable to bring a well-stocked repair kit.</p>	<p><b>EI 7</b></p>
<p><b>Boat</b>          You can cross into and out of Thailand via public boat from the Andaman coast to the Malaysian island of Langkawi. All foreign-registered private vessels, skippers and crew must check in with the relevant Thai authorities as soon as possible after entering Thai waters. Although major ports throughout Thailand offer port check-ins, most leisure-boating visitors check in at Phuket, Krabi, Ko Samui, Pranburi or Pattaya. Before departing from Thailand by boat, you must also check out with immigration, customs and the harbourmaster.          Car and Motorcycle</p>	<p><b>EI 8</b></p>
<p><b>Driving Licence</b>          In theory short-term visitors who wish to drive vehicles (including motorcycles) in Thailand need an International Driving Permit, however this isn't always enforced.</p>	<p><b>EI 9</b></p>
<p><b>Hire &amp; Purchase</b>          Cars, jeeps and vans can be rented in most major cities and airports from local companies as well as international chains. Local companies tend to have cheaper rates, but the quality of their fleet varies. Check the tyre treads and general upkeep of the vehicle before committing.</p>	<p><b>EI 10</b></p>
<p>Motorcycles can be rented in major towns and tourist centres from guesthouses and small mum-and-dad businesses. Renting a motorcycle in Thailand is relatively easy and a great way to independently tour the countryside. For daily rentals, most businesses will ask that you leave your passport as a deposit. Before renting a motorcycle, check the vehicle's condition and ask for a helmet (which is required by law).</p>	<p><b>EI 11</b></p>



<p><b>Road Rules &amp; Hazards</b></p> <p>Thais drive on the left-hand side of the road (most of the time!). Other than that, just about anything goes, in spite of road signs and speed limits. The main rule to be aware of is that right of way goes to the bigger vehicle; this is not what it says in the Thai traffic law, but it's the reality. Maximum speed limits are 50km/h on urban roads and 80km/h to 100km/h on most highways – but on any given stretch of highway you'll see various vehicles travelling as slowly as 30km/h and as fast as 150km/h.</p>	<p><b>EI 12</b></p>
<p>Indicators are often used to warn passing drivers about oncoming traffic. A flashing left indicator means it's OK to pass, while a right indicator means that someone's approaching from the other direction. Horns are used to tell other vehicles that the driver plans to pass. When drivers flash their lights, they're telling you not to pass.</p>	<p><b>EI 13</b></p>
<p>In Bangkok traffic is chaotic, roads are poorly signposted and motorcycles and random contra flows mean you can suddenly find yourself facing a wall of cars coming the other way. Outside of the capital, the principal hazard when driving in Thailand, besides the general disregard for traffic laws, is having to contend with so many different types of vehicles on the same road – trucks, bicycles, túk-túk ('pronounced dúk dúk; motorised transport) and motorcycles. This danger is often compounded by the lack of working lights. In village areas the vehicular traffic is lighter but you have to contend with stray chickens, dogs and water buffaloes.</p>	<p><b>EI 14</b></p>
<p><b>Road Safety</b></p> <p>Thailand rates as one of the most dangerous places to be on the road, according to a recent World Health Organization report. Several high-profile bus accidents involving foreign tourists prompted some Western nations to issue travel advisories for highway safety due to disregard for speed limits, reckless driving and long-distance bus drivers' use of stimulants.</p>	<p><b>EI 15</b></p>
<p>Fatal bus crashes make headlines, but more than 80% of vehicle accidents in Thailand involve motorcycles. Less than half of the motorcyclists in the country wear helmets and many tourists are injured riding motorcycles because they don't know how to handle the vehicles and are unfamiliar with local driving conventions. British consular offices cited Thailand as a primary destination for UK citizens experiencing road traffic accidents, often involving motorcyclists.</p>	<p><b>EI 16</b></p>
<p>If you are a novice motorcyclists, familiarise yourself with the vehicle in an uncongested area of town and stick to the smaller 100cc automatic bikes. Drive slowly, especially when roads are slick or when there is loose gravel. Remember to distribute weight as evenly as possible across the frame of the bike to improve handling. And don't expect that other vehicles will look out for you. Motorcycles are low on the traffic totem pole.</p>	<p><b>EI 17</b></p>
<p><b>Fuel &amp; Spare Parts</b></p> <p>Modern petrol (gasoline) stations are in plentiful. In more rural areas ben•sin/nám•man rót yon (petrol containing benzene) is usually available at small roadside or village stands. All fuel in Thailand is unleaded, and diesel is used by trucks and some passenger cars. Thailand also uses several alternative fuels, including gasohol (a blend of petrol and ethanol that comes in different octane levels, either 91% or 95%) and compressed natural gas, used by taxis with bifuel capabilities. For news and updates about fuel options and other car talk, see the website of BKK Auto (<a href="http://www.bkkautos.com">www.bkkautos.com</a>).</p>	<p><b>EI 18</b></p>
<p><b>Insurance</b></p> <p>Thailand requires a minimum of liability insurance for all registered vehicles on the road. The better hire companies include comprehensive coverage for their vehicles. Always verify that a vehicle is insured for liability before signing a rental contract; you should also ask to see the dated insurance documents. If you have an accident while driving an uninsured vehicle, you're in for some major hassles.</p>	<p><b>EI 19</b></p>
<p><b>Hitching</b></p> <p>Hitching is never entirely safe in any country and we don't recommend it. Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk. Hitching is rarely seen these days in Thailand, so most passing motorists might not realise the intentions of the foreigner standing on the side of the road with a thumb out. Thais don't 'thumb it'; instead,</p>	<p><b>EI 20</b></p>

when they want a ride they wave their hand with the palm facing the ground. This is the same gesture used to flag a taxi or bus, which is why some drivers might stop and point to a bus stop if one is nearby. In some of the national parks where there isn't public transport, Thais are often willing to pick up a passenger standing by the side of the road.

**Local Transport**

**City Bus & Sǒrng•tǎa•ou**

Bangkok has the largest city-bus system in the country, while Udon Thani and a few other provincial capitals have some city-bus services. The etiquette for riding public buses is to wait at a bus stop and hail the vehicle by waving your hand palm-side downward. You typically pay the fare once you've taken a seat or, in some cases, when you disembark.

**EI 21**

Elsewhere, public transport is provided by sǒrng•tǎa•ou (a small pick-up truck outfitted with two facing rows of benches for passengers). They sometimes operate on fixed routes, just like buses, but they may also run a share-taxi service where they pick up passengers going in the same general direction. In tourist centres, sǒrng•tǎa•ou can be chartered just like a regular taxi, but you'll need to negotiate the fare beforehand. You can usually hail a sǒrng•tǎa•ou anywhere along its route and pay the fare when you disembark.

**EI 22**

Depending on the region, sǒrng•tǎa•ou might also run a fixed route from the centre of town to outlying areas or even points within the provinces. Sometimes these vehicles are larger six-wheeled vehicles (sometimes called 'rót hòk lór').

**EI 23**

**Sǎhm•lór & Túk-túk**

Sǎhm•lór are three-wheeled pedicabs that are typically found in small towns where traffic is light and old-fashioned ways persist. The modern era's version of the human-powered sǎhm•lór is the motorised túk-túk. They're small utility vehicles, powered by screaming engines (usually LPG-powered) with a lot of flash and sparkle. With either form of transport the fare must be established by bargaining before departure. In tourist centres, túk-túk drivers often grossly overcharge foreigners so have a sense of how much the fare should be before soliciting a ride. Hotel staff are helpful in providing reasonable fare suggestions. Readers interested in pedicab lore and design may want to have a look at Lonely Planet's hardcover pictorial book, Chasing Rickshaws, by Lonely Planet founder Tony Wheeler.

**EI 24**

**Taxi**

Bangkok has the most formal system of metered taxis. In other cities, a taxi can be a private vehicle with negotiable rates and there are a variety of shared taxis in which the fare is split among a group of passengers.

**EI 25**

**Mass Transit**

Bangkok is the only city in Thailand to have an above-ground (BTS) and underground light-rail (MRT) public transport system.

**EI 26**

**Motorcycle Taxi**

Many cities in Thailand have mor•đeu•sai ráp jáhng (100cc to 125cc motorcycles) that can be hired, with a driver, for short distances. If you're empty-handed or travelling with a small bag, they can't be beaten for transport in a pinch. In most cities, you'll find motorcycle taxis clustered near street intersections. Usually they wear numbered jerseys. Fares tend to run from 10B to 50B, depending on distance and you'll need to establish the price beforehand.

**EI 27**

**Bus & Minivan**

The bus network in Thailand is prolific and reliable. The Thai government subsidises the Transport Company (bò•rí•sàt kǒn sǒng), usually abbreviated to Baw Khaw Saw (BKS). Every city and town in Thailand linked by bus has a BKS station, even if it's just a patch of dirt by the side of the road. By far the most reliable bus companies in Thailand are the ones that operate out of the government-run BKS stations. In some cases the companies are entirely state owned, in others they are private concessions. We do not recommend using bus companies that operate directly out of tourist centres, like Bangkok's Th Khao San, because of repeated instances of theft and commission-seeking stops. Be sure to be aware of bus scams and other common problems.

**EI 28**

<p>Minivans are increasingly becoming the middle-class option. Minivans are run by private companies and because their vehicles are smaller, they can depart from the market (instead of the out-of-town bus stations) and will deliver guests directly to their hotel. Just don't sit in the front – that way you can avoid having to watch the driver's daredevil techniques!</p>	<p><b>EI 29</b></p>
<p><b>Bus Classes</b>  The cheapest and slowest buses are the rôt tam•má•dah (ordinary fan buses) that stop in every little town and for every waving hand along the highway. Only a few of these ordinary buses, in rural locations or for local destinations, still exist since most have been replaced by air-con buses. Rôt aa (air-con buses) come in a variety of classes, depending on the destination's distance. Short distances are usually covered by the basic 2nd class bus, which does not have an on-board toilet on board. For longer routes, the buses increase in comfort and amenities, ranging from 1st class to 'VIP' and 'Super VIP'. The latter two have fewer seats so that each seat reclines further; sometimes these are called rôt norm (sleeper buses).</p>	<p><b>EI 30</b></p>
<p>Bring along a jacket for long-distance bus trips as air-con keeps the cabin at arctic temperatures. The service on these buses is usually quite good and on certain routes sometimes includes a beverage and video, courtesy of an 'air hostess'. On overnight journeys the buses usually stop somewhere en route for 'midnight kôw dôm', when passengers are awakened to get off the bus for a free meal of rice soup.</p>	<p><b>EI 31</b></p>
<p><b>Reservations</b>  You can book air-con BKS buses at any BKS terminal. Ordinary (fan) buses cannot be booked in advance. Privately run buses can be booked through most hotels or any travel agency, but it's best to book directly through a bus office to be sure that you get what you pay for.</p>	<p><b>EI 32</b></p>
<p><b>Train</b>  Thailand's train system connects the four corners of the country and is most convenient as an alternative to buses for the long journey north to Chiang Mai or south to Surat Thani. The train is also ideal for short trips to Ayuthaya and Lopburi from Bangkok where traffic is a consideration. The 4500km rail network is operated by the State Railway of Thailand and covers four main lines: the northern, southern, northeastern and eastern lines. All long-distance trains originate from Bangkok's Hua Lamphong station.</p>	<p><b>EI 33</b></p>
<p><b>Classes</b>  The SRT operates passenger trains in three classes – 1st, 2nd and 3rd – but each class varies considerably depending on whether you're on an ordinary, rapid or express train.  First Class – Private cabins define the 1st-class carriages, which are available only on rapid, express and special-express trains.</p>	<p><b>EI 34</b></p>
<p>Second Class – The seating arrangements in a 2nd-class, non-sleeper carriage are similar to those on a bus, with pairs of padded seats, usually recliners, all facing towards the front of the train. On 2nd-class sleeper cars, pairs of seats face one another and convert into two fold-down berths. The lower berth has more headroom than the upper berth and this is reflected in a higher fare. Children are always assigned a lower berth. Second-class carriages are found only on rapid and express trains. There are air-con and fan 2nd-class carriages.</p>	<p><b>EI 35</b></p>
<p>Third Class – A typical 3rd-class carriage consists of two rows of bench seats divided into facing pairs. Each bench seat is designed to seat two or three passengers, but on a crowded rural line nobody seems to care. Express trains do not carry 3rd-class carriages at all. Commuter trains in the Bangkok area are all 3rd class.</p>	<p><b>EI 36</b></p>
<p><b>Costs</b>  Fares are determined on a base price with surcharges added for distance, class and train type (special express, express, rapid, ordinary). Extra charges are added if the carriage has air-con and for sleeping berths (either upper or lower).</p>	<p><b>EI 37</b></p>

<p><b>Reservations</b></p> <p>Advance bookings can be made from one to 60 days before your intended date of departure. You can make bookings in person from any train station. Train tickets can also be purchased at travel agencies, which usually add a service charge to the ticket price. If you are planning long-distance train travel from outside the country, you should email SRT (passenger-ser@railway.co.th) at least two weeks before your journey. You will receive an email confirming the booking. Pick up and pay for tickets an hour before leaving at the scheduled departure train station. It is advisable to make advanced bookings for long-distance sleeper trains between Bangkok and Chiang Mai or from Bangkok to Surat Thani as seats fill up quickly. For short-distance trips you should purchase your ticket at least a day in advance for seats (rather than sleepers). Partial refunds on tickets are available depending on the number of days prior to your departure you arrange for a cancellation. These arrangements can be handled at the train station booking office.</p>	<p><b>EI 38</b></p>
<p><b>Station Services</b></p> <p>You'll find that all train stations in Thailand have baggage-storage services (or 'cloak rooms'). Most stations have a ticket window that will open between 15 and 30 minutes before train arrivals. There are also newsagents and small snack vendors, but no full-service restaurants. Most train stations have printed timetables in English; although this isn't always the case for smaller stations.</p>	<p><b>EI 39</b></p>
<p><b>Health and Safety</b></p> <p><b>Toilets</b></p> <p>Increasingly, the Asian-style squat toilet is less of the norm in Thailand. There are still specimens in rural places, provincial bus stations, older homes and modest restaurants, but the Western-style toilet is becoming more prevalent and appears wherever foreign tourists can be found. If you encounter a squat, here's what you should know. You should straddle the two footpads and face the door. To flush use the plastic bowl to scoop water out of the adjacent basin and pour into the toilet bowl. Some places supply a small pack of toilet paper at the entrance (5B), otherwise bring your own stash or wipe the old-fashioned way with water.</p>	<p><b>EI 40</b></p>
<p>Even in places where sit-down toilets are installed, the septic system may not be designed to take toilet paper. In such cases there will be a waste basket where you're supposed to place used toilet paper and feminine hygiene products. Some toilets also come with a small spray hose – Thailand's version of the bidet.</p>	<p><b>EI 41</b></p>
<p><b>Insurance</b></p> <p>A travel-insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is a good idea. Policies offer differing medical-expense options. There is a wide variety of policies available, so check the small print. Be sure that the policy covers ambulances or an emergency flight home. Some policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities', which can include scuba diving, motorcycling or even trekking. A locally acquired motorcycle licence is not valid under some policies. You may prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals directly rather than you having to pay on the spot and claim later. If you have to claim later make sure you keep all documentation. Worldwide travel insurance is available at <a href="http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel-insurance">www.lonelyplanet.com/travel-insurance</a>. You can buy, extend and claim online any time – even if you're already on the road.</p>	<p><b>EI 42</b></p>
<p><b>Danger and annoyances</b></p> <p>Although Thailand is not a dangerous country to visit, it is smart to exercise caution, especially when it comes to dealing with strangers (both Thai and foreigners) and travelling alone. In reality, you are more likely to be ripped off or have a personal possession surreptitiously stolen than you are to be physically harmed. Motorcycle accidents are another common injury.</p>	<p><b>EI 43</b></p>
<p><b>Assault</b></p> <p>Assault of travellers is rare in Thailand, but it does happen. Causing a Thai to 'lose face' (feel public embarrassment or humiliation) can sometimes elicit an inexplicably strong and violent reaction. Oftentimes alcohol is the number one contributor to bad choices and worse outcomes. Women, especially solo travellers, need to be smart and somewhat sober when interacting with the opposite sex, be they Thai or fa•ràng (foreigners). Opportunists pounce when too many whisky buckets are involved. Also be aware that an innocent flirtation might convey firmer intentions to a recipient who does not share your culture's sexual norms.</p>	<p><b>EI 44</b></p>

<p><b>Border Issues &amp; Hot Spots</b></p> <p>Thailand enjoys much better relations with its neighbours and most land borders are fully functional passages for goods and people. However, the ongoing violence in the Deep South has made the crossing at Sungai Kolok into Malaysia completely off limits and the entire Muslim-majority provinces (Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat) should be avoided by casual visitors.</p>	<p><b>EI 45</b></p>
<p>Cross-border relations between Thailand and Myanmar have normalised with unprecedented open land access. The long-contested area at Khao Phra Wihan (known as ‘Preah Vihear’ in Cambodia), along the Thai-Cambodian border, is still a source of military clashes and should be avoided until a lasting peace is found. Check with your government’s foreign ministry for current travel warnings.</p>	<p><b>EI 46</b></p>
<p><b>Druggings &amp; Drug Possession</b></p> <p>Belying Thailand’s anything-goes atmosphere are severely strict punishments for possession and trafficking that are not relaxed for foreigners. It is illegal to buy, sell or possess opium, heroin, amphetamines, hallucinogenic mushrooms and marijuana in Thailand. Possession of drugs can result in at least one year or more of prison time. Drug smuggling – defined as attempting to cross a border with drugs in your possession – carries considerably higher penalties, including execution.</p>	<p><b>EI 47</b></p>
<p><b>Scams</b></p> <p>Thais can be so friendly and laid-back that some visitors are lulled into a false sense of security, making them vulnerable to scams of all kinds. Bangkok is especially good at long-involved frauds that dupe travellers into thinking that they’ve made a friend and are getting a bargain when in fact they are getting ripped off. Follow Tourism Authority of Thailand’s (TAT) number-one suggestion to tourists: Disregard all offers of free shopping or sightseeing help from strangers. These invariably take a commission from your purchases.</p>	<p><b>EI 48</b></p>
<p><b>Theft &amp; Fraud</b></p> <p>Exercise diligence when it comes to your personal belongings. Ensure that your room is securely locked and carry your most important effects (passport, money, credit cards) on your person. Take care when leaving valuables in hotel safes. Follow the same practice when you’re travelling. A locked bag will not prevent theft on a long-haul bus. When using a credit card, don’t let vendors take your card out of your sight to run it through the machine.</p>	<p><b>EI 49</b></p>
<p>Unscrupulous merchants have been known to rub off three or four or more receipts with one purchase. Sometimes they wait several weeks – even months – between submitting each charge receipt to the bank, so that you can’t remember whether you’d been billed by the same vendor more than once.</p>	<p><b>EI 50</b></p>
<p>To avoid losing all of your travel money in an instant, use a credit card that is not directly linked to your bank account so that the operator doesn’t have access to immediate funds. Contact the tourist police (1155) if you have any problems with consumer fraud.</p>	<p><b>EI 51</b></p>
<p><b>Touts &amp; Commissions</b></p> <p>Touting is a longtime tradition in Asia, and while Thailand doesn’t have as many touts as, say, India, it has its share. In Bangkok, túk-túk drivers and other ‘new’ friends often take new arrivals on city tours; these almost always end up in high-pressure sales situations at silk, jewellery or handicraft shops. Touts also steer customers to certain guesthouses that pay a commission. Travel agencies are notorious for talking newly arrived tourists into staying at badly located, overpriced hotels.</p>	<p><b>EI 52</b></p>
<p>Some travel agencies often masquerade as TAT, the government-funded tourist information office. They might put up agents wearing fake TAT badges or have signs that read TAT in big letters to entice travellers into their offices where they can sell them bus and train tickets for a commission. Be aware that the official TAT offices do not make hotel or transport bookings. If such a place offers to do this for you then they are a travel agent, not a tourist information office. When making transport arrangements, talk to several travel agencies to look for the best price, as the commission percentage varies. Also resist any high-sales tactics from an agent trying to</p>	<p><b>EI 53</b></p>

sign you up for everything: plane tickets, hotel, tours etc. The most honest Thais are often sub-par salespeople.

**Health**

Health risks and the quality of medical facilities vary depending on where and how you travel in Thailand. The majority of cities and popular tourist areas have adequate and even excellent medical care. However, travel to remote rural areas can expose you to some health risks and less adequate medical care.

**EI 54**

Travellers tend to worry about contracting exotic infectious diseases when visiting the tropics, but these are far less common than problems with pre-existing medical conditions such as heart disease, and accidental injury (especially as a result of traffic accidents). Other common illnesses are respiratory infections, diarrhoea and dengue fever. Fortunately most common illnesses can be prevented or are easily treated. The advice given here is a general guide and does not replace the advice of a doctor trained in travel medicine.

**EI 55**

**Before You Go**

Pack medications in clearly labelled original containers and obtain a signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions, medications and syringes or needles. If you have a heart condition, bring a copy of your electrocardiography (ECG) taken just prior to travelling.

**PR56**

If you take any regular medication bring double your needs in case of loss or theft. In Thailand you can buy many medications over the counter without a doctor’s prescription, but it can be difficult to find the exact medication you are taking. Contact your home country’s Department of Foreign Affairs or the equivalent and register your trip; this is a helpful precaution in the event of a natural disaster.

**EI 57**

**Insurance**

Even if you’re fit and healthy, don’t travel without health insurance – accidents do happen. You may require extra cover for adventure activities such as rock climbing or diving, as well as scooter/motorcycle riding. If your health insurance doesn’t cover you for medical expenses abroad, ensure you get specific travel insurance. Most hospitals require an upfront guarantee of payment (from yourself or your insurer) prior to admission. Inquire before your trip about payment of medical charges and retain all documentation (medical reports, invoices etc) for claim purposes.

**EI 58**

**Medical Checklist**

Recommended items for a personal medical kit include the following; most of these medicines are available in Thailand:

**EI 58**

- antifungal cream, eg Clotrimazole
- antibacterial cream, eg Muciprocin
- antibiotic for skin infections, eg Amoxicillin/Clavulanate or Cephalexin
- antibiotics for diarrhoea include Norfloxacin, Ciprofloxacin or Azithromycin for bacterial diarrhoea; for giardiasis or amoebic dysentery take Tinidazole
- antihistamine – there are many options, eg Cetirizine for daytime and Promethazine for night-time
- antiseptic, eg Betadine
- antispasmodic for stomach cramps, eg Buscopan
- contraceptives
- decongestant
- DEET-based insect repellent
- oral rehydration solution for diarrhoea (eg Gastrolyte), diarrhoea ‘stopper’ (eg Loperamide) and antinausea medication
- first-aid items such as scissors, Elastoplasts, bandages, gauze, thermometer (but not one with mercury), sterile needles and syringes (with a doctor’s letter), safety pins and tweezers
- hand gel (alcohol based) or alcohol-based hand wipes
- ibuprofen or another anti-inflammatory
- indigestion medication, eg Quick Eze or Mylanta
- laxative, eg Coloxyl

- migraine medicine – for migraine sufferers
- paracetamol
- Permethrin to impregnate clothing and mosquito nets if at high risk
- steroid cream for allergic/itchy rashes, eg 1% to 2% hydrocortisone
- sunscreen, sunglasses and hat
- throat lozenges
- thrush (vaginal yeast infection) treatment, eg Clotrimazole pessaries or Diflucan tablet
- Ural or equivalent if prone to urine infections

**Vaccinations**

You should arrange your vaccines six to eight weeks prior to departure through a specialised travel-medicine clinic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) has a traveller’s health section that contains recommendations for vaccinations. The only vaccine required by international regulations is yellow fever. Proof of vaccination will only be required if you have visited a country in the yellow-fever zone within the six days prior to entering Thailand. If you are travelling to Thailand from Africa or South America you should check to see if you require proof of vaccination.

**EI 59**

**Mosquito Avoidance Tips**

Travellers are advised to prevent mosquito bites by taking these steps:

- use a DEET-containing insect repellent on exposed skin
- sleep under a mosquito net, ideally impregnated with Permethrin
- choose accommodation with screens and fans
- impregnate clothing with Permethrin in high-risk areas
- wear long sleeves and trousers in light colours
- use mosquito coils
- spray your room with insect repellent before going out

**EI 60**

**In Thailand**

**Infectious Diseases**

**Malaria**

There is an enormous amount of misinformation concerning malaria. Malaria is caused by a parasite transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. The most important symptom of malaria is fever, but general symptoms such as headache, diarrhoea, cough or chills may also occur – the same symptoms as many other infections. A diagnosis can only be made by taking a blood sample.

**EI 61**

Most parts of Thailand visited by tourists, particularly city and resort areas, have minimal to no risk of malaria, and the risk of side effects from taking antimalarial tablets is likely to outweigh the risk of getting the disease itself. If you are travelling to high-risk rural areas (unlikely for most visitors), seek medical advice on the right medication and dosage for you.

**EI 62**

**Typhoid**

This serious bacterial infection is spread through food and water. It gives a high and slowly progressive fever, severe headache, and may be accompanied by a dry cough and stomach pain. It is diagnosed by blood tests and treated with antibiotics. Vaccination is recommended for all travellers spending more than a week in Thailand, or travelling outside of the major cities. Be aware that vaccination is not 100% effective so you must still be careful with what you eat and drink.

**EI 63**

**Influenza**

Present year-round in the tropics, influenza (flu) symptoms include high fever, muscle aches, runny nose, cough and sore throat. Flu is the most common vaccine-preventable disease contracted by travellers and everyone should consider vaccination. There is no specific treatment, just rest and paracetamol. Complications such as bronchitis or middle-ear infection may require antibiotic treatment.

**EI 64**

<p><b>Cutaneous Larva Migrans</b> This disease, caused by dog or cat hookworm, is particularly common on the beaches of Thailand. The rash starts as a small lump, and then slowly spreads like a winding line. It is intensely itchy, especially at night. It is easily treated with medications and should not be cut out or frozen.</p>	<p><b>EI 65</b></p>
<p><b>Rare But Be Aware</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avian Influenza – Most of those infected have had close contact with sick or dead birds.</li> <li>• Filariasis – A mosquito-borne disease that is common in the local population; practise mosquito-avoidance measures.</li> <li>• Hepatitis E – Transmitted through contaminated food and water and has similar symptoms to hepatitis A; can be a severe problem in pregnant women. Follow safe eating and drinking guidelines.</li> <li>• Japanese B Encephalitis – Viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes, typically occurring in rural areas; vaccination is recommended for travellers spending more than one month outside cities or for long-term expats.</li> <li>• Melioidosis – Contracted by skin contact with soil. Affects up to 30% of the local population in northeastern Thailand. The symptoms are very similar to those experienced by tuberculosis (TB) sufferers. There is no vaccine but it can be treated with medications.</li> <li>• Strongyloides – A parasite transmitted by skin contact with soil; common in the local population. It is characterised by an unusual skin rash – a linear rash on the trunk which comes and goes. An overwhelming infection can follow. It can be treated with medications.</li> <li>• Tuberculosis – Medical and aid workers and long-term travellers who have significant contact with the local population should take precautions. Vaccination is recommended for children spending more than three months in Thailand. The main symptoms are fever, cough, weight loss, night sweats and tiredness. Treatment is available with long-term multidrug regimens.</li> <li>• Typhus – Murine typhus is spread by the bite of a flea; scrub typhus is spread via a mite. Symptoms include fever, muscle pains and a rash. Following general insect-avoidance measures and Doxycycline will also prevent it.</li> </ul>	<p><b>EI 66</b></p>
<p><b>Dengue Fever</b> This mosquito-borne disease is increasingly problematic in Thailand, especially in the cities. As there is no vaccine it can only be prevented by avoiding mosquito bites. The mosquito that carries dengue is a daytime biter, so use insect-avoidance measures at all times. Symptoms include high fever, severe headache (especially behind the eyes), nausea and body aches (dengue was previously known as ‘breakbone fever’). Some people develop a rash (which can be very itchy) and experience diarrhoea. Chiang Mai and the southern islands are particularly high-risk areas. There is no specific treatment, just rest and paracetamol – do not take aspirin or ibuprofen as they increase the risk of haemorrhaging. See a doctor to be diagnosed and monitored. Dengue can progress to the more severe and life-threatening dengue haemorrhagic fever; however this is very uncommon in tourists. The risk of this increases substantially if you have previously been infected with dengue and are then infected with a different serotype.</p>	<p><b>EI 67</b></p>
<p><b>Hepatitis A</b> The risk in Bangkok is decreasing but there is still significant risk in most of the country. This food- and waterborne virus infects the liver, causing jaundice (yellow skin and eyes), nausea and lethargy. There is no specific treatment for hepatitis A. In rare instances, it can be fatal for those over the age of 40. All travellers to Thailand should be vaccinated against hepatitis A.</p>	<p><b>EI 68</b></p>
<p><b>Hepatitis B</b> The only sexually transmitted disease (STD) that can be prevented by vaccination, hepatitis B is spread by body fluids, including sexual contact. In some parts of Thailand up to 20% of the population are carriers of hepatitis B, and usually are unaware of this. The long-term consequences can include liver cancer, cirrhosis and death.</p>	<p><b>EI 69</b></p>



<p><b>Leptospirosis</b> Leptospirosis is contracted from exposure to infected surface water – most commonly after river rafting or canyoning. Early symptoms are very similar to flu and include headache and fever. It can vary from a very mild ailment to a fatal disease. Diagnosis is made through blood tests and it is easily treated with Doxycycline.</p>	<p><b>EI 70</b></p>
<p><b>Measles</b> This highly contagious viral infection is spread through coughing and sneezing. Most people born before 1966 are immune as they had the disease in childhood. Measles starts with a high fever and rash and can be complicated by pneumonia and brain disease. There is no specific treatment. Ensure you are fully vaccinated.</p>	<p><b>EI 71</b></p>
<p><b>Rabies</b> This disease, fatal if left untreated, is spread by the bite or lick of an infected animal – most commonly a dog or monkey. You should seek medical advice immediately after any animal bite and commence post-exposure treatment. Having a pretravel vaccination means the postbite treatment is greatly simplified. If an animal bites you, gently wash the wound with soap and water, and apply iodine-based antiseptic. If you are not prevaccinated you will need to receive rabies immunoglobulin as soon as possible, followed by five shots of vaccine over 28 days. If prevaccinated you need just two shots of vaccine given three days apart.</p>	<p><b>EI 72</b></p>
<p><b>HIV</b> HIV is now one of the most common causes of death in people under the age of 50 in Thailand. Always practise safe sex; avoid getting tattoos or using unclean syringes.</p>	<p><b>EI 73</b></p>
<p><b>STDs</b> Sexually transmitted diseases most common in Thailand include herpes, warts, syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia. People carrying these diseases often have no signs of infection. Condoms will prevent gonorrhoea and chlamydia but not warts or herpes. If after a sexual encounter you develop any rash, lumps, discharge or pain when passing urine seek immediate medical attention. If you have been sexually active during your travels have an STD check on your return home.</p>	<p><b>EI 74</b></p>
<p><b>Environmental Hazards</b> <b>Jellyfish Stings</b> Box jellyfish stings range from minor to deadly. It is best to presume a box jelly is dangerous until proven otherwise. There are two main types of box jellyfish – multitentacled and single-tentacled. Multitentacled box jellyfish are present in Thai waters – these are the most dangerous and a severe envenomation can kill an adult within two minutes. They are generally found on sandy beaches near river mouths and mangroves during the warmer months.</p>	<p><b>EI 75</b></p>
<p>There are many types of single-tentacled box jellyfish, some of which can cause severe symptoms known as the Irukandji syndrome. The initial sting can seem minor; however severe symptoms such as back pain, nausea, vomiting, sweating, difficulty breathing and a feeling of impending doom can develop between five and 40 minutes later. There are many other jellyfish in Thailand that cause irritating stings but no serious effects. The only way to prevent these stings is to wear protective clothing.</p>	<p><b>EI 76</b></p>
<p><b>FIRST AID FOR SEVERE STINGS</b> For severe life-threatening envenomations the first priority is keeping the person alive. Send someone to call for medical help, and start immediate CPR if they are unconscious. If the victim is conscious douse the stung area liberally with vinegar for 30 seconds. Vinegar can also reduce irritation from minor stings as well. It is best to seek medical care quickly in case any other symptoms develop over the next 40 minutes. Australia and Thailand are now working in close collaboration to identify the species of jellyfish in Thai waters, as well as their ecology – hopefully enabling better prediction and detection of the jellyfish. Thanks to Dr Peter Fenner for the information on jellyfish stings.</p>	<p><b>EI 77</b></p>

<p><b>Food</b> Eating in restaurants is the biggest risk factor for contracting traveller's diarrhoea. Ways to avoid it include eating only freshly cooked food, and avoiding food that has been sitting around in buffets. Peel all fruit and cook vegetables. Eat in busy restaurants with a high turnover of customers.</p>	<p><b>EI 78</b></p>
<p><b>Snakes</b> Though snake bites are rare for travellers, there are over 85 species of venomous snakes in Thailand. Always wear boots and long pants if walking in an area that may have snakes. The Thai Red Cross produces antivenom for many of the poisonous snakes in Thailand.</p>	<p><b>EI 79</b></p>
<p><b>Insect Bites &amp; Stings</b> Bedbugs live in the cracks of furniture and walls and then migrate to the bed at night to feed on humans. You can treat the itch with an antihistamine.</p>	<p><b>EI 80</b></p>
<p>Ticks are contracted when walking in rural areas. They are commonly found behind the ears, on the belly and in armpits. If you've been bitten by a tick and a rash develops at the site of the bite or elsewhere, along with fever or muscle aches, see a doctor. Doxycycline prevents tick-borne diseases.</p>	<p><b>EI 81</b></p>
<p>Leeches are found in humid rainforests. They do not transmit disease but their bites are often itchy for weeks afterwards and can easily become infected. Apply an iodine-based antiseptic to the bite to help prevent infection.</p>	<p><b>EI 82</b></p>
<p>Bee and wasp stings mainly cause problems for people who are allergic to them. Anyone with a serious allergy should carry an injection of adrenaline (eg an EpiPen) for emergencies. For others, pain is the main problem – apply ice to the sting and take painkillers.</p>	<p><b>EI 83</b></p>
<p><b>Heat</b> For most people it takes at least two weeks to adapt to the hot climate. Prevent swelling of the feet and ankles as well as muscle cramps caused by excessive sweating by avoiding dehydration and excessive activity in the heat of the day. Heat stroke requires immediate medical treatment. Symptoms come on suddenly and include weakness, nausea, a hot dry body with a body temperature of over 41°C, dizziness, confusion, loss of coordination, fits and eventually collapse and loss of consciousness.</p>	<p><b>EI 84</b></p>
<p><b>Skin Problems</b> Prickly heat is a common skin rash in the tropics, caused by sweat being trapped under the skin. Treat by taking cool showers and using powders. Two fungal rashes commonly affect travellers. The first occurs in the groin, armpits and between the toes. It starts as a red patch that slowly spreads and is usually itchy. Treatment involves keeping the skin dry, avoiding chafing and using an antifungal cream such as Clotrimazole or Lamisil. The fungus Tinea versicolor causes small and light-coloured patches, most commonly on the back, chest and shoulders. Consult a doctor. Cuts and scratches become easily infected in humid climates. Immediately wash all wounds in clean water and apply antiseptic. If you develop signs of infection, see a doctor. Coral cuts can easily become infected.</p>	<p><b>EI 85</b></p>
<p><b>Sunburn</b> Even on a cloudy day sunburn can occur rapidly. Use a strong sunscreen (at least factor 30), making sure to reapply after a swim, and always wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses outdoors. If you become sunburnt stay out of the sun until you have recovered, apply cool compresses and take painkillers for the discomfort. One per cent hydrocortisone cream applied twice daily is also helpful.</p>	<p><b>EI 86</b></p>
<p><b>Parasites</b> Numerous parasites are common in local populations in Thailand, but most of these are rare in travellers. To avoid parasitic infections, wear shoes and avoid eating raw food, especially fish, pork and vegetables.</p>	<p><b>EI 87</b></p>

<p><b>Traveller's Diarrhoea</b>  Traveller's diarrhoea is by far the most common problem affecting travellers. In over 80% of cases, traveller's diarrhoea is caused by a bacteria (there are numerous potential culprits), and responds promptly to treatment with antibiotics. Here we define traveller's diarrhoea as the passage of more than three watery bowel movements within 24 hours, plus at least one other symptom such as vomiting, fever, cramps, nausea or feeling generally unwell. Treatment consists of staying well hydrated; rehydration solutions such as Gastrolyte are the best for this. Antibiotics such as Norfloxacin, Ciprofloxacin or Azithromycin will kill the bacteria quickly. Seek medical attention if you do not respond to an appropriate antibiotic.</p>	<p><b>EI 88</b></p>
<p>Loperamide is just a 'stopper' that only treats the symptoms. It can be helpful, for example if you have to go on a long bus ride. Don't take Loperamide if you have a fever, or blood in your stools. Giardia lamblia is a parasite that is relatively common. Symptoms include nausea, bloating, excess gas, fatigue and intermittent diarrhoea. 'Eggy' burps are often attributed solely to giardiasis. The treatment of choice is Tinidazole, with Metronidazole being a second-line option.</p>	<p><b>EI 89</b></p>
<p>Amoebic dysentery is very rare in travellers but may be misdiagnosed by poor-quality labs. Symptoms are similar to bacterial diarrhoea. You should always seek reliable medical care if you have blood in your diarrhoea. Treatment involves two drugs; Tinidazole or Metronidazole to kill the parasite in your gut and then a second drug to kill the cysts. If left untreated complications, such as liver abscesses, can occur.</p>	<p><b>EI 90</b></p>
<p><b>Travelling with Children</b>  Thailand is relatively safe for children. Consult a doctor who specialises in travel medicine prior to travel to ensure your child is appropriately prepared. A medical kit designed specifically for children includes liquid medicines for children who can not swallow tablets. Azithromycin is an ideal paediatric formula used to treat bacterial diarrhoea, as well as ear, chest and throat infections. Good resources are the Lonely Planet publication Travel with Children, and for those spending longer away Jane Wilson-Howarth's book Your Child's Health Abroad is excellent.</p>	<p><b>EI 91</b></p>
<p><b>Women's Health</b>  Pregnant women should receive specialised advice before travelling. The ideal time to travel is in the second trimester, when pregnancy-related risks are low. Avoid rural areas with poor transport and medical facilities. Ensure travel insurance covers all pregnancy-related possibilities, including premature labour.</p>	<p><b>EI 92</b></p>
<p>Malaria is a high-risk disease in pregnancy. Pregnant women should not travel to those areas with Chloroquine-resistant malaria. None of the more effective antimalarial drugs is completely safe in pregnancy.</p>	<p><b>EI 93</b></p>
<p>Traveller's diarrhoea can quickly lead to dehydration and result in inadequate blood flow to the placenta. Azithromycin is considered one of the safest anti-diarrhoea drugs in pregnancy. In Thailand's urban areas, supplies of sanitary products are readily available. Bring adequate supplies of your personal birth-control option. Heat, humidity and antibiotics can all contribute to thrush, which can be treated with antifungal creams and Clotrimazole. A practical alternative is one tablet of fluconazole (Diflucan). Urinary-tract infections can be precipitated by dehydration or long bus journeys without toilet stops; bring suitable antibiotics for treatment.</p>	<p><b>EI 94</b></p>
<p><b>Availability &amp; Cost of Health Care</b>  Bangkok is considered a centre of medical excellence in Southeast Asia. Private hospitals are more expensive than other medical facilities but offer a superior standard of care and English-speaking staff. The cost of health care is relatively cheap in Thailand compared to most Western countries.</p>	<p><b>EI 95</b></p>

<p><b>In Transit</b></p> <p><b>Deep Vein Thrombosis</b></p> <p>Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) occurs when blood clots form in the legs during long trips such as flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the journey, the greater the risk. Though most blood clots are reabsorbed uneventfully, some may break off and travel through the blood vessels to the lungs, where they can cause life-threatening complications. The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and difficulty in breathing. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention. To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, perform isometric compressions of the leg muscles (ie contract the leg muscles while sitting) and drink plenty of fluids (nonalcoholic). Those at higher risk should speak with a doctor.</p>	<p><b>EI 96</b></p>
<p><b>Jet Lag &amp; Motion Sickness</b></p> <p>Jet lag is common when crossing more than five time zones; it results in insomnia, fatigue, malaise or nausea. To avoid jet lag drink plenty of fluids (nonalcoholic) and eat light meals. Upon arrival, seek exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule. Some people find melatonin helpful. Sedating antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) or Prochlorperazine (Phenergan) are usually the first choice for treating motion sickness. Their main side effect is drowsiness. A herbal alternative is ginger. Scopolamine patches are considered the most effective prevention.</p>	<p><b>EI 97</b></p>
<p><b>Legal matters</b></p> <p>In general, Thai police don't hassle foreigners, especially tourists. They usually go out of their way to avoid having to speak English with a foreigner, especially regarding minor traffic issues. One major exception is drugs, which most Thai police view as either a social scourge against which it's their duty to enforce the letter of the law, or an opportunity to make untaxed income via bribes.</p>	<p><b>EI 98</b></p>
<p>If you are arrested for any offence, the police will allow you the opportunity to make a phone call, either to your embassy or consulate in Thailand if you have one, or to a friend or relative if not. There's a whole set of legal codes governing the length of time and manner in which you can be detained before being charged or put on trial, but a lot of discretion is left to the police. In the case of foreigners the police are more likely to bend these codes in your favour. However, as with police worldwide, if you don't show respect you will make matters worse.</p>	<p><b>EI 99</b></p>
<p>Thai law does not presume an indicted detainee to be either 'guilty' or 'innocent' but rather a 'suspect', whose guilt or innocence will be decided in court. Trials are usually speedy. The tourist police can be very helpful in cases of arrest. Although they typically have no jurisdiction over the kinds of cases handled by regular cops, they may be able to help with translations or with contacting your embassy. You can call the hotline number 24 hours a day to lodge complaints or to request assistance with regards to personal safety.</p>	<p><b>EI 100</b></p>
<p><b>Advice for Travellers</b></p> <p><b>Travelling with kids</b></p> <p>Looking for an exotic destination that the kids can handle? Thailand has it: beaches, mountains, elephants, sparkling temples and bustling markets; there's something for each age range. Plus Thais are serious 'cute' connoisseurs and exotic-looking foreign children trump stuffed animals and fluffy dogs.</p>	<p><b>EI 101</b></p>
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Small children are instant celebrities in Thailand and attract paparazzi-like attention. Babies do surprisingly well with their new-found stardom, soaking up adoration from gruff taxi drivers who transform into loving uncles wanting to play a game of peekaboo (called 'já äir'). If you've got a babe in arms, food vendors will often hold the child while you eat, taking the child for a brief stroll to visit all the neighbours.</p>	<p><b>EI 102</b></p>
<p>At a certain age, kids can develop stranger anxiety, which doesn't mix well with the Thai passion for children. For the preschool set, who are becoming self-conscious but still have major cute quotient, stick to tourist centres instead of trotting off to far-flung places where foreigners,</p>	<p><b>EI 103</b></p>

<p>especially children, will attract too much attention. A polite way to deflect spectators is to say the child is 'shy' ('ki aye'). Thais understand this emotion.</p>	
<p>Older children should be safe from Thai attention, though they might get nervous about the cities' natural chaos and the confusion that arises from being in a new place and having to negotiate transport. Consider giving your children a role in travel planning: reading the map, setting up an itinerary or carrying the water bottles. You're moulding future travellers.</p>	<b>EI 104</b>
<p>Thai cities can be claustrophobic and the heat can make it difficult to wear out energetic children. Staying at a hotel with a pool will give the kids enough exercise not to bounce off the proverbial walls. To smooth out the usual road bumps of dragging children from place to place, check out Lonely Planet's Travel with Children, which contains useful advice on how to cope with kids on the road, with a focus on travel in developing countries.</p>	<b>EI 105</b>
<p><b>Best Regions for Kids</b>  <b>Eastern Seaboard &amp; Ko Chang</b></p> <p>Shallow seas are kind to young swimmers and the low evening tides make for good beach-combing. Older children will like the interior jungle, elephant camp and mangrove kayaking.</p>	<b>EI 106</b>
<p><b>Southern Gulf</b></p> <p>Hua Hin has a long sandy coastline for pint-sized marathons and hillside temples for monkey spotting. Phetchaburi's cave temples have bats.</p>	<b>EI 107</b>
<p><b>Ko Samui &amp; Lower Gulf</b></p> <p>Older children can snorkel at Ko Tao without worry. Ko Samui, especially its northern beaches, is a hit with pram-pushers and toddlers, while Hat Chaweng is social and commercial; ideal for teens.</p>	<b>EI 108</b>
<p><b>Phuket &amp; Andaman Coast</b></p> <p>Phuket has amusements galore (from theme parks to surf schools), though steer clear of the Patong party scene. There are at least a dozen islands along this coast where families can frolic in the sea.</p>	<b>EI 109</b>
<p><b>Chiang Mai</b></p> <p>Families come in droves during European summer holidays to expose their kids to culture, ride elephants and cycle about town.</p>	<b>EI 110</b>
<p><b>Children's Highlights</b></p> <p>Children will especially enjoy the beaches, as most are shallow, gentle bays good for beginner swimmers. The further south you go, the clearer the water. The bays are often fringed with near-shore reefs and curious fish swim by for a visit.</p>	<b>EI 111</b>
<p>Animal amusements abound in Thailand, though standards are often below those in the West. Chiang Mai is the centre of elephant tourism; here tourists can bathe, ride and learn about elephant welfare. Many beach resorts, such as Phuket and Ko Chang, also have wildlife encounters. Lopburi is overrun with monkeys who cause all sorts of mayhem.</p>	<b>EI 112</b>
<p>Outdoor activities – trekking, ziplining, bamboo rafting – will appeal to older children. Chiang Mai, Kanchanaburi, southern beach resorts and tourist centres in Northern Thailand all have a variety of nature sports that are family friendly.</p>	<b>EI 113</b>
<p>Bangkok is great fun for those in awe of construction sites: the city is filled with cranes, jackhammers and concrete-pouring trucks. Then there's the aboveground BTS (Skytrain), and shopping malls complete with escalators (a preschool favourite). The city's immense shopping options will appeal to tweens and teens.</p>	<b>EI 114</b>
<p>Getting around can also be amusing. Kids on a train kick might like an overnight journey. On the train they can walk around and they're assigned the lower sleeping berths with views of the stations. The author's preschooler loved the speedboats they took to get around the Ko Chang archipelago.</p>	<b>EI 115</b>

<p>Even temples can be engaging places for children. The climb to hilltop temples, marvelling at the resident monkeys and cave shrines, is a great way to expend energy. Merit-making at a Buddhist temple is surprisingly child-friendly – there are the burning joss sticks, the bowing in front of the Buddha and the rubbing of gold leaf on the central image. It is a very active process that can involve the kids. Most temples have a fortune-telling area, where you shake a bamboo container until a numbered stick falls out. The number corresponds to a printed fortune. A variation on this is to make a donation into a pot (or in some cases an automated machine) corresponding to the day of the week you were born and retrieve the attached fortune.</p>	<p><b>EI 116</b></p>
<p><b>Eating with Kids</b></p> <p>Worrying about food occupies a lot of parental bandwidth and the vagaries of children's food preferences are further complicated by a cuisine known for its spiciness. Luckily, even Thai children are shielded from chillies and there are a handful of child-friendly dishes that every server can recommend. Because of the heat, remember to keep your little ones well hydrated, either with water or a variety of fruit juices, including fresh young coconuts or lime juice (a surprising hit with kids).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• kài jee•o (omelette) – more oily than the French style but a safe, non-spicy restaurant or street-stall option.</li> <li>• gàì yâhng/tôrt (grilled/fried chicken) – common market and street stall meal.</li> <li>• kôw nêe•o (sticky rice) – straight-up carbs but picky eaters won't resist; sold in markets alongside grilled or fried chicken.</li> <li>• gàì pàt mét má•môo•ang (chicken stir-fried with cashew nuts) – mild stir-fry, popular at restaurants.</li> <li>• kôw man gàì (Hainanese chicken rice) – a popular morning and afternoon meal sold at speciality shops.</li> </ul>	<p><b>EI 117</b></p>
<p><b>Health &amp; Safety</b></p> <p>For the most part parents needn't worry too much about health concerns. Regular hand washing should be enforced. Thai children are bathed at least twice a day and powdered afterwards to reduce skin irritation from the humid climate; foreigners should aim for at least daily showers. Children should be warned not to play with animals as rabies is relatively common and some pets have bad manners.</p>	<p><b>EI 118</b></p>
<p>Dengue is an increasing concern in Thailand and reached a 20-year-high rate of infection during the rainy season of 2013. Parents should take care to prevent mosquito bites (a difficult task) in children. Repellent creams containing 12% DEET are widely available. If your child is bitten, there are a variety of locally produced balms that can reduce swelling and itching. All the usual health precautions apply.</p>	<p><b>EI 119</b></p>
<p>Children familiar with urban environments will do well in Thailand's cities, where traffic is chaotic and pedestrian paths are congested. Thai cities are very loud and can be a sensory overload for young children. Be sure that your child understands street safety guidelines as it will be difficult to focus on your instructions amid all the street noise outside.</p>	<p><b>EI 120</b></p>
<p><b>Planning &amp; Practicalities</b></p> <p>Amenities specially geared towards young children – such as child-safety seats for cars, high chairs in restaurants or nappy-changing facilities in public restrooms – are virtually nonexistent in Thailand. Therefore parents will have to be resourceful in seeking out substitutes or just do without.</p>	<p><b>EI 121</b></p>
<p>Baby formula and nappies (diapers) are available at minimarkets and 7-Elevens in the larger towns and cities, but sizes are usually small, smaller and smallish. If your kid wears size 3 or larger, head to Tesco Lotus, Big C or Tops Market stores. Nappy rash cream is sold at pharmacies.</p>	<p><b>EI 122</b></p>
<p>Hauling around little ones can be a challenge. Thailand's footpaths are often too crowded to push a pram, especially full-size SUV versions. Instead opt for a compact umbrella stroller that can squeeze past the fire hydrants and mango carts and can be folded up and thrown in a túk-túk (pronounced ðúk ðúk; three-wheeled motorised vehicle). A baby pack is also useful, but make</p>	<p><b>EI 123</b></p>

<p>sure the child's head doesn't sit higher than yours: there are lots of hanging obstacles poised at forehead level.</p>	
<p><b>Women Travellers</b>  Women face relatively few problems in Thailand. With the great amount of respect afforded to women, an equal measure should be returned. Thai women, especially the younger generation, are showing more skin these days. That means almost everyone is now dressing like a bar girl and you can wear spaghetti strap tops and navel-bearing shirts without offending Thais' modesty streak. But to be on the safe side, cover up if you're going deep into rural communities. And certainly cover up if visiting temples.</p>	<p><b>EI 124</b></p>
<p>Attacks and rapes are not common in Thailand, but incidents do occur, especially when an attacker observes a vulnerable target: a drunk or solo woman. If you return home from a bar alone, be sure to have your wits about you. Avoid accepting rides from strangers late at night or travelling around in isolated areas by yourself – common sense stuff that might escape your notice in a new environment filled with hospitable people.</p>	<p><b>EI 125</b></p>
<p>While Bangkok might be a men's paradise to some, foreign women are finding their own Romeos on the Thai beaches. As more couples emerge, more Thai men will make themselves available. Women who aren't interested in such romantic encounters should not presume that Thai men have merely platonic motives. Frivolous flirting could unintentionally cause a Thai man to feel a loss of face if attention is then diverted to another person and, in some cases where alcohol is involved, the spurned man may become unpleasant or even violent.</p>	<p><b>EI 126</b></p>
<p><b>Working and volunteering</b>  There are many wonderful volunteering organisations in Thailand that provide meaningful work and cultural engagement. Volunteer Work Thailand maintains a database of opportunities with grassroots organisations.</p>	<p><b>EI R127</b></p>
<p><b>Gay and lesbian travel</b>  Thai culture is relatively tolerant of both male and female homosexuality. There is a fairly prominent gay and lesbian scene in Bangkok, Pattaya and Phuket. With regard to dress or mannerism, lesbians and gays are generally accepted without comment. However, public displays of affection – whether heterosexual or homosexual – are frowned upon. Utopia (<a href="http://www.utopia-asia.com">www.utopia-asia.com</a>) posts lots of Thailand information for gay and lesbian visitors and publishes a guidebook to the kingdom for homosexuals.</p>	<p><b>EI 128</b></p>
<p><b>Travellers with disabilities</b>  Thailand presents one large, ongoing obstacle course for the mobility impaired. With its high curbs, uneven footpaths and nonstop traffic, Thai cities can be particularly difficult. In Bangkok many streets must be crossed via pedestrian bridges flanked with steep stairways, while buses and boats don't stop long enough even for the fully abled. Rarely are there any ramps or other access points for wheelchairs.</p>	<p><b>EI 129</b></p>
<p>A number of more expensive top-end hotels make consistent design efforts to provide disabled access to their properties. Other deluxe hotels with high employee-to-guest ratios are usually good about accommodating the mobility impaired by providing staff help where building design fails. For the rest, you're pretty much left to your own resources. Counter to the prevailing trends, Worldwide Dive &amp; Sail offers live-aboard diving programs for the deaf and hard of hearing.</p>	<p><b>EI 130</b></p>

Content: Tips & Articles (TA)	Paragraph No.
<p><b>Bun Bang Fai: a guide to rocket festivals in Laos and Thailand</b>            by Lonely Planet • Apr 02 2013            Location: Throughout Laos and northeastern Thailand            Date: Usually on the May full moon            Level of participation: 1 - join the crowd to watch the rockets fly            In Southeast Asia the rain dance isn't dead, it's just been juiced up with some high-powered bamboo rockets. This pre-Buddhist rain ceremony can be one of the wildest festivals in Laos or northeastern Thailand, with music, dance, folk theatre, processions and general merrymaking.</p>	TA 1
<p>On the third and final day, bamboo rockets are launched into the sky in an attempt to kick-start the rainy season and bring much needed water to the rice fields. Behind the serious business of rain-making is the competition to be the local Roger Ramjet. The team whose rocket goes the highest is declared the winner; for anybody whose rocket doesn't get off the launch pad it's tradition to dump them in the mud. Vientiane is a good place to see Bun Bang Fai, while in Thailand it's celebrated best in the town of Yasothon.</p>	TA 2
<p><b>Essentials:</b> dates vary from village to village and town to town, so check ahead with tourist authorities as to festival dates. Buses for Yasothon leave from Ubon Ratchathani, two hours away.</p>	TA 3
<p><b>Local attractions:</b> in Vientiane, visit the golden stupa of Pha That Luang, the symbol of Lao nationhood. In Yasothon, the Phrat That Phra Anon stupa is said to enshrine holy relics of Buddha's personal attendant monk.</p>	TA 4
<p><b>Songkran: tips for enjoying Thailand's water festival</b>            by Lonely Planet • Mar 23 2013            This is an excerpt from Lonely Planet's A Year of Festivals.            Location: Throughout Thailand            Dates: 13–15 April            Level of participation: 5 – Songkran is a no-holds-barred water fight, and tourists are fair game, both to be soaked and to do the soaking            The Lunar New Year in Thailand marks a time when the country literally goes to water. Part a time of respect and part riot, Songkran is an occasion when images of the Buddha are 'bathed' and young Thais seek the blessing of their elders by pouring scented water over their hands (a ceremony known as rod nahm dum hua). After that, it's a water-throwing free-for-all – traditionally, the custom was to pour water gently over other people but it has evolved into little more than a good excuse for an almighty water fight.</p>	TA 5
<p><b>Surin Elephant Round-up: an unforgettable sight in Thailand</b>            Held in the peak of the hot season, Songkran is a literal chance for the country to cool off. For the three days of the celebration (in some places, five days), nobody is safe from a dousing. Water balloons are launched at suspecting and unsuspecting participants, hoses are turned on passers-by, and highpowered water guns are fired from bicycles, motorbikes and cars at pedestrians and other vehicles.</p>	TA 6
<p>In addition to the wild water battles, Songkran is also a time when replica sand stupas are built in the courtyards of monasteries. Birds and fish are also set free. A time of nationwide fun, Songkran is best witnessed in the northern city of Chiang Mai, where it's celebrated with an enthusiasm that borders on pandemonium. Thousands of revellers line up along the city's moats, and temporary pumps are installed so that water can be sucked from the moats and sprayed with abandon.</p>	TA 7
<p>Celebrations in Bangkok are more low-key, with many Bangkokians leaving town. The main venue for throwing water around with abandon is Th Khao San, where foreigners outnumber the Thais. The most memorable release of birds and fish is on the island of Phuket where, at Phra Pradaeng, this act of freedom is preceded by a colourful parade. The winner of a Miss Songkran beauty contest then releases the first of the fish.</p>	TA 8



<p><b>Essentials:</b> Unless you stay locked in your hotel room (and why would you?) it's virtually impossible to stay dry, so come prepared to get very wet. Arm yourself with a water gun or bucket for the most fun.</p>	<p><b>TA 9</b></p>
<p><b>Local attractions:</b> Both Chiang Mai and Bangkok deserve a few days built around any Songkran visit. In Chiang Mai, head out for some hill-tribe trekking, and while away the evenings in the sprawling night markets... Rolex knock-offs, anyone? In Bangkok, compare big Buddha and little Buddha – the holy Emerald Buddha in Wat Phra Kaew is just 75cm high, while the golden reclining Buddha at Wat Pho is 46m long. This is an excerpt from Lonely Planet's A Year of Festivals. This article was first published in December 2010 and was refreshed in March 2013.</p>	<p><b>TA 10</b></p>
<p><b>A guide to the eateries of Thailand</b> by Lonely Planet • Nov 20 2012 The first ráan khô kaeng (rice &amp; curry shop) to have been historically documented was a lean-to affair situated just outside the palace walls in 17th century Ayuthaya. It was said to have served rice and curry to palace courtiers who were too busy to prepare meals for themselves, but we know nothing else about the establishment.</p>	<p><b>TA 11</b></p>
<p>Other than the simple ráan khô kaeng in markets, Thai food wasn't available at most pre-WWII restaurants, which tended to be either Chinese or, more rarely, European. Real Thai restaurants – with full menus of kaeng, yam, tôm yam and phât dishes – didn't appear until the beginning of the Cold War, when Indochinese conflict brought an influx of foreigners with diplomatic, military or commercial interests. It could be said that Thais discovered the enjoyment of a Thai meal outside their homes only after the experience received outside attention.</p>	<p><b>TA 12</b></p>
<p>This self discovery coincided with the tremendous economic development the nation underwent between 1963 and 1997, when per capita income levels in Thailand increased 19-fold. Nowadays Thailand boasts many more Thai restaurants than any other type of eatery, and it's hard to believe that that barely 50 years ago finding a full-menu Thai restaurant was not an easy task.</p>	<p><b>TA 13</b></p>
<p>Today urban Thais eat out almost as often as they eat at home, whether it means grabbing a lone chair at a street vendor table for a quick bowl of kaytżaw, or driving in convoy with 15 family members to a pier-top restaurant for a weekend seafood feast. Watching where the Thais congregate to eat is the best way of all to determine the potential quality of a ráan aahãan (food shop) or rôt khẽn (vendor cart).</p>	<p><b>TA 14</b></p>
<p><b>Ráan khô kaeng (rice &amp; curry shop)</b> At a ráan khô kaeng (rice &amp; curry shop), pots of curry are placed on a table at the front of the shop, along with a large rice cooker. Typically the pots are not on a stove or heating element of any kind. Instead the curries are cooked early in the morning and, once lidded, they will stay warm for at least a few hours. Re-heating is not usually done, as it risks drying out or over-thickening the curry (a good curry should not be thinned with water, and to add more coconut milk would risk throwing the flavour balance off). The variety of beverages available are slim, often just water, nám chaa (weak Chinese tea) and a few soft drinks or fresh fruit juices. Ráan aahãan taam sàng (food-to-order shop)</p>	<p><b>TA 15</b></p>
<p>The more generic ráan aahãan taam sàng (food-to-order shop) can usually be recognised by one or more tall refrigerated cabinets with clear glass windows at the front of the shop. These will be filled with many of the raw ingredients – Chinese kale, tomatoes, chopped pork, fresh or dried fish, noodles, eggplant, spring onions – for a standard repertoire of Thai and Chinese dishes. The ingredients are often there as a simple means of promotion, as the actual kitchen stocks many more ingredients. As the name of the eatery implies, the cook attempts to prepare any dish you can name, including any kind of rice or noodle dish as well as more complex multi-dish meals. You won't usually find curries at a ráan aahãan taam sàng, but if they have them, the curries will usually be pre-prepared as at a ráan khô kaeng. Most of the standard Thai dishes are available, including those in the tôm yam, yam and phât categories. Almost any kind of beverage is available, from water and soft drinks to rice whisky and beer. Ráan aahãan taam sàng can be open at any time, although typical hours are 10am-9pm.</p>	<p><b>TA 16</b></p>

<p><b>Ráan khô tôm (boiled rice soup shops)</b></p> <p>In larger cities you may find a few 24-hour ráan aahāan taam sàng, especially if they serve khô tôm (boiled rice soup), a popular late night meal. In fact ráan khô tôm (boiled rice soup shops) and ráan aahāan taam sàng frequently overlap in menu and function. A true ráan khô tôm, however, carries a greater variety of khô tôm accoutrements and will have more of a Chinese orientation. Both kinds of eateries often use the word phochánaa – a Thai-Sanskrit term meaning ‘meals’ – in their names, as in Sayam Phochanaa or Si Chaiya Phochanaa.</p>	<p><b>TA 17</b></p>
<p><b>Ráan kaytżaw (noodle shop)</b></p> <p>At the front of a ráan kaytżaw (noodle shop) you’ll see steel- or wood-framed cabinets filled with piles of snowy white noodles. Hanging next to the noodles are pre-cooked meats, such as muu daeng (strips of bright red barbecued pork) or pèt yâang (roast duck). On a lower shelf sit little piles of chopped raw meats or poultry for custom cooking and on another shelf are any accompanying vegetables. Two steel boilers near the cabinet contain plain water (for dunking the fresh noodles) and soup broth. On the dining tables you’ll find the traditional rack of condiments. Noodle shops don’t have standard opening hours. Some cater to the breakfast and lunch crowd, others are open from 11pm until dawn.</p>	<p><b>TA 18</b></p>
<p><b>Night markets</b></p> <p>One of the simplest and most pleasurable venues for dining out in Thailand is the night market, which can vary from a small cluster of metal tables and chairs alongside the road to more elaborate affairs that take up whole city blocks. While breakfast or lunch may be quick and functional, a meal at a night market can be an evening in itself, starting with a drink and kàp klâem (drinking food) at one vendor, followed by a slow perusal of the other vendors to put together a feast. There are two types of night market, firstly the tàlàat laeng (late afternoon market) or tàlàat yen (evening market), which sets up just before sunset and stays open till around 9 or 10pm – possibly later in large cities. The second is the tàlàat tôh rúng (open until dawn market), which begins doing business around 11pm and keeps going until sunrise.</p>	<p><b>TA 19</b></p>
<p><b>Upscale Restaurants</b></p> <p>More upscale restaurants – the type that would offer printed menus – are usually only found in provincial capitals or tourist resorts. Average Thais prefer to order their favourite dishes without referring to a menu at all, so these more expensive restaurants only cater to an upper-class clientele with more international tastes. It is in such restaurants that you will find air-conditioning, tablecloths, and individual soup bowls. There’s no special name for this kind of restaurant, although the owners often bestow them with Thai names that have royal or historic connotations – Wang (palace), Tamnan (epic), Than Ying (a titled lady) – or that are intentionally humble – Baan (house or village), Rai (field) or Kratip (sticky rice basket).</p>	<p><b>TA 20</b></p>
<p><b>Reua aahāan (food boat restaurants)</b></p> <p>Other kinds of Thai eateries fall into smaller, specialist categories. In Bangkok, for example, a number of reua aahāan (food boat restaurants) operate dining boats, which leave the restaurant’s pier once or twice nightly for a one- or two-hour cruise on the Chao Phraya River. Such restaurants offer a regular Thai menu from the restaurant’s riverside eatery. It’s a fine way to dine outdoors when the weather is hot, away from city traffic and cooled by river breezes. Several of the boats cruise under the illuminated Rama IX Bridge, the world’s longest single-span cable-suspension bridge.</p>	<p><b>TA 21</b></p>
<p><b>Phae aahāan (food raft)</b></p> <p>In provincial towns with rivers or lakes, you’ll come across the similar phae aahāan (food raft), a floating platform moored to the bank. Although the rafts never move from their moorings, the cooling breezes off the water make for a pleasant dining experience. Be especially discerning when choosing a phae aahāan, as the cooking sometimes takes a distant second place to the location. Follow the usual rule of thumb in restaurant selection – look for a crowd – and you should be fine.</p>	<p><b>TA 22</b></p>

<p><b>Eating Alone</b>  At ráan khôo kaeng, ráan khôo tôm and ráan aahāan taam sàng – places where the jaan diaw (one plate) meal is the norm – you’ll fit right in dining alone. Eating at places like these not only saves you from buying a dish and a plate of rice separately, but the portion will be ample for one. At reua aahāan, phae aahāan and the more up-market restaurants, it’s fairly unusual to dine solo. It’s difficult for one person to eat a multi-dish meal alone, since most dishes are meant to feed at least two. Even if you order only one dish and some rice, it’s not much of a balanced meal to Thai eyes. The most socially acceptable solution when flying solo is to stick to jaan diaw places. Originally published Feb 2011. Updated Nov 2012.</p>	<p><b>TA 23</b></p>
<p><b>Thailand’s islands: where to escape the crowds</b>  by Lonely Planet • May 15 2012  Whether it is riding in the back of an open tuk-tuk or racing across the waves in a longtail boat, a journey through Thailand’s islands always feels like a real adventure. Thailand’s beauty is no secret, but there are still a few wonders that remain relatively under wraps. In this excerpt from an article originally by Oliver Berry, Lonely Planet Magazine takes you deeper into the Thai islands.</p>	<p><b>TA 24</b></p>
<p><b>Ko Tarutao Marine National Park: the last archipelago of Thailand</b>  by Lonely Planet • Oct 24 2010  It took a team of landscape gardeners to make the beach in The Beach look like a proper island paradise. Why go to all that trouble when you can find the real thing in the laid-back islands of the Tarutao Archipelago? Tucked away in Thailand's deep south, this is the last group of Thai islands to escape the developers. It probably helps that the main island is the headquarters of the Ko Tarutao Marine National Park.</p>	<p><b>TA 25</b></p>
<p>Comprising 1490 square kilometres of jungles, beaches and ocean, the Tarutao islands sprawl across the Andaman Sea, closer to Pulau Langkawi in Malaysia than the Thai mainland. Yet by a quirk of politics, the ritzy tourist developments stop on the Malay side of the border. Over in southern Thailand, paradise-seekers make do with a handful of beach getaways on Ko Lipe, or the charmingly institutional national park headquarters on Ko Tarutao island.</p>	<p><b>TA 26</b></p>
<p>Strolling barefoot along the silver-sand beaches that line the western shore of Ko Tarutao, it's hard to believe that this little piece of paradise was once a notorious prison, holding high-profile political prisoners until 1948. Of course, Tarutao was less hospitable in those days, with impenetrable malarial-swamps and shark-infested waters to dissuade anyone thinking of swimming for the mainland.</p>	<p><b>TA 27</b></p>
<p>Left to crumble after WWII, the prison camp at Ao Taloh Udang has been reclaimed by jungle vines. These days, there are more monkeys than people on Ko Tarutao, and the only modern development is a cluster of government-run bungalows spilling onto the beach by the ranger station at Ao Pante Malacca. Most visitors are happy to trade luxury for pristine rainforest and mile after mile of untouched sand.</p>	<p><b>TA 28</b></p>
<p>Of course, you don't have to take the Swiss Family Robinson option. On sand-dusted Ko Lipe, Castaway offers swaying hammocks, resident masseurs, shady waterside pavilions and thatch-topped cabins that look onto a vista of liling waters and bobbing long-tail boats. Divers can descend to a series of submerged pinnacles which attract mantas, whale sharks and other magnificent denizens of the deep.</p>	<p><b>TA 29</b></p>
<p>Where you go on these languorous isles will depend on your temperament. Ko Lipe calls out to travellers seeking the tropical idyll of sun, sea and sand between the toes, but the island is changing fast, with more bungalows bursting out of the jungle with each passing monsoon. A short boat-ride across brilliant blue waters in almost any direction will deposit you on an island where not even footprints disturb the sand.</p>	<p><b>TA 30</b></p>
<p>Credit for preserving the islands in such impressive condition goes to the rangers of the national park, who have kept Tarutao much as it was left when the last prisoners departed at the end of WWII. For the ultimate Robinson Crusoe experience, consider sleeping under canvas on the remote beaches of Ao Son, Ao Makham and Ao Taloh Udang, with only hornbills and crab-</p>	<p><b>TA 31</b></p>

<p>eating macaques for company. From November to May, ferries to Ko Tarutao and Ko Lipe leave daily from the jetty at Pak Bara, 60km north of Satun in southern Thailand. Boats also run to Ko Lipe from Pulau Langkawi, which is served by regular flights from Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.</p>	
<p><b>Ko Tarutao</b>          Few people make the long journey south to the islands of the Ko Tarutao Marine National Park, but if you're looking for pristine island scenery, this is certainly where you'll find it. This enormous national park encompasses 51 islands, most of which are uninhabited and covered in virgin rainforest. They are a haven for all kinds of birds, animals and underwater life, and have some of the healthiest coral reefs in Thailand. Base yourself on the island of Ko Tarutao, where you can sleep in bungalows (dnp.go.th).</p>	<p><b>TA 32</b></p>
<p><b>Ko Kut</b>          It's only a quick trip from the popular island of Ko Chang on Thailand's Gulf Coast, but Ko Kut receives far, far fewer visitors. It's still remarkably underdeveloped - there are only around 20 small resorts dotted along its heavily forested coastline, and nearly every one has its own patch of private beach. Active types will find plenty of opportunities for diving, hiking and snorkelling, but for most people, Ko Kut is simply a place to kick back and watch the island tides roll by (kokood.com).</p>	<p><b>TA 33</b></p>
<p><b>Thailand for first-timers</b>          by Lonely Planet • Jan 14 2011          Thailand is lucky. It has the looks, the temperament and the attractions to capture the world's imagination for an exotic escape. It is mysterious and confounding but approachable and inviting. Hospitality is a genuine art, crafted by a culture that takes pride in putting people at ease. The best months to visit are November–February, but if you want to beat the crowds, go April–October. As a holiday destination, it's renowned for its beaches, its shopping and its sizzly, spicy food. We've selected the top 5 for each of these to help start forming your plans, as well as some practical information to make your first time in Thailand only the first of many.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ko Phi-Phi Don: Behold the prettiest tropical island you've ever seen.</li> <li>• Ko Pha-Ngan: Master the art of hammock-hanging.</li> <li>• Ko Samui: Devote yourself to great beaches, sleepy fishing villages and seaside yoga.</li> <li>• Chiang Mai: This handicraft centre has both homespun and chic buys.</li> <li>• Surin: Craft villages practise silk weaving and silversmithing.</li> <li>• Ko Kret: See pottery in situ on this river island near Bangkok.</li> <li>• Nong Khai: The riverside market sells souvenirs and grilled fish; people-watching is free.</li> <li>• Best places to eat - and cook</li> <li>• Bangkok: A culinary superstar with noodles, haute cuisine and immigrant fare.</li> <li>• Chiang Mai: Learn how to chop and wok through Thai cooking.</li> <li>• Hua Hin: Combine two great Thai specialities – seafood and night markets – into one.</li> <li>• Phuket: Sample southern fare, seafood and fusion.</li> <li>• Nakhon Ratchasima: Sôm•đam (papaya salad), gài yâhng (grilled chicken) and kôw nêe•o (sticky rice) fuel Thailand's muscles.</li> </ul>	<p><b>TA 34</b></p>
<p><b>Before you go</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One month before: Start shopping for airline fares, planning an itinerary, booking accommodation and arranging domestic train and plane tickets.</li> <li>• One week before: Book your Thai cooking course and dive trip. Start watching the web for Thailand news.</li> <li>• One day before: Confirm your flight, find a hearty book for the plane ride and bid adieu to hohum home life.</li> </ul>	<p><b>TA 35</b></p>
<p><b>Accommodation - what your money will get you</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1700Baht or less per day: Mid-range hotels or guesthouses (Thailand's most common option; some are simple rooms in a family's home), meals at local restaurants or markets, and daily transport hire.</li> <li>• 3400B to 6800B: Boutique hotels, international restaurants and organised tours.</li> </ul>	<p><b>TA 36</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 6800B: Top-end hotels, private tour guides and extensive shopping sprees.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Explore more!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discover Bangkok's Chatuchak Market</li> <li>• Find the last archipelago in Thailand</li> <li>• What to expect at the Songkran Water Festival</li> <li>• Eat up at Phuket's Vegetarian Festival</li> <li>• Discover Thailand's unexplored north</li> <li>• 10 ways to eat out, Thai-style</li> <li>• Thailand's Andaman Coast</li> </ul>	<p><b>TA 37</b></p>
<p><b>The best clubs and nightlife in Thailand</b></p> <p>Despite what your dodgy uncle might have told you, having a good time in Thailand does not necessarily have to involve ping-pong balls or the word 'go-go'. The drinking and partying scene in Thailand is diverse, and caters to pretty much any audience. You can watch the sun set over Bangkok at one of the glamorous rooftop bars that have captured the imagination of western travellers since the Hangover II; listen to reggae at bohemian beach bungalows, or get wild with some help from cheap Thai whisky at a sloppy full moon party in Ko Phang Ngan. And just about everything in between.</p> <p>Read more: <a href="http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thailand/things-to-do/the-best-clubs-and-nightlife-in-thailand#ixzz3VV6HGbnQ">http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thailand/things-to-do/the-best-clubs-and-nightlife-in-thailand#ixzz3VV6HGbnQ</a></p>	<p><b>TA 38</b></p>
<p><b>Money and Coast in Thailand</b></p> <p>The basic unit of Thai currency is the baht. There are 100 satang in one baht; coins include 25-satang and 50-satang pieces and baht in 1B, 2B, 5B and 10B coins. Older coins have Thai numerals only, while newer coins have Thai and Arabic numerals. The 2B coin is similar in size to the 1B coin but it is gold in colour. The two satang coins are typically only issued at supermarkets where prices aren't rounded up to the nearest baht.</p> <p>Paper currency is issued in the following denominations: 20B (green), 50B (blue), 100B (red), 500B (purple) and 1000B (beige).</p>	<p><b>TA 39</b></p>
<p><b>Tipping</b></p> <p>Tipping is not standard but it is appreciated. If there is a small bit of change from a restaurant bill or metered taxi fare, it is common to offer it as a tip.</p>	<p><b>TA 40</b></p>

<b>Appendix 3</b>	
<b>Stickmanbangkok.com: Travel in Thailand (STB)</b>	
<b>Content: Introduction (INT)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
One of the world's most popular and delicious cuisines. Beautiful beaches and islands. Friendly, charming people. Warm weather all year round. Reasonable prices for most everything. Colourful, enchanting temples. An exotic culture preserved through the ages by a country that has never been colonised. Where is this? Thailand, of course!	<b>INT 1</b>
Located in the heart of Asia, Thailand has been captivating foreign visitors for decades. Visitors return year after year and as the word spreads, first-time visitors come flooding in. The number of foreign visitors to Thailand continues to increase and year after year, records are broken as international visitors flock to this fascinating country.	<b>INT 2</b>
Arguably the most exotic destination in South East Asia, Thailand offers travellers and holidaymakers a huge range of vacation possibilities. It doesn't matter whether you're a budget traveller wanting to explore a foreign land on a tight budget, or a well-heeled traveller who wants to be pampered and experience the very best, Thailand has something for you.	<b>INT 3</b>
But despite such huge numbers of international visitors, Thailand has not been unduly damaged by the ravages of mass tourism. It is still quite possible to find a pristine stretch of beautiful white sand beach that you can have all to yourself. Lazing away the days on a hammock under a palm tree on a mile long beach, without anyone else in sight, swaying in the breeze under a cloudless sky as the waves gently break against the soft white sand....is an experience that can still be had. Welcome to Thailand!	<b>INT 4</b>
There is a huge amount of information about travelling and holidaying in Thailand online. In my usual, no nonsense, BS free style, I have tried to create a worthwhile site that cuts through the guidebook nonsense and tell you what it is really like! As always with my writings about Thailand, I try and get beyond political correctness and give you the sort of information that can help you enjoy your holiday more, as well as avoid becoming a victim!	<b>INT 5</b>
The coverage of a limited number of destinations on this site reflects my experiences in only the places that I have been to and / or spend adequate time in to develop a feel for the place. I have visited most of the 76 provinces in Thailand, over-nighted in about 40 of them, but there are plenty of places that I have never been to that are therefore not covered and other places that I have visited but have not mentioned as I consider that I wasn't there long enough to develop a real feel for the place.	<b>INT 6</b>
While I hope to provide some useful information, if you are planning on staying for anything more than a short holiday in Thailand, you should consider picking up a guidebook, such as the excellent Lonely Planet Guide To Thailand. Like all publications, it's not without its faults, but in my humble opinion it's still the best Thailand guide book.	<b>INT 7</b>
A lot of other information about travelling in Thailand can also be found in my extensive Working & Living in Bangkok section. That article was written for those looking at relocating to and becoming an expat in Bangkok, and also includes sections on food, transport in Bangkok, Thai people, problems and the police that are just as relevant to tourists. There is plenty of overlap so it may be worth checking out.	<b>INT 8</b>
This lengthy article can be separated into two sections. The first part gives general information about travelling in Thailand with sections on transport, getting around, scams etc. while the second goes into detail about some of the specific places to visit.	<b>INT 9</b>

Content: Scams & Problems (SP)	Paragraph No.
<p><b>General problems</b> Thailand receives a large number of foreign tourists every year, in excess of 15 million, and the vast majority enjoy themselves and return home without any problem. There are however a small number who have problems. Being aware of some of the common scams and potential problems can help you avoid becoming a victim.</p>	SP 1
<p>Please do not forget that Thailand is, compared to most Western countries, far from wealthy. Many Thais earn less than 10,000 baht per month. When Thais see foreigners throwing around more in a day than they earn in a month it can create resentment and jealousy, and that may manifest itself into crime.</p>	SP 2
<p><b>Personal Safety</b> In terms of personal safety, most Westerners feel that Thailand is very safe. I would question this notion. The areas where most Westerners go, being central Bangkok and the most popular beaches and destinations as well as Chiang Mai in the north, are very safe. The odds of someone hitting you over the head, grabbing your money and running are fairly slim. That is not the usual type of crime perpetrated against tourists. What is much more common is tourists being tricked to give up their hard-earned.</p>	SP 3
<p>The one area in Thailand where there has been quite an increase in violent crime is in Pattaya. More and more people are being mugged or attacked and their valuables taken. Again, most people who go to Pattaya have no problems at all, but you do need to exercise caution. Most problems of this nature happen at night, usually very late, often after midnight, so be aware of your surroundings if you find yourself out late.</p>	SP 4
<p>Despite the warning notice on the right here, the problem of pick pocketing is not great. Sure, it happens, and one has to exercise caution in large crowded markets like the Patpong night market and Chatuchak Market, also known as the Weekend Market. MBK (aka Mahboonkrong) is another shopping centre where pick pocketing is a problem. Stories from the '70s and '80s of people's day bags or jeans being sliced with a razor blade and their wallet or cash removed without them knowing seem to be a thing of the past.</p>	SP 5
<p>As mentioned already, tourists are often tricked to part with their money, a crime where greed of the victim is exploited. Tourists are approached by well dressed Thais in popular tourist areas or by tuktuk or taxi drivers and are taken to a gem store or a jeweler store. They may be offered fake jewellery at inflated prices with the promise that the sale of this jeweler or gem stones in one's own country could make the tourist very rich indeed. Some incredibly silly tourists have gone on to spend a fortune, thinking that they could return to their own country and get rich overnight, only to later find out that the stones they bought were imitation and pretty much worthless.</p>	SP 6
<p>Some tourists have also been told that the day they are there is a special holiday or there is a "government sale" or some such other nonsense. This is all a scam and what is offered is knock off junk jewellery that may not even be worth 10% of what is paid for it. I have heard countless stories over the years of people putting down a couple of thousand dollars for this crap. An article in the Bangkok Post a few years back mentioned that the Tourist Police get about 20 complaints a week from people who have bought this rubbish. Frankly, anyone who falls for this scam is stupid and deserves what they get. But what really bothers me is that while complaints are made to the police about this issue, nothing is done, at least long term. The same shops have been pulling the same scams for years and years and continue to do so. Hmmm, is someone in on it?!</p>	SP 7
<p><b>The Tuktuk / Taxi driver scam</b> A similar type of scams occurs with the tuktuk drivers and to a lesser extent, taxi drivers, in Bangkok. As a foreigner you stand out in the crowd and you will be constantly approached by taxi and tuktuk drivers inviting you on a "tour of Bangkok". They might even offer to take you on a tour for anywhere between 1 and 3 hours, all for a silly fee, like 10 or 20 baht. They are not</p>	SP 8

about to take you around the temples, museums or places of historic interest, but around a bunch of stores where the sales assistants will put pressure on you to buy something. Many of the goods are for sale at high prices and the tuktuk or taxi driver who takes you to the establishment will get a significant commission on everything you buy. These shops can be really sneaky. After battling the heat, you will be led into a shop with cool air-conditioning, often by a very pretty and charming Thai lady, well dressed, and who speaks very good English. In the more sophisticated operations you will be offered a choice of cold drink and a cool, wet towel to wipe away the sweat and dirt. But in no time the snakes will be all over you, pressuring you to buy something in their store. If they sense that you are going to buy something the charm will remain but if they feel you are going to get away without buying anything then expect their demeanour to change completely, for them to be cold, and for you to suddenly be made very unwelcome indeed. Don't worry, your personal safety is never at risk, but you will be shown the door quickly. Frankly, it is all a very unpleasant experience.

Various types of establishments pay commissions to tuktuk and taxi drivers, from large jewellery stores – some of which sell genuine gems and jewellery, and some of which sell fakes, through to tailors' stores, duty free stores, massage parlours and even some restaurants, particular seafood restaurants. The commissions made by the tuktuk and taxi drivers can be significant, often more than they would earn in an entire day if they were just driving passengers around, hence there is real motivation for them to get involved. A driver taking a customer to a massage parlour may get 500 baht per customer who indulges. At tailors' stores and seafood restaurants the commission is usually 10 – 15%. At stores operating the gem scams the commission can be really, really high, meaning many thousands of baht. In a country where people live on 6,000 – 7,000 baht a month, this is a very significant amount of money. Frankly, these establishments see that the drivers are richly rewarded for their efforts. A lot of the businesses are so keen to get potential customers in the door that even if that person doesn't make a purchase here, the driver will get a commission in the form of petrol vouchers.

If taken to a tailor's shop, a charming tailor of Indian ethnicity who speaks many languages well will put on a very convincing sales pitch. I have seen some tough characters give in to the wishes of these tailors and end up buying some suit or other tailored clothes that they really didn't want nor need. The quality of such tailored goods is variable – remember Bangkok tailors seldom make the clothes on the premises but rather send out the material to one big sweatshop where hundreds of tailors make all of the clothes to order. This means that it doesn't really matter which tailor shop you go to, the quality could well be the same as a place on the other side of town. BUT, if you get taken to such a store by a tuktuk or taxi, that person's commission will be built in to the price so you will be paying more than you would have had you gone there alone.

While I do not believe it to be a big problem, there were a lot of reports in late 1999 and 2000 regarding non licensed taxis. Basically, these just consist of people running their private car as a taxi. They will try to pick you up in heavily touristed areas and take you to the sites. While the regular taxi drivers don't really have any tests or anything that they need to pass before they can do the job, these other fellows are even worse. They will take you to all of the places offering high commissions as above. If you get really nasty, they might even try and kill you as happened to a number of unlucky punters... If it is not a regular taxi, steer clear!

**Credit card & ATM Fraud**

Thailand is one of the worst places in the world for credit card fraud. You give you credit card to a vendor and they somehow either take a copy of it or do something or other and then they can go on to run up huge bills. Obviously when you get your bill back home you will be able to successfully challenge it and will not be liable for it but it is a hassle and inconvenience and is not going to endear you with your bank. To try and avoid being the victim of such a scam, do not let your credit card out of your sight when using it to make a purchase. This is one of those scams that seemed to be very common in the past but we seem to hear less and less about it these days.

Personally I am less concerned about credit card fraud than I am ATM fraud. Just as in the West the ATM machines at some banks are tampered with so that when you insert your card into the machine it is retained, or the number is read, and can be used by the criminal later. One of the big problems of ATM fraud in Thailand, at least if you are a Thai bank account holder, is that

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the banks do not just automatically write the fraud off and re-imburse you for how much was lost. Oh no, not at all, you are now in a fight to get that money back. There have been numerous stories in the press over the years about unlucky people who have lost serious amounts to ATM fraud and had a fight to get it back, so to speak.

**Driving standards and public transport**

The standard of driving in Thailand is very poor indeed. Taxi and tuktuk drivers generally drive too fast, follow too close, and perform dangerous maneuvers. Thank God that traffic in Bangkok generally doesn't move that fast meaning that if you should be involved in a crash then with a bit of luck the vehicle was not going too fast.

You should also exercise great care and caution when getting in and out of taxis, or any vehicles for that matter. Motorcycles squeeze in and out of traffic and many a tourist has opened the taxi door to get out only to open it right in front of a motorcycle who hit it, causing damage not only to the taxi and the motorbike but possibly themselves too. In a case like this it is you who opened the door who is at fault and you will be asked for compensation right away. Failure to pay it and you'll be off to the police station where a settlement will be agreed AND paid before you are free to go!

There is a law in place that says that if you cause a traffic accident and someone else is injured or hurt, you must pay for that person's immediate medical treatment. In reality this means handing over a small amount of money, most likely between 200 and 1,000 baht. Even if you are not at fault, you may be asked to hand over money. If you have any problems, it would be best to contact the local tourist police – assuming that they are represented where ever you happen to be.

Intercity travel in Thailand can be nerve wracking because once out on the open road many Thais fancy themselves as the next Michael Schumacher and like to see just how fast their vehicle can go. The intercity buses in Thailand can be a bit hair raising and at times you start to question your immediate surroundings and wonder whether you are on a bus or a roller coaster. You read many reports in the newspapers of intercity bus crashes, and the carnage caused. The only way to avoid being a victim is to take the train or private transportation. While I do not travel intercity by bus any more, I can confidently say that the problem is not as bad as it used to be.

Another problem with the intercity buses concerns luggage stowed on the buses. Large pieces of luggage are stored in the luggage hold. Many people have found that upon reaching their destination, that their valuables have mysteriously disappeared. What happens is that a Thai may travel the journey down in the luggage hold and go through all of the luggage, looking for valuables like cash, cameras or other items that can be quickly turned into cash. Basically, when you travel on the intercity buses, be it the Government run bus service, or the private companies, take all of your valuables on board the bus with you.

A lot of Westerners suffer motorcycle accidents, particularly on the islands in the south of the country where it is popular to hire a bike as one's primary means of getting around. As already stated, driving standards may not be what you are used to at home and the surface of the road might not always be as good as it could be. There are often other problems like the camber of the road going the wrong way and confusing signs, all of which contribute to causing problems. I cringe when I see Westerners zooming around on a motorbike wearing but a pair of shorts and no shirt. Come off that bike and you're going to have all sorts of problems. I cannot re-iterate enough that many, many Westerners have bike accidents in Thailand, and a number die. Yes, people do die while riding bikes in Thailand so please, please, take care out there on the roads. No-one wants to go home in a box. By the way, the law states that you must wear a helmet and there is a 400 baht fine if you're caught without one – and Thai cops love to catch Westerners out!

Motorbike theft is a problem in Thailand, although strangely, the theft of cars seems not to be such a big problem. One of the big problems is that there are some unscrupulous characters who directly target bikes hired by tourists. In a worst case scenario, when you hire a bike you may be followed by someone who is effectively working for the person who hired you that bike. When you have parked the bike and have disappeared down to the beach, gone to some tourist attraction

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or wherever, the person who followed you simply rides your bike away using a spare key they had! After you have reported it stolen, you read the fine print of the motorbike agreement and see that you have no insurance and that you are in fact liable for a replacement bike. Bit of a nasty one this. What a lot of the folks hiring motorbikes do is to ask to hang on to your passport as security. My strong recommendation is that you do not give it to them and if hiring a bike, it may be best to not let them know where you stay as this way, if you do have an unfortunate mishap, you can quietly disappear and they will be none the wiser... Yes, I know this is wrong, but sometimes you have to fight fire with fire. Also, if they know where you are staying they might come and take the bike at night when you are sleeping. Most of the folks hiring bikes are fine so do not worry too much!

It should be noted that the condition of some of the bikes can be iffy so try and get someone that knows a little about bikes to check it out before you take it, especially if you plan on taking a bike for a few days. A lot of the bikes hired out to tourists are not what I would term road-worthy – little in the way of decent tread on the tyres, the breaks are not operating as effectively as they should be, the engine is running rough etc.

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**Drugs**

Anyone travelling to Asia who has done their homework knows that drugs and Asia just do not mix. That said, there are still plenty of tourists who fail to heed the advice of every guidebook and use drugs while on holiday.

**SP 22**

If you do drugs in Asia, you deserve what you get – it's as simple as that. I have never done, nor will I ever do drugs, but what you do is up to you. However, don't forget that the penalties in Thailand are VERY harsh if you are caught with drugs on your person. How harsh I hear you ask? Well there was the story of a Brit who was caught in Lumpini Park with drugs in person a few years back. The case went to court and if I remember rightly he got 50 years jail. 50 years!

**SP 23**

I gather that drugs can be obtained easily in Thailand but while I know my way around Bangkok, I wouldn't have a clue where to get drugs from – and nor do I have any reason to know.

**SP 24**

There are some tuktuk drivers and other Thais, especially in the backpacker areas, like Khao San Road, on Ko Phangan and up in the far north, who will offer to provide drugs for you. But what may follow is the police knocking on your guesthouse door to bust your ass because they have been tipped off by Mr. Tuktuk Driver! Now Mr. Tuktuk didn't do this because he doesn't like farangs – in fact he loves them – but because he'll be getting a very nice cut of the money that you have to expend to pay off the cops to keep your virgin ass out of prison!

**SP 25**

Yes, that's right, in the case of a small amount of drugs you may be given the option of paying your way out of it. As much as I am against drugs and corruption, my advice would be to pay whatever is asked. No-one wants to end up in a Thai prison.

**SP 26**

**Thais working in the tourism industry**

Some of the Thais in the tourist industry have become jaded dealing with foreigners day in day out and all of the cultural nuances that go with it. While most Thais that you meet will be friendly, there are some rogues out there who think nothing of scamming the foreigner. With this in mind, you need to be aware of anyone that appears too friendly without a reason which is hard to do as Thais are extremely nice people. If the chambermaid in the hotel is friendly then that is to be expected but if a stranger approaches you in a public place and seems too nice without a valid reason, you have reason to be cautious.

**SP 27**

One scam that has been around forever sees well dressed Thais with decent English lingering near the entrance to popular tourist attractions telling visitors that a particular tourist attraction is closed that day. The Grand Palace, Wat Po, the Erawan Shrine and Jim Thompson's House are popular venues for these scammers but the scam can occur at any popular tourist attraction in Bangkok. Basically, as you approach the destination, a well dressed Thai approaches you and tell you that due to <\_insert some="" bullshit="" reason,="" often="" a="" government="" holiday\_=""> the said attraction is closed. They (usually a he) will try and steer you elsewhere, often to a duty free shop, jewellery store, tailor's or in the direction of some venue for which he will get a commission, all in much the same way that some tuktuk drivers and taxi drivers do.

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<p>In extreme cases, it may even be suggested that you go to a gambling game and gamble money on his behalf with him citing another crazy story that for some crazy reason, he cannot participate. This is all a big ruse to part you with your money. It pays to be suspicious of people approaching you out of the blue. They can be polite and very smooth and well rehearsed.</p>	<p><b>SP 29</b></p>
<p>While Thai people can appear to be very friendly and gracious when you first meet them, be aware that the Thai smile does not always mean the same as the farang smile. Thais don't just smile when they are happy – the smile can show one of many emotions but for the uninitiated it can be hard to read.</p>	<p><b>SP 30</b></p>
<p>Thai people are some of the warmest and friendliest people in the world and your experience will no doubt be invigorated by the Thais' constant smiles and happy nature. It is sad to say that the Thais that are in constant contact with foreigners can become a little jaded and some of the people that you meet in your travels may only be interested in being pleasant to you if they believe there will be something in it for them. You may meet some money hungry folks. If you get the feeling that someone is only interested in your money, then give them a wide berth. Don't be surprised if Thais you meet ask you for a loan, something which may come as a surprise from someone you barely know. They may give you some sort of hard luck story about how they have no money, or how their tuition fees are due, or their rent is due, or some other fabrication. Sadly, many Thais do not look at a loan as something that needs to be repaid, but rather as a gift. Only give money away that you can afford to lose and do not expect to see again. Simply think to yourself if someone asked you for money under those circumstances in the West whether you would assist them or not. Remember, this is often a ruse and the money may well be used for liquor or narcotics!</p>	<p><b>SP 31</b></p>
<p>Be careful when making complaints about service failures in Thailand. An aggressive tone or attitude which may be considered justified or normal to many Westerners when they have been let down is not effective with Thais. It not only rubs them up the wrong way, it upsets them and even if you have a genuine complaint, the Thais may not be responsive if they feel that they are being threatened. Keep calm and simply outline what has happened, and what you would like to happen next, be it a refund, a replacement, or whatever. As crazy as it sounds, Western tourists who complain loudly may find that the person they are complaining to thinks that the complainant is in the wrong – and may refuse to help! In a worst case scenario, someone arguing or complaining too loudly might be set upon by others who perceive their behaviour as threatening.</p>	<p><b>SP 32</b></p>
<p>Many Thais really don't understand Westerners and vice versa. With different expectations, you may experience what you consider service failures often. A basic example is when you order food at a restaurant in Thailand it doesn't necessarily all come at the same time. So a wife's food might come 5, 10 or even 20 minutes before her husband's! For Thais this may not be an issue because they often order rice for everyone and share the "main" dishes. But for Westerners who tend not to eat this way – or in the case of Western food where people usually only eat from their own plate – it can become an issue. Complaining about it may confuse the service provider who simply doesn't understand that there is a difference in concept!</p>	<p><b>SP 33</b></p>
<p><b>Double pricing / Money scams</b> It is a sad fact that in Thailand dual pricing is very much present and tourists are the targets of the inflated prices. At many places from national parks to tourist attractions and even to some restaurants there are two sets of prices, one set for the Thais, and another for foreigners. Sometimes the price difference is small, but at other times it is huge and can make the foreigner feel like they are being taken advantage of and ripped off.</p>	<p><b>SP 34</b></p>
<p>To give you a few tangible examples, at many national parks it costs Thais 20 baht to enter and foreigners 400 baht. Yes, you read that right, foreigners pay 20 times the price that Thais do! At the Ancient City to the east of Bangkok, foreigners pay 300 baht while and Thai national pay 100 baht. And at a small but popular Thai restaurant opposite Wat Arun on the Chao Praya River, most dishes cost Thais 25 baht whereas foreigners are charged 50 baht.</p>	<p><b>SP 35</b></p>

There seems to be no logic nor reason behind the price differences. It cannot be argued that the foreigners make more money than Thais and so should be charged more because in many cases it is wealthy Thais who are visiting these places – and these people are very wealthy. It also cannot be reasonably argued that Thais pay taxis in Thailand and foreigners don't so the Thais have already contributed to the cost of the venue – many of the places charging these fees are privately owned businesses. Really, there is no other reason other than to gouge the tourist. Sadly, what many Thais fail to realise is that many foreigners choose to visit Thailand for the very reason that most things in the country are cheap and affordable. The Thais fail to realise that if they start playing games with prices like this then they will put foreigners off visiting – and then they will make nothing at all!

**SP 36**

My feeling is that there is no problem with a venue offering discounted pricing to locals, so everyone pays the "standard" price and the locals get a discounted price. Unfortunately this is not what happens in Thailand these days. The locals pay the "standard" price, which could be deemed as a fair and reasonable price to gain entry into a venue or attraction whereas foreigners are gouged. As an example, at the Lumpini Thai boxing stadium the price for Thais is 230 baht whereas foreigners are charged between 1,000 and 2,000 baht, depending where they sit. 2,000 baht is a lot of money so we're not talking peanuts. The crazy thing is that international kickboxing events featuring current champions and big names can be seen in much superior and far more comfortable venues around the world for about half this amount. It is quite simply price gouging with the asking price way, way more than you would expect to pay in the West.

**SP 37**

Another venue which thrives on gouging tourists is Ocean World within the Siam Paragon shopping centre in the heart of Bangkok. The family discount price is 1,500 baht but this is for Thai families only whereas you will pay 3,000 baht if you are not Thai. Again, this is an INFLATED PRICE. I strongly encourage you to refrain from visiting venues which encourage such pricing.

**SP 38**

I guess what riles me most of all is that at virtually every place where this scam is practiced it is done in an underhand way, with the price for foreigners in English, using Roman characters, whereas the prices for Thai people are in the Thai script, a script which very, very few foreigners can read.

**SP 39**

Thailand based expats are often able to get around this problem either by simply speaking Thai to the vendor or ticket seller, or by producing some local ID, be it a Thai drivers license, a work permit, or some other local official document.

**SP 40**

Loosely related, but not a scam as such, you may find when shopping in markets that you will be offered a price much higher than a Thai would but this is just standard market practice and fair play. How well can you bargain?!

**SP 41**

The picture here shows a price board from the Sukhothai Historical Park in Northern Thailand – all of the text in red was added by me. I have taken the liberty of translating the Thai numbers into characters readers can understand. I just wish they wouldn't be so sneaky about it. Why don't they just come out and say that it is Thailand and they are going to offer reduced rates to their nationals? That they go and hide this irritates many Westerners. It is annoying too that at some places the price difference can be up to ten times more for foreigners!

**SP 42**

Another of my pet hates is the "I no have change" look that some vendors come up with. A favourite scam of anyone providing transportation to you, this is usually a ploy to extract "a tip" from you. If the driver / rider refuses to give you change, tell them that you will not pay which usually prompts them to suddenly discover that long last cache of change in their pocket or somewhere in their vehicle! Alternatively, if they do not have change, they will quickly find someone that does, usually the nearest street vendor or 7-Eleven store. Please do remember however that 1,000 baht is a lot of money in Thailand and that trying to pay for a 60 baht taxi fare with a 1,000 baht note is simply asking for trouble.

**SP 43**

<p><b>Noise</b> Thailand is noisy! This is not a problem that you will necessarily read about elsewhere online, but to me it is one of the fundamental issues I suffer when I try to relax in Thailand. It doesn't matter if I am at the beach, or in my condo, there is always some noise interrupting my thought process, and indeed my very ability to think, or to relax.</p>	<p><b>SP 44</b></p>
<p>Noise does not seem to bother the Thais like it bothers Westerners. For Thais, smell is the sense that bothers them and if something smells really foul this can really upset Thais and they lose their balance, so to speak. Unfortunately they do not seem to understand that for Westerners, smell is less of a problem than noise.</p>	<p><b>SP 45</b></p>
<p>The problem of noise manifests itself in many ways. Imagine sitting at the beach in Thailand, kicking back on a beach chair, all relaxed, your eyes closed and you can feel yourself drifting off to sleep when suddenly a nearby (or perhaps even not so nearby) establishment decides to turn the sound on their music system up to full ball. The tranquility is lost. Or the noise pollution of hoons on jet skis going up and down the beach at break neck speed with the awful sound the jet ski makes. Or what about my pet peeve. There you are, just about out for the count, totally relaxed, when you feel, but don't necessarily even see, the presence of a beach vendor standing over you. "Mister, you want buy &lt;_insert name="" of="" some="" stupid="" trinket_=""&gt;".</p>	<p><b>SP 46</b></p>
<p>Thailand is a great place for a holiday, but if you are after a really relaxing time at the beach, I strongly suggest you spend a bit more money and check into a quality resort where you do not have to put up with the awful noise pollution that mars the experience at so many Thai beaches.</p>	<p><b>SP 47</b></p>
<p><b>Dangerous animals and other creatures</b> Thailand is located in tropical Asia and it should come as no surprise that in this part of the world, there are all sorts of tropical animals, bugs, insects, snakes etc. You're unlikely to see any in the big cities but if you go trekking in the countryside, it is more than possible that a scorpion, snake or poisonous centipede may cross your path. It's all part of the experience!</p>	<p><b>SP 48</b></p>
<p>Many tourist sites in Thailand do not have the same safety controls in place that you might expect at similar such sites in the West. I was at a snake show once and the crowd was encouraged to get really close to the snakes and their handlers to allow photos to be taken. One snake got away from the handler and made a beeline for one of the tourists there. A handler dived and grabbed it just before it got to the shocked tourist. The MC just chuckled when someone asked if the snake was poisonous. "Oh, it is deadly", he replied! Mai pen rai!</p>	<p><b>SP 49</b></p>
<p>Then there was the elephant that ran through a fence in Pattaya and killed one member of a family there some years back. And ofcourse there was the time when I was riding an elephant in Phuket amongst a trail of elephants and the British guy on the elephant in front of me fell over and rolled about ten metres (!) down a bank injuring himself quite badly.</p>	<p><b>SP 50</b></p>
<p>And then....you get the picture. Thailand is not so much dangerous but the Western safety features and controls that you may be used to are not prevalent here so sometimes you have to be aware and take responsibility for yourself. Further, if you do suffer any damage through negligence of the locals, do not expect to be compensated for it. If anything, you might be threatened with further harm if you start making claims for compensation.</p>	<p><b>SP 51</b></p>
<p>In Bangkok I really think a trip to Lumpini Park is worthwhile if for nothing else than to see and photograph the huge, ugly monitor lizards that call Lumpini Park home. These ugly reptiles are called "hee-a" in Thai which is actually used as a swear word in the local lingo as well as being the word for the ugly beasts. I personally find these beasts fascinating and have spent many a Sunday afternoon in Lumpini photographing them. The big ones are actually quite scary! Don't get too close to them because they will bite and their mouths are supposed to be incredibly dirty and the treatment for a bite is a very long course of antibiotics. Thais tell me that some people bit by these vermin have ended up losing a limb. You've been warned!</p>	<p><b>SP 52</b></p>

<p><b>The tourist Police</b> Realizing the importance of tourism to the country, the Thai Government had the excellent idea to set up a special division of the police force whose job it is to help tourists in distress. Known as the Tourist Police, officers from this department can be seen in most of the major tourist areas around Thailand. They have the same brown coloured uniform as the regular police with a badge that says Tourist Police on their shoulder. The officers are supposed to be friendly and helpful and as a bonus, are supposed to speak English too. If you have any problems at all, they should be the first people that you consult. In some centres the tourist police may have their own little police station but often they will be stationed along with the regular police force.</p>	<p><b>SP 53</b></p>
<p>The reality is that readers have had mixed reactions to the tourist police. They often speak little or no English and they are not always that helpful in the instances of scams or rip-offs – which is that many foreigners thought they were there to help with in the first place!</p>	<p><b>SP 54</b></p>
<p>In some centres, including Phuket, Pattaya and Chiang Mai, there are volunteer tourist police. There are two types of volunteer police, Westerners and Thais. They will wear a uniform that clearly says tourist police volunteer on it. They do not have the same powers or authority of police but instead their role is to help anyone who may be in distress.</p>	<p><b>SP 55</b></p>
<p><b>Women of night</b> A final note needs to be said about the infamous women of the night in Thailand. If you think you may indulge with the ladies of the night, then you should remember one piece of advice, what ever you do, NEVER fall in love with a bargirl because if you do, you'll be in for a hell of a ride!</p>	<p><b>SP 56</b></p>
<p>These bargirls, or let's call them what they are, prostitutes, will try and treat men extremely well in the interest of separating the man from his hard earned money. They will say and do everything they can to do that but at the end of the day they are after your money.</p>	<p><b>SP 57</b></p>
<p>Do be careful of drinks you are offered from some women who work as freelancers, that is prostitutes who work in discos and other bars where they can just come and go as they please. It is not unusual for them to drug the drinks of guys they meet so they can go back to the guy's room and relieve him of his valuables.</p>	<p><b>SP 58</b></p>
<p>Please also be aware that Thai women do not necessarily believe in the concept of "free sex", something they see as an entirely Western concept. This means that if you meet a Thai woman in a bar, or a place where women of questionable repute hang out and you later end up in your hotel room, or elsewhere with her, that she might actually expect payment from her. This is a bit of a problem if you do not know the environment well because asking a woman if she is a hooker or not is getting close to be the ultimate turn off!</p>	<p><b>SP 59</b></p>
<p><b>Terrorism</b> Over the past few years there have been very major problems with separatist insurgents in the deep south of Thailand. For the time being the problems have been isolated to the four southernmost provinces, where there have been all sorts of problems including countless gruesome murders with many of the victims being beheaded. For some time now there have been threats that the terrorists will take their fight to Bangkok and the likely targets are the very places where you find Western tourists including shopping centres and nightlife entertainment areas.</p>	<p><b>SP 60</b></p>
<p>No-one knows what the future holds in this respect but most Westerners who have resided in Thailand for a long time think that it is just a matter of time before the terrorists blow something up in the Thai capital. The targets I hear most mentioned are Emporium and Paragon shopping centres as well as Khao San Road, Nana Plaza and Patpong. I'll admit that all of those places make me nervous at night. I personally think a big bomb going off in Khao San Road would be far and away the worst in terms of damage to the tourism industry.</p>	<p><b>SP 61</b></p>
<p>What makes me mad about virtually all of these problems and scams that tourists face in Thailand is that they have been going on for years and years and neither the police nor the tourism authorities appear to be doing anything to stop them. That means that every day there are new</p>	<p><b>SP 62</b></p>

<p>victims of the scams, and the conmen behind them continue to get rich. Of course one can hypothesize why the scams continue...just who is in on them?!</p>	
<p><b>The Thailand Jet Ski scam</b>  In recent years there has been a massive increase in what is known as the jet ski scam. Jet skis are available for hire at 1,500 – 2,000 baht an hour at many popular beaches. The scam is simple. When you return the jet ski to the beach, the person or group who hired it to you will examine the jet ski and discover some damage that they will claim wasn't there when they hired it to you. They will then make claims for a large amount of compensation, usually 10,000 – 20,000 baht for damages and lost income for the time that the jet ski is supposedly being repaired. If you refuse to pay, they will make threats about how you will ultimately not only have to pay for the supposed damages, you will also end up in prison. The vast majority of people buckle, often negotiating the amount to be paid down. Still, few people caught up in this scam manage to escape without being extorted out of several thousand baht.</p>	<p><b>SP 63</b></p>
<p>What is scary about this scam is that the police – and the tourist police – don't seem to take any interest even though many of us believe that they are fully aware of what is going on. This scam is widespread in Thailand and particularly prevalent on Patpong Beach in Phuket and in Pattaya. It has been highlighted in newspapers, in YouTube videos and many tourists have returned to their country to warn others never to hire a jet ski in Thailand, or even never to visit Thailand!</p>	<p><b>SP 64</b></p>
<p>The problem with the authorities is that despite past promises that they would do something about the problem, including compulsory insurance for all jet ski hire operators, now they will not even acknowledge that the scams happen – so there's almost zero chance of assistance. My advice on this matter is simple, <b>DO NOT HIRE A JET SKI IN THAILAND!</b></p>	<p><b>SP 65</b></p>

<p><b>Content: Getting Around Thailand (GT)</b></p>	<p><b>Paragraph No.</b></p>
<p><b>Travel by bus</b>  One of the great things about getting around Thailand is that no matter what form of transport you choose, it's never expensive. Imagine traveling 600+ kilometres in an air-conditioned bus all the way to the border with Laos for 500 baht = about \$US 17. Or taking a taxi 150 km from Bangkok to Pattaya for just 1,200 baht = about \$US 40. Amazing value for money!</p>	<p><b>GT 1</b></p>
<p>The most popular form of intercity transport in Thailand is bus and there are many different types of buses in Thailand so you need to think carefully as to which service to use. The Government run BKS buses is arguably the best run bus service.</p>	<p><b>GT 2</b></p>
<p>There are several different classes of bus from the ordinary non air-conditioned buses through to the big VIP buses. The difference in cost between the best and worst class of bus is significant in terms of the cost, sometimes as much as ten times difference.</p>	<p><b>GT 3</b></p>
<p>The ordinary buses are orange and unless it is raining, or in the middle of the cool season, the bus will drive along with all of the windows open – so you get a nice breeze running through. These buses stop pretty much anywhere and pick up anyone who waves down the bus. Further, if one wants to get out of the bus mid route, the driver will stop the bus at your request – great service! However, these buses, easily recognisable because they are bright orange, can be very slow and unless you are down to your last few pennies, I wouldn't recommend travelling on them as they are really slow! Further, the seats are much smaller and there are no seat allocations so you may have to stand – but getting to the bus station early usually prevents that from happening.</p>	<p><b>GT 4</b></p>
<p>There are a few local routes in the provinces where air-conditioned buses routes just don't exist so if you get off the beaten track you might find yourself on such a bus! But it is not that bad and there are a few benefits. People using this type of bus are often poorer folks who have never met a Westerner and they will be delighted to try and chat with you so you have a great opportunity</p>	<p><b>GT 5</b></p>

to meet and have conversations with the nicest Thai people on these buses. When these buses stop, vendors often jump on board selling all sorts of food, drinks, clothes etc. It's absolutely marvellous to be able to buy some grilled chicken, sticky rice and even from time to time, if you are really lucky, some som tum, all without having to get off the bus. These vendors sell food in the same manner on the trains too. Ahhh, the pleasures of overland travel in Thailand – just great!

**GT 6**

The next class of bus up from the orange non air-conditioned bus is the standard air-conditioned bus. All of the air-conditioned classes of bus are blue in colour. The standard air-conditioned buses are a little nicer than the orange buses, obviously air-con but they tend to be a little older and can be run down. While they may pick up people on route, it is not common to have people standing on air-con buses i.e. they sell tickets with allocated seat numbers and once the bus is full, that's it, no more tickets. But, if in mid route, someone waves down the bus, they may be allowed on board but they will have to stand until another passenger gets off and a seat becomes available. Although prices vary, the fares on the standard air-con bus are around 75% more than a non air-conditioned bus. As with the other classes of air-conditioned bus, there will usually be a television on board. The entertainment is usually in Thai or if on the off chance it is a Western movie, it will probably be dubbed in Thai. Even though the bus may be running to a far flung destination several hours away, and running at night, the bus company are convinced that you do not want to sleep and the volume is at maximum – just like in Thai cinemas! Some buses have elaborate sound systems with many speakers so escaping the sound may not be an option!

**GT 7**

Better than the standard air-con buses is the first class air-con bus. These are usually be newer and the seats are nicer, finished with cloth instead of vinyl as is usually found on the standard air-con bus. There will also be less seats on board, meaning more leg room. You will be given a drink and something sweet or savoury to eat soon after the bus has departed – more often than not a soft drink and a Thai style cake. If it's a long journey you will be given another drink later on. And not too long before you reach your destination you will be given one of those chemically smelling wet cloths, similar to what you get on planes not long before landing. There will be a toilet on board but there is a chance it's out of order. First class air-con buses cost around 20 – 25% more than the standard air-con bus and for lengthy journeys, the extra cost is well worth it, especially if you're tall and appreciate the extra legroom.

**GT 8**

The VIP bus is the highest class of bus and can be a very pleasant way to travel. VIP buses seem to vary a little and while some of them are remarkably similar to the first class air-con bus mentioned earlier, others are quite luxurious. The genuine VIP bus will have a limited number of seats and every seat has a truckload of leg room – pro basketball players wouldn't complain. VIP buses can be quite dear comparative to the other bus services, with the fare from Bangkok to Chiang Mai over 800+ baht, as an example, but if you think of that in Western currency, it is peanuts.

**GT 9**

It should be noted that intercity bus crashes are common in Thailand and you often see the chilling remains of what was once a bus on the side of the road. Not only is the standard of driving very poor, but many of the truck and bus drivers take speed to keep themselves awake and allow them to drive for long periods – and hence make more money. Some try to drive like Michael Schumacher after he's spent the afternoon in a beer garden! I will never forget the first time I took an intercity bus in Thailand, a lengthy journey from Bangkok to Nongkhai. The driver was driving like an absolute maniac – overtaking on hills and around corners. I really thought I was going to die so I drained all of my stowed away alcohol really fast which luckily put me to sleep. I woke up not at the gates of hell but at the bus station at Nongkhai which in retrospect, was something of a miracle.

**GT 10**

What I love about land based domestic travel in Thailand is that you are treated well and the service is generally very good. In many Western countries, it seems to me that everything is so stiff – the train leaves at this time and gets to the destination at this time – if you want to stop for a leak, forget it. If the bus passes right past your house and you would like it to stop there, forget it. In Thailand, it's the complete opposite. If all of the tickets for the bus have been sold and everyone is board, the bus will leave – bureaucracy goes out the window as the driver takes charge of the situation – great stuff! And if you want to get off somewhere along the way, you can. It is all very sensible!



But there are times when perhaps the notion of good service is taken a little bit far. I never fail to chuckle when on the Pattaya to Bangkok bus trip, the driver is more than happy to stop the bus by one of the median barriers in the middle of the motorway so that people can get off. Not only is it tricky to stop there and then re-enter the fast flowing traffic, but the passengers who jumped off then have to battle their way over a few lanes of traffic barreling along at high speed before they reach the side of the road. This is Thailand and you have to expect the unexpected but I still laugh when I see this happen.

**GT 11**

At bus stations in Thailand, there are various touts around trying to get you to buy a ticket for your journey. Their English will usually be good enough to ask you where you're going and then direct you or show you to the ticket counter. What is the deal with them? Well, not only is the Government bus company represented but there are also various private competing bus companies competing for the travelers' baht. If you can't read the signs in Thai at bus stations and on the side of the buses, you wouldn't know it for all of the buses are the same colour but on some routes, there are several competing companies. These touts are trying to get you to buy a ticket from their company. Don't worry about commissions or anything as the ticket price is the same whether you were taken to the counter by them or not. The private companies operating out of the major Bangkok and provincial bus stations are usually fine but the Government run buses still have the best reputation – they are a little dearer so you get what you pay for.

**GT 12**

In addition to the Government run buses and the private companies offering similar services, there are the “Khao Sarn Road buses” that go to and from Khao Sarn Road, the backpacker haven of Bangkok. These really are a bit of a lottery, sometimes good and sometimes not so good. When booking one of these buses, the first thing you need to ascertain is whether it is a full sized bus or a minibus. Yep, sometimes they will sell you a “bus ticket” but when the bus arrives, it is in fact a small cramped Japanese minivan. And they will shove you in like sardines and drive you to the far flung corners of the country with your knees up around your ears and that stinky smelly backpacker's hairy armpits no more than three inches from your mouth! Sounds like a nightmare doesn't it? The great thing about these buses however is that if you are staying in the Khao Sarn Road area, you do not need to go hunting for the bus station which can be a little tricky, costly and time consuming. Funnily enough, when going the other way from the provinces to Bangkok, these buses do not always go to Khao Sarn Road and will sometimes drop you off somewhere else! The price of the ticket varies from travel agent to travel agent so you may find that the person sitting next to you with those damned armpits paid a different amount to what you did – but with the smell coming from those armpits, you won't give the price difference much thought at all.

**GT 13**

There are three main bus stations in Bangkok – MoChit which is huge and more like an airport than a bus station, Ekamai which is located half way down Sukhumvit Road, conveniently next to the Ekamai train station, and the Southern Bus Station located west of the Chao Praya River. You need to ascertain where you want to go and then make your way to the right bus station. Generally speaking, buses to the North and Northeast which includes places like Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Ayuthaya, Sukhothai, Korat, Khon Kaen etc leave from MoChit. Buses going east of Bangkok to places like Pattaya, Chonburi and Chantaburi leave from the Ekamai station. Buses going anywhere south and a few places not far from Bangkok such as Kanchanaburi leave from the southern bus terminal. There are a few exceptions though so you need to check!

**GT 14**

One curious thing that was happening in early 2000, gosh that is many years ago now isn't it, was police approaching foreigners at the Ekamai Bus Station in Bangkok. They would ask the foreigner if they could check the foreigner's luggage and do a reasonably thorough check including a pat down of the body and checking every compartment of the person's wallet. They appeared to be checking for drugs. I'm no legal expert but I wonder if this is actually legal or not and also wonder what would happen if you said, no, I do not give you permission to search me. Still, it seems innocuous enough. If it was me, I'd let them search me as I never have anything to hide. Fortunately they seemed to give up on this some time ago.

**GT 15**

<p><b>Travel by boat</b> If you find yourself venturing to any of Thailand’s islands you may find yourself on a boat. Good luck. Boat travel in Thailand is cheap, but then it should be, because many of the boats are rickety old things, often driven by some young punk that you just know doesn’t have a clue about the rules of the sea, and to say nothing of a terrible shortage of life jackets and other safety features. No means of travel makes me so nervous in Thailand as boat travel.</p>	<p><b>GT 16</b></p>
<p>On the eastern seaboard the boats that make their way across to the Ko Samet and Ko Chang are older vehicles and they tend to move at a slow pace. Even with that in mind they often lean to one side, or are so old and worn out that you find yourself willing the old girl to reach her destination as quickly as possible. I also always find myself eyeballing the life jackets.</p>	<p><b>GT 17</b></p>
<p>There are various boats in operation in the south, connecting the many islands down that way. In recent years there have been a number of high profile accidents involving drunk boatmen, overcrowded vessels, boats at sea in inclement conditions and a shortage of life jackets. Sometimes using a boat in Thailand is unavoidable but frankly, I avoid them like the plague.</p>	<p><b>GT 18</b></p>
<p><b>Travel by air</b> Flights to Thailand from international destinations are cheaper now with more carriers flying routes into Bangkok’s Suvarnabhumi Airport and Don Meuang Airport, the old international airport, the hub for budget airlines like Air Asia.</p>	<p><b>GT 19</b></p>
<p>Thai Airways is the main domestic airline and airfares for flights within Thailand are fairly reasonably priced, the schedules are good with lots of flights to the most popular destinations and the prices are fixed – it doesn’t matter when you buy the ticket, 3 months in advance or 3 hours before the flight leaves, the price will be the same. Further, the planes are generally in good condition and you do not get anything like the horror stories you hear of some neighbouring countries where you share the cabin with farmer Joe and half the cattle from his farm! Thai Airways flies to most parts of the country, but not quite all.</p>	<p><b>GT 20</b></p>
<p>The notable exception of where Thai does not fly is the tropical paradise of Ko Samui. There is only one airline which flies between Ko Samui and Bangkok and that is Bangkok Airways who I believe own the airport at Samui. The fare to fly from Bangkok to Ko Samui on Bangkok Airways is more expensive than the fare on Thai to fly from Bangkok to Phuket, something which many people question, with some feeling that Bangkok Airways really stings you when you fly between Bangkok and Ko Samui. Bangkok Airways also flies to some neighbouring countries as well as operating domestic flights within Thailand, but it is the route to Ko Samui for which they are most famous. Bangkok Airways has tried to reposition themselves and now markets themselves as Asia’s boutique carrier.</p>	<p><b>GT 21</b></p>
<p>Thai Airways introduced a budget carrier called Nok Air which flies some of the more popular routes at fares a little more than half the price of the equivalent fare on Thai. The planes are ex Thai Airways fleet and the flights are generally on time. Nok Airways is my preferred budget airline in Thailand for this very reason.</p>	<p><b>GT 22</b></p>
<p>Air Asia is the biggest budget airline in the region and is run out of Malaysia. I personally have found their planes to be a little old, and they’re often late, usually an hour or two. I have not had good experiences with Air Asia and I will not fly them again if it can be helped. That said, if you book a good period in advance before flying then you can save a lot of money with this particular airline.</p>	<p><b>GT 23</b></p>
<p>Finally of the budget carriers operating in Thailand is One Two Go. I have never used them so cannot really comment on them, but a workmate swears by them. Many of the popular places in Thailand such as the islands in the south and Chiang Mai in the north are quite a distance from Bangkok so travelling by air does make sense if you want to save time. Look closely and the two cloud covered islands in the pic are Ko Samui on the left and Ko Phangan on the right, seen from 30,000 feet.</p>	<p><b>GT 24</b></p>

<p><b>Travel by train</b></p> <p>The trains in Thailand are good and a very pleasant way to travel if you are not in a hurry. Generally speaking the train is slower than a bus running the comparable route. Even the deceptively names express and sprinter services often feel like they are crawling along at a snail's pace. Sure, you can get up and walk around etc but for the most part, when I used public transport to travel intercity I preferred the buses – that's just a personal preference.</p>	<p><b>GT 25</b></p>
<p>Like trains elsewhere in the world, there are three different classes, 1st, 2nd and 3rd – funny that. Third class can be a bit rough if you are travelling a long journey. Personally, I wouldn't want to sit in 3rd class for any journey of more than about 3 hours or so. The seats are uncomfortable and if you get a busy train such as the Bangkok to Korat, they pack the punters in like sardines. 2nd class is comfortable and 1st class is apparently very nice but truth be told, I never tried it. I do note that some of the first class prices are about the same as an airfare!</p>	<p><b>GT 26</b></p>
<p>As mentioned in the section on travelling by bus, vendors get on and off the trains along the way and sell various items of food and drink, often at very reasonable prices. Also like the non air-conditioned buses the train can be a great way to meet the locals.</p>	<p><b>GT 27</b></p>
<p><b>Travel by car</b></p> <p>Hiring cars or even a big bike is one way to get around Thailand. The quality of the roads in Thailand is generally pretty good. Where the problems start to arise is in the quality of the driving and if you spend much time watching the way the Thais drive, I hate to say it but all of the Asian driver jokes suddenly seem to have some credence.</p>	<p><b>GT 28</b></p>
<p>All of the big international car rental car companies such as Budget and Avis are represented along with a lot of smaller, private rental car companies which may offer slightly older cars, but at very reasonable prices. Many of these firms have websites and searching for Thailand car hire should be a start.</p>	<p><b>GT 29</b></p>
<p>With the big firms you do have more peace of mind than the smaller firms where occasionally you hear a story about the cars being poorly maintained or having some sort of problem. Car rental is fairly cheap in Thailand which is a little surprising given that the cost of buying a car in Thailand is much dearer than in the West.</p>	<p><b>GT 30</b></p>
<p>You can hire a variety of motorbikes in Thailand and this seems to be fairly popular in most of the beaches and islands along with places in the north. The most popular bikes seem to be the little 125 cc Honda Dream which you can get for about 150 baht a day or as little as 3,000 baht per month. Whether or not you would want to do a lot of intercity riding is questionable though.</p>	<p><b>GT 31</b></p>
<p>While Bangkok can be a difficult place to drive in – signs are generally in Thai only, traffic jams are legendary and it can be very difficult to orient yourself, the opposite is said of the provinces. Generally, driving in provincial Thailand is easy, the drivers are less aggressive, there is much less traffic – and the further you get from Bangkok, the less traffic and congestion you find. However, wherever you go, signs are generally in Thai only. In a few places, and Pattaya is one exception, some road signs are in Thai. Fortunately street signs are in both Thai and English nationwide, something which I have been extremely impressed with. Yes, for many years, street signs in even the most far flung corners of the country have English on them too!</p>	<p><b>GT 32</b></p>
<p>Petrol is reasonably priced in Thailand, more expensive than American prices, but much cheaper than what is paid in Europe.</p>	<p><b>GT 33</b></p>
<p>Many of the Thais living in Bangkok come from provincial Thailand and moved to the big smoke to pursue employment. On public holiday weekends, there is often a mass migration out to the provinces as these folks head back to see their families. A lot of the folks working in Bangkok have partners and children in the countryside that they are supporting and so they take every opportunity to go home and visit them. With this in mind, you should, and indeed often need, to buy your tickets in advance if you plan to travel over public holiday periods. This is especially</p>	<p><b>GT 34</b></p>

<p>true for the Songkran holiday period in April when routes can get sold out well in advance. Book early to avoid disappointment.</p> <p>One point needs to be made about using taxis in Thailand, especially Bangkok. Always try and get a taxi that is driving on the roads. Taxis parked outside hotels are very reluctant to use the meter and you can bet that if they offer you a price it will be anywhere between double and several times what the fare would be if they used the meter!</p>	<b>GT 35</b>
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<b>Content: Accommodation (ACC)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>No matter what your budget, you can find something to suit. Thailand and indeed Bangkok has a huge range of places to stay. Whether you want the opulence of the Oriental Hotel, the filth of a Khao Sarn Road backpacker hole or somewhere in between, you will be able to find it in Bangkok. And right throughout Thailand, you will be able to find something to suit your needs, at least most of the time in most places.</p>	<b>ACC 1</b>
<p>In surveys of (admittedly well-heeled) international travelers, Bangkok's top end hotels continue to rate extremely highly. The Oriental Hotel, The Dusit Thani, The Peninsula and The Shangri-La are often mentioned when you hear the top hotels in the world being talked about. These are five star hotels in every sense and should suit the most demanding of travelers. But if you've read down this far, you obviously have a bit of time on your hands and you are more likely to be looking at another class of hotel.</p>	<b>ACC 2</b>
<p>Throughout Thailand, you have all of the big international hotel chains like Marriot, Sheraton, Regent, Hyatt represented. You also have some very good Thai hotel chains like Amari. And then you have got a lot of stand alone hotels. At the lower end of the range you have guesthouses. I gather that camping grounds are available in some places but having seen one snake show too many, I think I'll give that one a miss, thank you.</p>	<b>ACC 3</b>
<p>Bungalows are a very popular Thai style of holiday accommodation. What exactly is a bungalow? Well, it is just a stand alone building that may have as little as a bed, bedside table and chair or be a stand alone building decorated and with the facilities as flash as a room in the best 5 star hotels. One tends to think that bungalows are only found near the seaside and while this is where they tend to be located, you can find them in many other places too, especially outside of cities and in the countryside.</p>	<b>ACC 4</b>
<p>Of the beaches and islands in Thailand, the most popular spots like Pattaya, Phuket and Ko Samui are oozing with a variety of accommodation options. But this is not always the case at some of the more off the beaten track type places. It should come as no surprise that the further off the beaten track you get, generally the harder it is to find quality accommodation. Even in some of the islands the quality of accommodation is not always that good – and sometimes the prices, while cheap by international standards, can be expensive by local Thai standards. Places like Ko Samet and Ko Chang are classic examples where, in my personal opinion, accommodation prices really are higher than they should be.</p>	<b>ACC 5</b>
<p>It's widely known that more than a few men come to Thailand, perhaps not for the purpose of getting involved with Thai women, but ultimately they end up with a Thai lady at their hotel. It should be noted that some hotels may not allow obvious women of the night into the establishment. In some hotels, prostitutes are barred from entering. Such places include some guesthouses and budget hotels, as well as some hotels which cater specifically to families or tour groups. In some hotels there is a "joiner fee" which means you have to pay a supplementary cost to allow a woman who is obviously a prostitute to spend the night with you. The fee could be anything from a few hundred baht to over a thousand. In and around the areas known for naughty nightlife, virtually all of the hotels are "guest-friendly". The vast majority of hotels in Thailand allow prostitutes to stay overnight and it would be less than 1% which bar entry and only a small percentage which charge extra.</p>	<b>ACC 6</b>

<p>One of the great things about accommodation in South-East Asia (with the exception of Singapore) is that you can get your own room at an affordable price. I remember travelling around Europe as a young backpacker in 1990 and spending around \$US12 equivalent for a bed in a room with 6 – 8 other smelly, stinky backpackers. There was no privacy whatsoever. Well, this is Asia and you don't have to worry about such dormitory style accommodation. Having said that, in the areas that are popular with backpackers, such accommodation can be had for a pittance, at less than 100 baht a bed. However, again, this is Asia and sometimes the quality of said establishment may be questionable. You can therefore forget the idea of youth hostels that you may have had to suffer in the likes of Western Europe. While there are a handful of youth hostels in Thailand such as those run by YHA, these aren't so common.</p>	<p><b>ACC 7</b></p>
<p>While I acknowledge that some people don't have a lot of money and want to make it go as far as they can, I'd be wary about choosing the cheapest accommodation options. In Bangkok that would likely mean the Khao Sarn Road and as with a lot of the other locations with budget travelers, the cheapest accommodation can often be dirty to the point of being unhygienic. Sheets go unchanged and bed bugs breed like mad, waiting for that magic moment when you go to bed so they can start to feast! Such venues may have bathrooms rife with stagnant water which are homes to armies of mosquitoes which wait patiently for the chance to snack on you too! Basically, with the cheaper places, inspect the rooms closely and don't be afraid to ask them cutting questions such as when the sheets were last changed!</p>	<p><b>ACC 8</b></p>
<p>Thailand is not an expensive country to travel through and if you are on a real budget, you can do just fine. Let's look at the cost of accommodation in Bangkok first. A room in the top end hotels tends to go for 5,000 baht or more a night. The very best spots, like the Oriental may even go for twice this. As I mentioned earlier, hotels in Bangkok really are excellent and the top end places are just fabulous. My pick is the Sukhothai which has a wonderful combination of Thai style with modern convenience. It is worth just going for a wander through as it really is that nice!</p>	<p><b>ACC 9</b></p>
<p>The mid range in Bangkok would be those venues where a room goes from around 1,000 to 3,000 baht a night. The variance in this range would largely be determined by the facilities offered at the hotel, how new it is, and to a lesser extent, just where it is located. You can get some perfectly acceptable hotels for not much more than 1,000 baht a night in Bangkok.</p>	<p><b>ACC 10</b></p>
<p>At the lower end of the scale you have the guesthouses which go from anywhere from loose change up to close to 1,000 baht a night. Yes, there are some budget locations knocking on the 1,000 baht a night rate!</p>	<p><b>ACC 11</b></p>
<p>As Bangkok can be quite difficult to get around due to the dreadful traffic conditions and the fact that the skytrain and underground only cover a small part of the city, one needs to think carefully about the area where one chooses to stay. The most popular areas are Sukhumvit Road, Silom Road, the Siam Square / Pratunam area, Banglampoo and the river. I'll try and outline the particular advantages and disadvantages of each area as well as mention a few other areas which for various reasons I would not really recommend.</p>	<p><b>ACC 12</b></p>
<p><b>Sukhumvit Road</b> The Sukhumvit Road area has long been a popular spot for Westerners and we have been staying in that area for as long as we have been visiting the Thai capital. There are a large number of hotels in the area, ranging from older, but still comfortable and very affordable 2 and 3 star accommodations at around 1,000 baht a night, many with names which you just know they sprouted up in the Vietnam area, to a number of genuinely fine 5 star properties which can go for several thousand baht a night.</p>	<p><b>ACC 13</b></p>
<p>Sukhumvit is central, easy to get to and from, and is the most popular area for a good percentage of Bangkok's resident Westerners to live. It is also the main area for much of Bangkok's farang oriented naughty nightlife industry which is predominantly in the area from Sukhumvit Soi 1 to soi 23. If that excites you, then this is a good area to stay, but if it abhors you, you may want to stay away from Sukhumvit. I personally do not think there is anything particularly special in this</p>	<p><b>ACC 14</b></p>

area and frankly, the main reason people come to or stay in this area is for the nightlife. The shopping in this area doesn't compare to other spots and there really aren't any major tourist attractions in the area. The skytrain runs along Sukhumvit Road so access to other areas serviced by the skytrain is easy.

**Siam square / Pratunam**

This is the home of Bangkok's biggest and best shopping malls and as such if shopping is your thing, this is most definitely the area to stay. There are a number of huge shopping malls in the area, ranging from the ever popular Mahboonkrong to the ultra upmarket Gaysorn, as well as the more budget minded Pratunam Market. You really can shop until you drop in this area.

Traffic congestion and pollution in this area can be very bad at peak times, but it remains a very convenient area to stay in. Not only is the shopping very good, but this is an area where the vendors are used to dealing with foreign tourists so most vendors and the staff in most shops, speak fairly good English. Here are also some interesting attractions in the area such as the Erawan shrine and the Baiyoke Tower, the tallest building in the city. It is quite frankly, an easy and convenient area to stay.

**Silom Road**

The Silom Road area, and the two roads that run parallel, Suriwong Road and Sathorn Road, encompass the main business district, an area where there are many banks, embassies, insurance houses and both local and international company head offices. If you are doing business, this would likely be a good area to stay. You're not too far away from the skytrain either and there is some shopping in the area, including a lot of tourist related shopping. The Patpong night market and the Lumpini Night Bazaar are right there too. As it attracts a lot of business travellers to the area, many of the hotels are not cheap and there aren't as many budget hotels in this area as there are in say, Sukhumvit Road.

From the top of Silom Road you have the Dusit Thani Hotel, a very fine hotel, with a number of hotels down Silom Road and the roads running parallel either side. Some of the big name hotels in this area include the Sofitel, the Narai Hotel, the Holiday Inn and my personal favourite, the gorgeous Sukhothai Hotel.

**The River**

Essentially located at the bottom of Silom Road, the hotel properties along the river are some of the finest not just in Bangkok, but in the world. The famous Oriental Hotel exudes a colonial charm, in contrast to the Peninsula directly opposite, which is much more modern, yet still in the same price bracket. The Shangri-La is another world famous hotel and the Sheraton Orchid is also lovely. These are all very fine 5 star hotels, cheap compared to many other 5 star hotel properties around the world, and all have very fine facilities and restaurants. It should be noted that the skytrain does not make it down to the river so traffic can be a bit awkward down there, especially from late afternoon and into the evening.

**Banglanphu (Khao San Road area)**

This is the backpackers and budget travellers' area and is very conveniently located to some of the city's historic attractions like the Grand Palace, Wat Po and the wonderful Chao Praya River. This is the place to go if you are travelling on a budget, or want to be among others travelling on a similar budget. Khao Sarn Road is the main road in this area, although there are guesthouses and budget hotels strewn all over the area.

It should be noted however that a number of guesthouses and budget hotels in the Khao San Road area do not allow Thai nationals to stay! I am not sure of the reasons for this but if you are travelling with a Thai, you need to be aware of this! Of course one of the reasons is that the guesthouses and hotels want to discourage blokes from bringing hookers back to their room. I'll never forget a sign in Tawee Guesthouse where I stayed way back in 1998 which said "Don't bring prostitutes back to the establishment because things go missing, missing and the police come sniffing, sniffing"!

**ACC 15**

**ACC 16**

**ACC 17**

**ACC 18**

**ACC 19**

**ACC 20**

**ACC 21**

<p><b>Rachadapisek Road, Chinatown and the Airport</b> Two areas where I would not really recommend you stay unless you have a very specific reason for being there are Chinatown and the airport area. Chinatown has dreadful pollution and the traffic down there is about the worst in the city. Getting in and out of the area to go to other areas can be a major ordeal.</p>	<p><b>ACC 22</b></p>
<p>There are a number of hotels along Rachadapisek Road. In the past I would never have recommended that a Westerner stayed in the area as the traffic was very bad and there is little of interest in the area, but note the underground runs up that road making it more accessible to other areas. Many of the hotels in this area seem to market to other Asian travellers and this, as well as the lack of any real reason to stay there, mean I would not really recommend it – unless you got a super deal.</p>	<p><b>ACC 23</b></p>
<p>The new Bangkok international airport opened in September 2006 and I am unsure of the hotel situation out there. There is no real reason to stay in the area unless you find yourself flying in late at night with an early flight out the next morning.</p>	<p><b>ACC 24</b></p>
<p>Accommodation in Bangkok is readily available and the city almost never suffers city wide accommodation sell outs. Wherever you are or wherever you want to be, you will never be far away from some sort of accommodation.</p>	<p><b>ACC 25</b></p>
<p>The prices of accommodation in Phuket and Ko Samui are much the same as in Bangkok. Both are now big international beach resorts with many fabulous places to stay and as such the prices reflect what people are prepared to pay for them. However, most of the large resorts have timeshares available, which are luxurious apartments that offer many great amenities and give visitors the opportunity to come back year after year. On the other hand, Pattaya and Chiang Mai both have high quality accommodation available at prices which simply do not exist – at least what you get for that money – in Bangkok. This is one reason to visit Pattaya and Chiang Mai – you get very good value for money on your accommodation.</p>	<p><b>ACC 26</b></p>
<p>Once you get outside of Bangkok and the most popular tourist areas, the prices for accommodation plummets, but the quality remains reasonably good. In much of regional Thailand, in towns such as Khon Kaen, Phitsanulok, Korat, Nakhon Phanom etc, you can get a great room for 1,000 baht. This usually gets you a very comfortable well-maintained hotel room with either a double or two single beds, all the usual facilities and a very good buffet breakfast for two. You can actually find cheaper than this, but the 1,000 baht mark seems to be the average. Such hotels can be very comfortable indeed. One such example is the Nakhon Phanom River Hotel where for this price you get a very nice room with a view of the river and an excellent breakfast buffet. The quality of hotels in regional Thailand really is excellent and as I say, the cost is very fair indeed. Another favourite of mine is the Charoen Thani Princess Hotel in Khon Kaen where for 1,100 baht you get a really nice room and again, an excellent breakfast buffet.</p>	<p><b>ACC 27</b></p>
<p>You don't need to worry too much about squat toilets as although they are still popular in the countryside, just about anywhere where a Westerner goes has standard Western toilets. But then you might come to prefer the squat toilet, the absence of toilet paper and the requirement to use one's left hand... It's better for the environment and I believe it's more hygienic too. Give it a go, you might like it! A note about toilets. Many apartment buildings and even a lot of modern, expensive hotels will have notes requesting that you do NOT flush toilet paper down the bowl. If there is a basket there in the cubicle, it is expected that you will discard your used toilet paper there. Apparently the reason is not only for preservation of the environment but also that the refuse system was not designed to handle toilet paper. But like many things in Thailand, this is changing.</p>	<p><b>ACC 27</b></p>
<p>Some of the cheaper places around about will rent out rooms short time for use by working girls and their customers. Unless you are a prude, there's no reason to let this bother you and keep in mind that if you go somewhere that is busy and there seems to be no rooms available, just hunt for the local short time hotel which will be more than happy to rent you a room for however long you require.</p>	<p><b>ACC 28</b></p>

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<b>Content: What To Buy &amp; Shopping (WBS)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>Thailand is a great place for a holiday for many reasons but it could survive solely as a shopping destination as there is a huge range of places to go shopping and a huge range of products to buy. Remember this is Asia and at the weekends or whenever they have free time, Asians just love to shop.</p>	<b>WBS 1</b>
<p>All of the best shopping malls are in Bangkok, in fact the city is absolutely full of huge shopping malls. The most impressive of them all would have to be Paragon, located in Siam Square, in the heart of the city's shopping district. In the immediate area there are several impressive shopping malls but none as impressive as the gargantuan Paragon which friends from abroad have told me would hold its own against shopping malls the world over. Paragon is home to a huge department store of the same name along with a huge number of smaller stores including many high end fashion names from Europe and North America. The mall is home to a Ferrari dealer as well as dealerships offering Lamborghini, Maserati, Porsche and the exotic German marques. It's all a little overwhelming! As with most shopping centres in Bangkok there is a huge cinema multiplex on the top floor and the centre is full of restaurants and a number of food courts. If you love to shop you could probably spend the best part of a day in there.</p>	<b>WBS 2</b>
<p>The other high end shopping centres in Bangkok are the recently renovated Central World Plaza, the Emporium, Gaysorn Plaza and Peninsula Plaza. You'll find the finest goods and fashions from all around the world in these shopping centres.</p>	<b>WBS 3</b>
<p>In the next tier of shopping centres you have the ever popular MBK, also known as Mahboonkrong, a very popular shopping centre in the heart of the city. I used to like MBK but these days I find it a bit manic for my liking. It is always packed with people and is popular with a younger crowd so you have lots of young Thais running around, yahoing and generally making a lot of noise. Combine that with the fact that the walkways in the shopping centre being narrow and congested then you have a shopping experience which is hardly relaxed. Perhaps a more relaxed shopping experience can be had at Central Chidlom, the flagship store of the Central Group. It is just one stop on the skytrain from Siam Square and is one of Thailand's best and most popular department stores. Frankly, there are too many shopping centres in Bangkok to mention!</p>	<b>WBS 4</b>
<p>A lot of the major European and American fashion brands have factories in Thailand making their clothes there and selling them in the department stores. Popular brands like Arrow, Yves Saint Laurent, Guy Laroche, John Henry, Camel to name but a few are all available at less than you would expect to pay for them at home. Thailand is a great place to stock up on your wardrobe and if you come from a place like England or New Zealand where getting decent fashionable clothes at reasonable prices isn't always easy, then you will find the Thai department stores just great.</p>	<b>WBS 5</b>
<p>For anything high end, Bangkok is the place to buy it in Thailand. Although you can still find shopping centres in the provincial capitals of Thailand, the shopping in those centres just doesn't compare to Thailand.</p>	<b>WBS 6</b>
<p>For electronics and appliances, Thailand is not the best place, at least not when compared with other more famous shopping centres in the region like Hong Kong and Singapore. The prices of such goods have dropped in recent years, but you can still get better deals elsewhere, although the price differences aren't great these days. On some things, such as memory cards for cameras Thailand might even be cheaper. The prices of electronic goods in Thailand is generally more expensive than the US, but cheaper than Western Europe including the UK. However, one reason not to buy such goods in this part of the world is that the warranty may only be valid for Thailand. There's not much point buying an expensive item in Thailand if you only save a small amount but effectively do not have a valid warranty!</p>	<b>WBS 7</b>
	<b>WBS 8</b>



Of course it may be that you want to buy items of a different type, handicrafts and so forth. There are a number of shops in Bangkok that have a selection of handicrafts from all over the country but really, the best places to buy this sort of thing are in the provinces themselves, in small town Thailand so to speak. That is where you'll get the best prices and the best selection. The night market in Chiang Mai is said to be the best place for handicrafts and the like and has a good selection of this type of thing from the northern provinces. I'm not big on handicrafts and am not a big shopper so am perhaps not the best person to ask about this sort of thing.

**WBS 9**

Many tourists end up down at the Patpong night market that runs down perhaps the most well known stretch of road in Thailand. Nestled in between some of the most well-known bar area in all of Asia is a night market that peddles predominantly copied and counterfeit goods. In my opinion the Patpong Night market is about the worst place in Thailand to buy goods unless you really know what the goods can be bought for elsewhere. The one positive side about Patpong is that there is a fairly good range of most things in one place and the quality of some of the copied goods is high. Yes, copied goods do come from various different suppliers and one fake Rolex may not be the same as another. English football shirts are really popular and there are several different grades of copies with the best being barely discernible from the original. Pictured here is the Patpong Night Market being set up late afternoon.

**WBS 10**

Some of the vendors at Patpong ask exorbitant prices and at times my eyes have just about popped out of my head when I have seen the foreign tourist nod their head and go straight for their wallet and take out the money! You can see the vendors eyes light up knowing that in one sale they have already made a good profit for the night! Copied computer games that go for as little as 30 baht elsewhere can go for as much as 250 baht at Patpong. Fake Prada and other fashion name bags that go for 400 elsewhere can go for as much as 2,500 baht – you get the idea. There is no rule of thumb when negotiating a price with these vendors as some of them will come down to as much as 20% of the original stated price and others will quote you a fair price to start with and will only move a little on the original offer. All I can really say about this place is that while it is well worth a look, but if you actually want to buy something, try and get a local to take you along to ensure that you don't get ripped off. The vendors can be a bit pushy and some are downright rude. The whole area can be crowded but this notwithstanding, it's still worth a visit for a look, if nothing else.

**WBS 11**

An alternative to the Patpong night market is the Pratunam Market, located on the corner of Petchaburi and Rajadamri Roads, near the Amari Watergate Hotel. This market is famous for clothes and traders from all over the world go there to buy bargain basement clothes that are then shipped offshore and sold in foreign markets. But Pratunam has a lot more than just clothes, fabrics and apparel. It's a good place to get many of the things that you can get at Patpong.

**WBS 12**

There are street vendors all over the city selling much the same junk that is peddled at Patpong. All along the heavily touristed area of Sukhumvit Road between the Nana and Asoke intersections, and especially in the area just east of soi 3 are many street vendors selling much the same stuff that is on offer at Patpong but at less inflated prices.

**WBS 13**

The biggest market of all in Bangkok is Chatuchak Market, also known as the weekend market. The easiest way to get there is to take the skytrain to MoChit station which stops right beside it. Chatuchak Market is huge and attracts hundreds of thousands of shoppers at the weekend. The range of goods and "things" available is mind-boggling and in many ways it is as much a tourist attraction as it is a place to shop – although 99% of the people doing the shopping are Thais. Amongst the "things" for sale are animals, including some wild animals and all sorts of other strange stuff. If you're a shopaholic you might really like it, but frankly, I do not like the place. The area is open and crowded and so it is very, very hot and uncomfortable. There are a lot of really terrible smells coming out of the place and much of what is for sale is cheaper, or lower end goods and clothes. I haven't been for a few years and have no real desire to go there again, but that said, anyone spending a few days in Bangkok should check it out. It is called the weekend market for a reason – it is only open on Saturday and Sunday.

**WBS 14**

I gather that jewellery made in Thailand is tastefully designed and comparatively cheap due to the low labour costs. Of course when buying such jewellery you really need to be careful as there are some scam artists out there who are not averse to selling you counterfeit jewellery.

<p>There is a great range of goods and what not available for sale in Thailand but please do take care when choosing. Refunds are not the norm and if you buy something and later decide that you do not like it you cannot change it. Further, if you buy something and it breaks down or simply doesn't work as it should then you might find the vendor unwilling to help. Electronic goods and appliances come with a warranty and these are honoured but with most other types of goods if there is a problem you are on your own. Carefully check and examine any major purchase – or even smaller purchases – before you actually put your cash on the counter!</p>	<b>WBS 15</b>
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Content: Miscellaneous (MIS)	Paragraph No.
<p><b>Visas</b> Visitors from Western countries to Thailand get 30 days permission to stay in Thailand upon arrival if arriving at an airport or 15 days if crossing into Thailand overland. If you wish to stay longer, you can exit the country and re-enter immediately getting another 15 or 30 days. You can apply for a tourist visa to visit Thailand outside of the country which is good for 60 days and can be extended inside the country for another 30 days, at a cost of 1,900 baht. For more extensive information on Thailand visas, check out this section.</p>	<b>MIS 1</b>
<p><b>Weather</b> With regards to the weather most people feel that the best time to visit Thailand is December through to the end of February, which is curiously named the "cool season". It doesn't usually get what I would term cold, or even cool, in the central or southern regions of the country. In the north and the northeast it can get cool in the evenings, especially in the mountains and in the border regions – so if you are visiting those areas in the cool season may need to pack clothes accordingly.</p>	<b>MIS 2</b>
<p>March through to mid June is the hot season and it gets very hot across the entire country. You simply cannot escape the heat. In addition to the heat, in some parts of the country it can get hazy, which may mean breathing problems if you have any such ailments. It also means that visibility is limited in some areas, such as Chiang Mai where from the city centre it can be difficult to see the mountains even though they are only a few kilometres away!</p>	<b>MIS 3</b>
<p>The rainy season runs from early September – November and that is obviously the wettest time of year. Still, it doesn't rain every day and even when it does rain, it doesn't rain for that long – and the rain is usually only mid to late afternoon for an hour or two. It can be very heavy when it comes down though! It is not an entirely unpleasant time to travel but is perhaps not the best time of year for a beach or sunbathing holiday.</p>	<b>MIS 4</b>
<p>Most travelers to Thailand find the weather to be very hot, no matter what time of year they come! So, with this hot weather in mind, should one just chuck on a singlet and a pair of shorts and sandals and explore the country? Well, this may be the most comfortable type of clothing BUT, the Thais are not that fond of such clothing being worn and it is deemed to be somewhat impolite with the notable exception of wearing such clothes at the beach. Thais tend to cover themselves up and a shirt and trousers are the norm for men and for females, something of a similar vein that is not too revealing.</p>	<b>MIS 5</b>
<p>In some of the chicer places in Bangkok, one can see the Bangkok Thais wearing all manner of clothes but generally speaking, they seem to stick with a sort of semi-formal clothes regime. You'd think that such clothes would make you roast in the Thai heat but actually, with the light fabrics used in the manufacture of many of the clothes bought in Thailand, most people are comfortable. There is nothing stopping you from wearing shorts and a singlet but in many places, the Thais will deem this inappropriate, particularly shopping malls, cinemas, restaurants but especially temples or places of cultural or religious importance to the Thais where those decked out in such gear may be refused entry. Whatever you decide to wear, loose fitting clothes are the order of the day. The Thais place little importance on footwear and after a while in the</p>	<b>MIS 6</b>

<p>Kingdom, seeing a Thai businessman walking around in an expensive suit accompanied with a pair of cheap plastic flip flops won't surprise you!</p>	
<p>The tourist high season runs from around late November through to mid April. At certain times, particularly Christmas, New Year, the Chinese New Year and Songkran the most popular beaches and islands can be extremely busy to the point that getting accommodation can become a bit of a problem. Hotels and even some guesthouses hike their prices – and people are willing to pay it. So if you are travelling over any of these periods it pays to book well in advance.</p>	<p><b>MIS 7</b></p>
<p>With regards to other factors of when it is best to visit, Thailand doesn't tend to have any periods where it closes down like some Western countries, for example Italy, do. The major holiday period is mid April, the peak of the hot season, when the Songkran holiday is celebrated. At this time of year, businesses close down for up to a week and many Thais return to their homes back in the provinces. While tourist related services continue to operate and most major shops remain open, intercity transport can be very hard to come by. Airplanes, buses and trains are usually booked solid from April 10 for about the next week or so. But for the staff in shopping centres / temples etc., it is just another day at the office. Some smaller shops close over this period but really, travellers shouldn't be effected greatly.</p>	<p><b>MIS 8</b></p>
<p><b>The Songkran period marks the end of the tourism high season.</b></p> <p>There are a number of other holidays throughout the year and on some of these holidays nightlife areas and bars and discos can be closed – and the sale of alcohol is outlawed. Some bars slip the boys in brown a bit of cash so they can remain open. Generally speaking it is the Buddhist holidays and December 5th, the birthday of HM The King, when most places close and alcohol is hard to come by.</p>	<p><b>MIS 9</b></p>
<p><b>Health</b></p> <p>I first visited Thailand with a good mate in the late '90s and within 24 hours of arriving I got a dreadful dose of food poisoning. We both ordered the same dish, a seafood combination with rice. He thought the shrimps didn't smell right so he didn't eat his. Me, being quite the pig, not only wolfed mine down, but ate his too. A few hours later I was staring down the toilet bowl and throwing up every last bit of whatever was in my system. It was a fairly nasty bout of food poisoning and took me a few days to get over it.</p>	<p><b>MIS 10</b></p>
<p>One has to be careful with what they eat in Thailand. Let me say right off though that you should not be any more concerned about the food that is sold on the street than the food sold in restaurants. Thai people eat food off the street every day and seldom have any problems at all – and so most Westerners can eat this food without problems too. However if the vendor looks like they have poor hygiene then move on to the next place to eat.</p>	<p><b>MIS 11</b></p>
<p>One also should be careful with spicy food if you're not used to it. Eating a lot of spicy food when your system is not used to it is never a good idea. Finally when it comes to food, do drink as much water as you can. Thailand is very hot for much of the year and it is easy to become dehydrated.</p>	<p><b>MIS 12</b></p>
<p>With regards to health, you should consult your local doctor before leaving home regarding any vaccinations that you may or may not need. A lot of people come to Thailand and do not bother with any vaccinations while others line up their arm as a pin cushion and get the full batch. I am not a doctor and the following should be taken as my experience only. I do not know anyone who has caught any of the diseases for which vaccinations are available and most of the people I know who have visited Thailand did not get any vaccinations.</p>	<p><b>MIS 13</b></p>
<p>When I went to see my local doctor, he recommended that I got typhoid and hepatitis shots as these are two of the most common and easily contracted diseases. If you reside in a country where the vaccinations are very cheap or even free, like in England, then bugger it, get the damned lot and protect yourself – though many are no doubt unnecessary. Like I said at the start, consult your doctor as he or she knows best. Remember that you may need to go and see your doctor a couple of months before you take off on your travels as some vaccinations require not one, but a whole course of shots. Oooh, what fun!</p>	<p><b>MIS 14</b></p>

<p>While some of the shots may not be particularly necessary for Thailand, if you are going on to other countries in the region then you need to check out the need of shots for those countries too. I believe that travellers to Laos and Cambodia may require certain shots, whereas travellers to Malaysia and Singapore need not worry.</p>	<p><b>MIS 15</b></p>
<p>If you are going to be getting any malarial prophylactics, then the word on the street is to avoid Larium. I have both read and heard a number of horror stories about this drug and its dreadful side effects, which include intense nightmares and hallucinations – so if any doctor tries to get you to go on this one, do your research first!</p>	<p><b>MIS 16</b></p>
<p>If you think you're going to be a naughty boy and get involved with the ladies of the night in Thailand then make sure you use condoms. It goes without saying that AIDS is much more common in Thailand than in your own country and the prevalence of STDs amongst sex workers AND women who may liaise with travellers on a frequent basis is high. Condoms are available locally, but to be safe I recommend you bring your favourite brand from home. Durex is the top selling brand locally, but avoid buying the Kingtex range as they are made for the local market – and too small for the average Westerner.</p>	<p><b>MIS 17</b></p>
<p><b>I want my money back!</b> Thailand is a wonderful country for a holiday but many people experience a problem of some sort or another and as often as not, it has to do with the expected level of service. Service in Thailand is a little different to in the West and while it can be a lot better at times, sometimes things aren't handled as well as they could have been. If you are staying in the best hotels and eating in the best restaurants then you should largely be dealing with well trained service staff who have a good understanding of what western tourists expect. It's when things go wrong that some Westerners start to lose the plot a little. As mentioned in the scams and problems section, remain cool, point out the issue and don't get too loud! After that you may need to hope for the best!</p>	<p><b>MIS 18</b></p>
<p>One thing that justifiably annoys some tourists to Thailand is that if you do suffer a problem while in the country, it is VERY seldom that you will receive a refund – it's quite simply not the Thai way to give people their money back.</p>	<p><b>MIS 19</b></p>
<p>If you do have a problem with anything, do not lose your temper. Stay calm, smile and try to very slowly and clearly explain yourself. Losing one's temper will simply have the opposite effect on the vendor or service provider and make them disinterested in in your problem to the point of being totally unhelpful and perhaps even walking away. Put enough pressure on them and complain loudly enough and you will likely get nowhere!</p>	<p><b>MIS 20</b></p>
<p><b>Communication</b> The language of Thailand is Thai and while English is widely spoken, the level is often still pretty low. When speaking English with the locals, try to speak slowly and as clearly as possible in order that the person that you are communicating with has as much chance as possible to understand you. Do what us English teachers call "grading our language".</p>	<p><b>MIS 21</b></p>
<p>Learning Thai is the way to go but if you are only in the country for a short holiday, it isn't really worth the effort. Further, even if you say a few words of Thai with utter mediocrity, don't be surprised if the Thai you're speaking to replies to you with a string of Thai, and a big grin on their face followed by confusion that the white person who just spoke some Thai is now not able to understand! You generally find that in Thailand, the Thais speak a functional level of English that enables them to carry out their job. Get away from this specific language that they use every day and you can quickly lose them. Frankly, as long as you stay on the main tourist path, like most people do, the ability to speak Thai, while nice, is not necessary. Other languages such as French, German and other European languages are not widely spoken in Thailand at all. There is a growing interest in learning other Asian languages but for the time being it is often only a basic smattering of English that the locals understand other than Thai.</p>	<p><b>MIS 22</b></p>

<p><b>Arriving in Thailand</b></p> <p>Most foreign visitors arriving in Thailand fly into Suwannaphum, Bangkok's international airport. Your first time in Thailand, which may be your first time in Asia, can be more than a little confusing. After a long trip you probably want to get to your hotel as soon as possible. To make matters easy I recommend you grab a cab – they're easy and inexpensive and a trip to Sukhumvit or Silom Road should cost you less than 300 baht, and even all the way to Khao San Road shouldn't be more than 400 baht. There are buses available but if you do not know where to get off then you risk getting lost. When you grab a cab at the airport the driver should use the meter. Please note that he is entitled to tack on a surcharge of 50 baht – that is for all airport pick ups.</p>	<p><b>MIS 23</b></p>
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<b>Content: Stickman's Bangkok Tour (SBT)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>I like it when friends come and visit me in Bangkok. Not only is it great to catch up with them and show them around but they can bring me all of the goodies that I miss from home. From time to time, friends are just passing through Bangkok very briefly and I may only have 24 hours, sometimes less, to show them around. If you do not know your way around, Bangkok can appear to be one big giant, dirty, drab and grey city, just as you can see in the picture here. But if you know where to go, you can have a lot of fun. This is the little tour that I take them on.</p>	<p><b>SBT 1</b></p>
<p>The beauty about this tour is that you can start it anywhere that the skytrain goes to. So, make your way to the nearest skytrain station and once you get there, you have to find the easiest way to get to Saphan Taksin station. If you are on the Silom line, this is easy, just get on the train that says that it is going to Saphan Taksin and get off there. If you get on the skytrain on the Sukhumvit line, you will have to make your way to Siam station and once there, will have to change on to the train going to Saphan Taksin. All pretty easy really.</p>	<p><b>SBT 2</b></p>
<p>As you make your way around the sky train you will get a nice elevated view of the city, a city that looks far better from the comfort of the sky train than it does from ground level. In the area around and just after Sala Daeng station, you will be going past the commercial district of the city and will see some of the tallest and flashiest buildings in the Thai capital, many of them with the banners denoting that they house the Thai office of international banks and multinationals.</p>	<p><b>SBT 3</b></p>
<p>When you arrive at Saphan Taksin station, you need to exit and walk towards the river. You should notice that there are two small piers there and one, just to your left a little, should have a sign saying Chao Praya Express Boat. That is the boat that you want to take. But, do not go to the pier yet... You should notice that you are underneath a bridge and a little to your right is a flight of stairs. Walk up the few short flights of stairs and walk across the bridge. From the bridge you can get a nice view up the river, looking roughly in a northerly direction. You can get a nice angle from here if you want to photograph all of the big hotels on the edge of the river, as below. You can walk across the bridge to the other side and go down the stairs at the other side. Walk to the bottom of them and you should see a small boat. This boat just goes backwards and forwards across the river at 3 baht per person. Take the boat across to the other side, back to where you were. Once you have got off this boat, you want to go to the Chao Praya Express Boat pier that will be just a little over to your right.</p>	<p><b>SBT 4</b></p>
<p>Now, it is important to note that you want to take a boat that is heading from left to right, i.e. towards all those big hotels that you can see over on the right. As an option, you can take a boat heading down river, that is right to left. There are just three stops down to the end of the river. If you decide to take this option, just get on another boat heading back up the river. You can get some nice river photos if you go down this way. The fare to the end of the line is just a few baht.</p>	<p><b>SBT 5</b></p>
	<p><b>SBT 6</b></p>

When you get on the boat, tell the ticket seller that you want to go to Ta Dien and the fare should be 10 baht. As you head up the river, you will get an excellent view of many of Bangkok's, and indeed the world's, finest hotels. On the right, and not looking nearly impressive from the outside as one may expect from it's reputation is the Oriental Hotel. On the same side of the river and in the immediate vicinity are the Sheraton and The Shangri-La. Directly opposite the Oriental Hotel is the recently built Peninsula Hotel. As you go further up the river, you will start to see more of the old city with several Buddhist temples on either side of river. The ever impressive Wat Arun, or in English, The Temple Of Dawn is an impressive site on the western side of the river. This temple is the marker to tell you that you are almost at the port where you should get off, Ta Dien.

**SBT 7**

When you have got off at Ta Dien, you simply have to walk about ten metres and get on to the cross river ferry that will take you over the river to Wat Arun. There are various points up and down the river where you can take a ferry that just runs backwards and forwards and the fare costs all of 3 baht.

**SBT 8**

Once you make it over to the other side, you can have a look around Wat Arun, pictured here. It's only 20 baht to get in but that is still too much given that Thais get in for less than that. In all truth and honesty, this temple looks better from the other side of the river and is largely unremarkable up close but as it is so cheap to get over the river, it's worthwhile looking at it. There are a lot of scam artists in the area around here selling the usual junk at the usual inflated for foreigners prices. You also get the obligatory souvenir sellers, the ice-cream sellers, the Coke at crazy price sellers etc. This can be a nice place to sit and relax and enjoy watching life on the river. Beware of the cut out boards with pictures of traditional Thai costumes painted on them and a hole for you to put your head through so your picture can be taken "wearing a traditional Thai costume". In the bottom corner, most inconspicuously placed, it says 40B meaning the cost for a photo is 40 baht (for Thais it's free). This really is a scam so don't bother taking pictures here unless you are willing to pay the 40 baht.

**SBT 9**

The Chao Praya River is one of the most interesting places in Bangkok and there is always something going on with long tail boats zooming foreign tourists around, barges transporting cargo up and down and the police boats hunting for wayward Khao Sarn Road backpackers who may have found a nice spot on side of the river to have a toke on cheap Thai weed. If you know anything about engines, you will notice that a lot of the long tail boats have old car engines running them, ranging from the ever popular 1600 twin cam Toyota engine to a few American V8s.

**SBT 10**

After you have finished wandering around and presumably photographing Wat Arun, it is time to head back across the river. Once you get back over there, walk right through the pier building and you should come out into a small side street with a lot of tuktuk drivers who will try to convince you to allow them to take you somewhere – walk past them and about another 50 or so metres and you are at an intersection where you can see a street right in front of you and two large compounds with white walls on either side. Here you have Wat Po on the right and the Grand Palace on the left. These are two of the most impressive and famous temples in Thailand. It's up to you which one you visit (or you can see both) but I personally prefer Wat Po as it is less crowded, costs only 20 baht to get in as opposed to 200+ for The Grand Palace – and it houses the impressive reclining Buddha. The style of architecture in the two temples is fairly similar so I will stick my neck out and say that unless you are a big fan of Thai Buddhist temples, seeing one is enough. So, go for a wander around either of the temples.

**SBT 11**

After you have seen the temples, you can abort the tour and head to wherever by taxi (or any other means) or continue with the tour. If you decide to continue, you can now head up towards Sanam Luang, a big, somewhat nothing park where Thais often go at the weekend and then on to Khao Sarn Road, the backpackers domain of Bangkok. Or, if this does not appeal, you can just return to where you came from. Depending on the time of year, you may want to walk up to Sanam Luang. This big park attracts lots of Thais to the many fortune tellers, tarot card readers and so forth at the weekend. Even the poorer Thais can be seen throwing silly money at these impostors to hear some sort of positive words about their future. Sunday is the best day in this area, particularly from November to February when the weather is best.

**SBT 12**

<p>You need to head to the main road, Sanam Chai Road, and this then leads on to Rachadarmnoen Road. As you walk along Rachadarmnoen Road, Sanam Luang, the large park will be on your left. You need to follow this road for about 1.5 km which can be hard going in the hot season as you are now heading for the Golden Mount, aka Wat Saket.</p> <p>Walking along Rachadarmnoen Road, you will see a huge monument at a large roundabout. This is Democracy Monument. Don't ask me what it represent as I'm not entirely sure... You need to cross the road at sometime so that you are on the opposite side of the road to McDonalds which is very close to the monument. Walk another few hundred metres and you will see the Golden Mount. This under rated tourist attraction is a strange sort of Thai temple set on a hill that allows really good views of the old part of Bangkok. Go for a wander around, take some photos and enjoy yourself. Once you have finished there, you want to wander back down and on to the main road. You should see that the main road goes over a bridge. Under this bridge is a canal and there is a canal boat stop there. This particular stop is the last one on the line so you do not have to worry about getting on the wrong boat as there is only one to get on. Get on the boat and ask to go to Central World Plaza. The journey shouldn't take much more than 12 minutes and you will get to see some interesting places along the journey including the houses of people who live right alongside the canal – some are flash while others are less than desirable but they are all interesting. Twelve or so minutes later and the boat will make it back to Central World Plaza, the large shopping centre right in the centre of Bangkok. From here you can get a bus or a cab to anywhere. I hope you enjoyed Stickman's Tour Of Bangkok. Depending on what options you take, the whole tour will take about 4-5 hours.</p>	<p><b>SBT 13</b></p>
<p>Having had the good fortune to do a lot of travelling in my life, I can compare the Thai holiday experience with that of many other countries and I can confidently say that of all of the places that I have been to, no where compares with Thailand for such a range of great diverse destinations. Sure, Thailand is now very heavily touristed and for those wanting to explore somewhere new where no white man has ever shown his face, Thailand may not be the ideal destination for you. Despite rising prices, particularly in the places that tourists go, Thailand remains very affordable and is still a lot cheaper than any Western country. And if you speak some Thai and manage to avoid being scammed, you can do things super cheap if you so desire. While Thailand may still be considered a developing country, in some parts of the country, especially the heavily touristed areas, the infrastructure really is not that much different to some Western countries. Everything is sort of good enough, if you know what I mean! If you do make this wonderful country your choice for your next holiday, I am sure you will not be disappointed. Go along with an open mind and you'll have a great time.</p>	<p><b>SBT 14</b></p>
<p>And don't forget the Damnoen Saduak Floating Market which is in Rachaburi province, about 100 km southwest of the capital and well within reach for a day trip, or even a half day trip. You can read more about a trip to the Thailand Floating Market <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	<p><b>SBT 15</b></p>

<p><b>Content: Historical Places / Temple Ruins (HPTR)</b></p>	<p><b>Paragraph No.</b></p>
<p>All over Thailand there are many great historical sites with old ruins that fascinate you and stimulate your brain to consider how the world used to be. Most of the best preserved ruins are in the central, northern and northeastern areas of the country. As you travel around different parts of the country, so you will notice different styles of ruins in different areas.</p>	<p><b>HPTR 1</b></p>
<p>One of the great things about the ruins in Thailand is that these truly fascinating historical sites are affordable to enter – especially when compared with such historical sites around the world where an entry fee of \$US 20 to see a European castle is not out of the question. Where I do have a problem with the pricing of such attractions in Thailand is the blatant dual pricing that is in effect at so many of these sites. Ayuthaya, Sukhothai and the various other locations with historic ruins all charge the foreigner three to four times the price that the Thai pays. More often than not, the Thai pays 5 – 10 baht and the foreigner pays 20 – 40 baht. To really rub salt into the wounds, at all of these places, the prices for foreigners is listed in English and the prices for Thais listed in Thai script including using the seldom used Thai script digits. This way, 99% of foreigners do not know that they are actually being ripped off by being asked to pay more for entrance to the site than the Thais. While I do not condone it, a friend of mine claims that at many of the sites, it is possible to walk in side or back doors without having to pay. His</p>	<p><b>HPTR 2</b></p>

<p>justification for this being that if they would charge the same price for foreigners as they do for Thais, he wouldn't have to resort to this. In my opinion, he has a fair point so if you get a chance, jump the fence! Having seen him in action, I can confirm that this is VERY easy to do – especially at many of the sites in Ayuthaya.</p>	
<p><b>Ayuthaya</b>          Heading north from Bangkok, about 20 km or so south of the main temple area in Ayuthaya is the Summer Palace at BangPa In, pictured below. Now this is a very impressive attraction with lovely, manicured grounds and a very warm feeling about it all. There is a bit of history in the palace with various buildings on the grounds being home to previous generations of royalty. To get to BangPa In, most people get off the train at the BangPa In train station and get a motorbike or a tuktuk to the palace. Alternatively you could get there by car. The Bangkok to Ayuthaya bus may stop somewhere around there but frankly, I do not know. The palace grounds are not that big and unless you are feeling lazy or have bad legs, I wouldn't recommend taking the electric power vehicles to drive around the palace. They cost 400 baht an hour for foreigners or 250 baht an hour for Thais, but either way, I think they are a little in the expensive side. Besides, an hour is not really enough time to get around, read some of the history and of course, take lots of photographs. BangPa In, like so many of the attractions in Thailand, really is a photographer's paradise so bring lots of memory cards or lots of film! Entry price is 100 baht and for Thais is cheaper, just 30 baht. Grrr. You would almost certainly visit BangPa In the same day you would visit Ayuthaya.</p>	<p><b>HPTR 3</b></p>
<p>Ayuthaya is really easy to get to from Bangkok – in fact it's perfect for a day trip if you are not planning on going any further north. You can either take the train from the main train station at Hualompong which takes about an hour and a quarter and costs a whopping 15 baht (probably increased since) or alternatively, you could take a bus from Mo Chit bus station which costs a bit more but gets there quicker. If you ever find yourself at either Victory Monument or Future Park Rangsit, just north of the airport, from both of these places several minibuses offer a service to Ayuthaya and just depart when the van is full. Keep a look out for vans with small plastic or cardboard signs in the window or on the side that are usually in Thai, occasionally English. Just ask one of the guys hanging around the vans and they'll point you in the right direction.</p>	<p><b>HPTR 4</b></p>
<p>Once you have arrived at Ayuthaya, you have to decide how you wish to get around. You have a few options available to you and far and away the cheapest is to hire a bicycle at 30 – 50 baht for the day. Ayuthaya is flat so getting around on a bike is easy. The only problem is that some of the ruins and temples are quite a way from each other so you will have to do quite a bit of cycling and further, while they are not too difficult to find, one can also get lost! Road maps can be damned confusing in Thailand!</p>	<p><b>HPTR 5</b></p>
<p>The ruins at Ayuthaya are spread over a wide area and in many ways the entire town is an historical park. Just wandering / cycling or driving around, there is no shortage of eye candy and exploring is half of the fun. Most people seem to head for the main temple in the centre of town with the three pagodas but there are some equally impressive temples round about. Like I say, explore and see where you end up. I maintain that to see Ayuthaya comfortably, a car would be best, but if that is not possible, you can hire a tuktuk for a few hours to take you around. They charge around 400 baht for 3 – 4 hours and will take you to 3 or 4 of the best temples. If you're lucky, the driver might even speak enough English to give you a bit of history about each of the temples. alternatively, if you know where you want to go, you can just hire a different tuktuk to take you from one historical site to another which will cost 40 – 60 baht per journey. The central area of Thailand can get very hot during the day and Ayuthaya is no exception. Many people find that by mid afternoon the heat has got to them and it is time to either return to a local guesthouse or make the trip back to Bangkok.</p>	<p><b>HPTR 6</b></p>
<p>There are other old ancient ruins all over the country and I gather that the ruins at Sukhothai, in the north, are very impressive. Further, scattered throughout Isaan are various ruins such as those found at Phimai, not far out of Korat. These historical sites tend to be quite busy at the weekend and on public holidays. During the week they are usually a lot quieter though if you are really unlucky, you may get there at the same time as a few hundred Thai school students.</p>	<p><b>HPTR 7</b></p>
<p><b>Lopburi</b></p>	<p><b>HPTR 8</b></p>



Lopburi is a funny place. I had lived in Thailand for well over five years before I visited it and during that time, no-one had said much to be about it, so I wasn't really expecting too much. When I finally made it there, I was almost dumbfounded about not having visited it sooner. It is a relatively small city, but there is plenty to see and do and you could easily spend a day wandering around, looking at the wealth of attractions.

**HPTR 9**

There is a huge old palace and beautiful grounds which is pretty much in the middle of city. The ground are huge and you can get a fairly good feel for what was once the old capital. There are these huge doors there that took me a while to figure out, oh, they're for the elephants! Anyway, in what I believe is called something like the old city palace, you have the grounds to explore and a very nice museum to wander through. Entry is a ridiculously cheap 30 baht.

**HPTR 10**

Scattered around the city area are various temple ruins, most of which are a few hundred years old. None are as impressive as the ruins of Ayuthaya or Sukhothai, but are worth looking at nonetheless. Perhaps the most popular attraction in the city of Lopburi is the temple ruin in the centre of the city that is home to hundreds of monkeys. These little monsters are everywhere and they are a great laugh though be careful as they are famous for stealing things from visitors and have been known to run off with sunglasses, wallets and cameras! It is a little perturbing to see the monkeys run across a major inner city intersection between two temples and a bunch of shops, but the traffic seems to slow down for them and they seem to get by ok. The monkey temple is probably the pick of the Lopburi attractions. You could do Lopburi as a day trip from Bangkok or on the way heading either north from Bangkok or south, back to Bangkok.

**HPTR 11**

**Kampeng Phet**

You're well and truly in the north when you reach the old town of Kampeng Phet. Although home to the Kampeng Phet Historical Park, I get the feeling that not a lot of visitors make it to this town and fair enough too. There are a lot of historical parks in Thailand and the one here is not the most impressive, but that is not to say that it is unimpressive either. Quite different from, any of the other historical parks, this one is in a semi forested area just a few km from the city centre. On the day that I was there, there were no other visitors at all which gave it all an eerie silence. A few local Thais were exercising in the area but apart from that, it was deathly quiet, almost a little unnerving in a country where one gets used to constant noise. If you are touring around the north by motorbike or car and / or you are particularly fond of such historical parks, then this town is worth checking out. But if you are reliant on public transport or are feeling a little templed out, then Kampeng Phet could be cross off your itinerary. If you do stay in Kampeng Phet, I found the Phet Hotel in town to be very pleasant and offered good value for money. 650 baht or a single room which was nice, and as with many reasonable hotels in the provinces of Thailand, it included a buffet breakfast too!

**HPTR 12**

Many people seem to overnight in Phitsanulok, a very pleasant northern town that must be a bit past the half way point from Bangkok to Chiang Mai. The city itself is pleasant without being startling to the foreign visitor and it has a nice river running through it along with a nice temple complex with a one of those large Khmer style phallic whatever you call them things in the middle. Yeah, yeah, old Sticky doesn't know what they're called in English. To find out more about the lower north of Thailand, check out the travelogue that I wrote and used as the opening piece in the Stickman Weekly column of 19/10/2003.

**HPTR 13**

**Sukhotai**

It took me a long time to get there but I finally made it to Sukhothai and boy, was I impressed. The main Sukhothai historical park has several very well restored temple ruins (if that makes any sense?) within one large park which would probably be a couple of square kilometres, a size that you could just about walk around. To me, the ruins up here are a lot more impressive than Ayuthaya and are easier to get around and more stunning visually. The ruins themselves are quite some distance from Sukhothai town itself, some 20 km or so I'd say at a guess. There is a charge to get into each of the temples within the park, or you can just buy a 30 day pass which gets you into all of the temples within the historical park, all of those just outside it, which are a few, and some others quite a distance away. The pass is priced at a very fair 150 baht, whereas each temple, if entered individually, would cost 30 baht. The strange thing though is that at almost every temple I checked out in the area, I was never once asked to show a ticket. That is not to say that I condone people just wandering in without paying, but it would be possible. While more impressive than Sukhothai, at least to my eyes, it can be seen in a shorter

<p>amount of time due to the close proximity of al of the ruins. You could conceivably see most of it in less than 3 hours, though some people will no doubt want to spend the entire day.</p> <p>I still haven't made it up to Sri Satchanalai and hope to do that the next time I am up in the north, I will check it out. If it is even half as good as Sukhothai, pictured below, then it must be something really worth visiting.</p>	<b>HPTR 14</b>
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<b>Content: Bangkok (BA)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>Bangkok is truly a city that never sleeps, a city with a real energy that can induce you in, take a firm hold of you and in some cases, refuse to let go! Bangkok is not a city of endless tourist attractions and must see museums, but a city you visit to feel the vibe. Bangkok has an energy seldom found elsewhere.</p>	<b>BA 1</b>
<p>I'd love to Bangkok to say that Bangkok is a pretty city with lots of parks, gardens and other natural attractions but to do so would be a dreadful lie. Apart from a few areas, Bangkok is not pleasant on the eye. It's flat without many landmarks viewable from all over the city and that makes it a very easy place to get lost.</p>	<b>BA 2</b>
<p>As you travel around in the heat, fumes and humidity of one of Asia's biggest cities, you can quickly begin to think that the few days you had planned to stay there was too long and you might suddenly want to just press the fast forward button and move on to the next part of your trip. To the uninitiated, it can appear to be another big, drab grey city but if you persevere, exploring the city can be a rewarding experience.</p>	<b>BA 3</b>
<p>As far as attractions and interesting things to see and do in Bangkok go, there are a handful. The old part of town, that is the area down near the river, not far from the Khao San Road area, is where you'll find a lot of the more culturally and historically significant building and temples. That is one part of the city that is actually quite pretty. For many the highlight of the area is the Grand Palace, the most important of all of Thailand's 40,000+ Buddhist temples. The Grand Palace does suffer from huge numbers of tourists and it would have to be the most visited attraction in the country. Over run with tourists, this is one Buddhist temple where you don't get that serene peaceful feeling that I associate with many other places of worship. The dress code for entry is strictly enforced – you shouldn't wear anything too brief or a sleeveless shirt. The Thai ticket staff are not the friendliest and like a growing number of Thais who deal with huge numbers of Westerners on a daily basis visitors can be made to feel like it is a privilege to pay the 500 baht entry fee (Thais get in free).</p>	<b>BA 4</b>
<p>Sort of over and behind the Grand Palace is Wat Po, which I personally prefer to the Grand Palace. It doesn't get nearly the same number of visitors as the Grand Palace and there is the huge reclining Buddha to see, the largest reclining Buddha in the world, I believe.</p>	<b>BA 5</b>
<p>The other major temple in this area is Wat Arun, most probably the most photographed temple, or for that matter, location, in all of Bangkok. Wat Arun is the fascinating temple just over the Chao Praya River from the Grand Palace and Wat Po. You can take a cross river ferry for 3 baht to reach it. Note that the three most popular temples for foreigners to visit are the Grand Palace (Wat Pra Kaew), Wat Po and Wat Arun. There is something very enchanting about Wat Arun that sort of draws you to it. I find it a wonderful temple complex to wander through and explore and I personally never bore of it. I can't count how many times I have been there, and how many out of town friends I have walked through with, but it must be in excess of 20!</p>	<b>BA 6</b>
<p>In addition to these three temples there are many other Buddhist temples in the old part of town. As they are fairly close together, they can be easily reached on foot – though in the hot season, it might be slightly tough going! Wandering around the area is enjoyable and you just never know what you are going to see around the next corner. Virtually all of the temples in the area, apart from the Grand Palace, charge a 20 – 50 baht entry fee – and in many cases entry is free.</p>	<b>BA 7</b>
<p>Without wanting to sound negative, if you've had enough of getting ripped off and overcharged, you'll be happy to know that at a lot of the temples, it is not just possible, but downright simple,</p>	<b>BA 8</b>

<p>to slip in one of the side or back doors. That's not to say that I condone doing that, but when you have been ripped off a few times already, such behaviour comes a lot more easily!</p>	
<p>The area near the river area is a must see and if you want to get a good look at it AND do it on the cheap, scroll down towards the bottom of this page to the section titled, Stickman's Bangkok Tour.</p>	<p><b>BA 9</b></p>
<p>The tallest building in Bangkok is the Baiyoke 2 Tower which towers above everything else. It's located a few hundred metres up from the Central World Plaza in a busy parks of the Pratunam Market. The tower soars around 300 metres into the sky and from the top, on a clear day at least, you get good views of Bangkok. When overcast the view is not nearly as good. Like many such buildings around the world, there is the obligatory city view restaurant though just about everyone that I know who has been there has said that it was disappointing. With this in mind, consider making your food arrangements back at ground level. Going up the tower to the observation level costs 200 baht. If you fancy eating up there, the cost of the buffet is less than many other hotel buffets around town, and the cost of going up is included.</p>	<p><b>BA 10</b></p>
<p>There's a somewhat dated but still interesting snake farm right in the heart of the city. Located on Rama 4 Road, within the Red Cross compound, it features a show that is presented in both English and Thai. There are a variety of snakes on hand, all of which are horribly fearsome! It would be an idea to time your visit for the slide presentation and snake show which is run three times a day with the times printed on the sign out the front. When they do the snake show, the audience is seated in a small grandstand like structure VERY close to the action. This is great for photos but like a lot of things in Thailand, I have reservations about safety. When I was there, this Australian fellow was sitting down below the grandstand trying to get some close up photos and I guess he was around 3 metres from the snake. Somehow, this somewhat tempestuous snake got away from the handler and accelerated like a Ferrari on a race track, making a beeline for the Aussie. Two snake handlers dived and caught the snake just before it reached the now frozen tourist. The announcer chuckled and someone from the audience asked if that particular snake was poisonous to which he said words to the effect that it was deadly! Don't let this little story put you off as it is an excellent attraction and as long as you don't get too close, there shouldn't be any real safety issue. And at 70 baht, it's a bargain. When they finish the show, you have the opportunity to get the old snake around the neck photo at no extra cost. Being somewhat nervous of these creatures, I declined that kind offer.</p>	<p><b>BA 11</b></p>
<p>Any visit to Bangkok should include checking out some of the city's markets. Chatuchak Market, also known as the weekend market is large and impressive, but not exactly comfortable, and Patpong Night Market, just a short walk from the Sala Daeng BTS station right slap in the middle of the city's commercial district is worth a look. Somewhat more wholesome is the Lumpini Night Market, a large area right across the road from Lumpini Park and reached by the Lumpini underground station.</p>	<p><b>BA 12</b></p>
<p>Also in the Lumpini area is one of the city's two major Thai boxing stadiums, Lumpini Stadium. I haven't been for many years and I have heard that this venue has introduced double pricing at tickets for Westerners are at sky high prices. Someone even mentioned the figure of 1,000 baht though surely this couldn't be right as that is almost \$US30! I enjoy the Thai kickboxing and really must make it along again. Rather than go for ringside seats, I think it is a lot more fun to sit up in the main stand with the Thais and watch them gambling. Heaps of fun!</p>	<p><b>BA 13</b></p>
<p>The Ancient City, known as Meuang Boran in Thai, located a fair distance from the centre of Bangkok, is another excellent attraction, in fact the word excellent really doesn't do it justice. In this quite outstanding attraction, the creators have built scale models of more than 100 of the most famous and / or notable buildings, temples and structures around Thailand and made them into what is essentially a drive around theme park! It is a wonderful opportunity to see LARGE scale models of many of the beautiful buildings and temples found throughout the Kingdom. The first time that I went there I didn't even realise that all of the buildings were actually replicas as some of them are that big! You need a few hours to do it justice. It truly is a photographer's dream. The major problem with this attraction is not so much that it is located so far from the centre of Bangkok – which in itself is a minor issue – but more that the attraction itself is spread out over a large area and is too big to comfortably walk around, hence the need for a car, which</p>	<p><b>BA 14</b></p>

<p>few visitors have – and I doubt many taxis would be keen to run you around at the standard metered rate. While some people (ONLY foreigners – a Thai would never dream of that) do walk around it, it really is made to be seen by car. I don't know how big it is but would guess quite a few square kilometres. You could try and hire a cab for a half a day to take you there, drive you around and drop you back into the centre of town. I'm not even going to try and give you directions on how to get there because I got lost when I tried to find it... Of course you can hire bicycle to make your way around but in the heat of the Thai sun that is going to become tough work. I hate to say it but this place has now introduced dual pricing and the cost for foreigners is 300 baht while for Thais it is 100 baht. Is it worth visiting? I'll leave it to you to make that choice.</p>	
<p>Some of the other more popular attractions for tourists visiting Bangkok are actually outside the city limits. I have never been to the Floating Market which is actually in Rachaburi province, to the south-west of the capital as I have heard that it is very heavily touristed and such attractions don't appeal that much. However, there are supposed to be really good opportunities for photography. I have also never been to the Crocodile farm which is located very close to the Ancient City. Like snakes, crocs make me nervous. Also, the price for foreigners of 400 baht, is eight times the price for Thais at 50 baht – and I refuse to play that game. Make it 100 baht for everyone and I'll check it out.</p>	<p><b>BA 15</b></p>
<p>There are a number of different companies offering dinner cruises on the Chao Praya river. Some of the deals are for a buffet dinner and some are a la carte. Figure at least 1,000 baht a head. The river is a really impressive part of the city and is well worth spending a good chunk of your time.</p>	<p><b>BA 16</b></p>
<p><b>Khao San Road</b> If you're travelling on a budget then and are planning to spend some time in Bangkok then you will almost certainly spend some time in Khao San Road, the backpackers ghetto (and I don't use that term lightly) of Bangkok. This 400 odd metre stretch of road and its immediate surrounds are home to all of the businesses that a traveller ever needs with cheap restaurants, internet cafes, travel agencies, photo processing stores and of course a multitude of guesthouses and cheap accommodation as well as many like-minded people on the road, just like you.</p>	<p><b>BA 17</b></p>
<p>Khao San Road is actually well located for anyone visiting Bangkok as it is walking distance to the river and the most interesting and historically significant parts of the city. The must see Grand Palace is about a mile or so away, easily walkable, even in Bangkok's oppressive heat.</p>	<p><b>BA 18</b></p>
<p>For those on a real tight budget, you should be able to find a room for as little as 100 – 150 baht a night. There are cheap places in other areas of Bangkok but not the sheer range and number of places that are available at Khao San in this price range. However, you shouldn't expect the Ritz at this price.</p>	<p><b>BA 19</b></p>
<p>Khao San is slowly moving upmarket. In the old days it was all about cheap, cheaper and cheapest, but now you have more and more better places. Starbucks, McDonalds and Burger King can all be found there and the accommodation options are moving up with some better places charging well over 1,000 baht for a room for a night, and at that price point you're starting to think more of a mid-range place than truly budget accommodation.</p>	<p><b>BA 20</b></p>
<p>I used to think of Khao San Road as a rat hole serving Western food and culture to those who seem oblivious to the fact that they had travelled half way around the world to exotic Asia, only to spend it amongst their Western peers in this false hybrid environment. But as I spent more time at Khao San, never as a traveller mind you, only ever as a resident of Bangkok going to the area for a night out, I began to warm to it. One can find fun out there and the vibe isn't bad once you know where to go.</p>	<p><b>BA 21</b></p>
<p>A lot of Bangkok residents, that is Westerners and Thais, like to go to Khao San Road for a night out as it is different to anywhere else in the city. Having said that, the area is still dominated by budget travellers. What makes me laugh about this bunch is how they try to show off to all and sundry how much they have learnt about Thai culture by doing such dumb, improper and</p>	<p><b>BA 22</b></p>

<p>downright inappropriate things such as wai-ing every Thai service provider they deal with. You can see the Thais snicker to themselves when the intrepid farang makes a fool of himself!</p>	
<p>Khao San Road has all of the essentials for anyone travelling through Bangkok, Thailand or on to other popular spots in the region. Hippies and wannabe hippies trying to recapture the romance of those who travelled through the region in the '70s can buy their hippy attire on Khao San.</p>	<b>BA 23</b>
<p>Ironically it's also the best place to buy a variety of copied documents such as foreign press passes, journalist passes, international driving licenses, degrees, RSA English teaching qualifications, ISIC cards etc. Just remember that these documents are NOT real and if you are caught using them in Thailand and purporting them as originals then you will probably go to jail! Think I'm joking? I'm not! In early 2007 there was a major crackdown on foreigners using fake degrees and purporting them to be originals. The first two guys charged pleaded guilty and were sentenced to three months in a Bangkok prison.</p>	<b>BA 24</b>
<p>A few of the cheaper eateries have disappeared, making way for some interesting bars. Khao San at night can be a fun place and sitting outside one of the restaurants, sinking a few cold ones and chewing the fat is something I enjoy. Khao San Road has increased in popularity with the Thais and at around 10:00 PM, a lot of Thais of university student age descend on the street. They usually start at one of the outdoor bars and as the night goes on drift in to one of the dark clubs, of which there are more than a few.</p>	<b>BA 25</b>
<p>Suzy's Bar was the most popular for some time....and then Gulliver's came along. These two venues remain popular and with the growth of the street as a centre of nightlife and entertainment there are now quite a number of popular venues and an old guy like me can't keep up with where the most popular spots are. It should be noted that a number of the bars on Khao San Road are home to Thai working girls, so for you guys, if you meet a girl who wants to go back to your guesthouse, please be aware that in the morning she might expect 1,000 baht or more from you!</p>	<b>BA 26</b>
<p>The bars in the Khao San Road area are amongst the more reasonable places in Bangkok for a night out. A bottle of Heineken or a local beer ranges from around 70 – 80 baht and something harder, such as Jack Daniels coke should be less than 100 baht. Local beers can be very cheap, at around 50 – 70 baht a bottle. Obviously there are cheaper and more expensive places but this should give some idea of the prices you'll pay.</p>	<b>BA 27</b>
<p>There are also some interesting bars in the streets and alleys around Khao San and there's even a temple just across the road from the Police Station at the west end of the road. The lanes surrounding the temple have some great little bars and restaurants. Some good second hand bookshops exist in the area but prices asked are steep for second hand gear – surely, people don't actually pay these prices which seem to be around 50 – 60% of retail for a book on its last legs up to about 80% of retail for one in good condition.</p>	<b>BA 28</b>
<p>Khao San Road is worth a visit and its location is good, but it may not be the best place to stay if you are not into the whole backpacker ghetto scene. While some visitors may describe the area as vibrant, others might just call it noisy!</p>	<b>BA 29</b>
<p>It seems that a lot of Westerners come to Khao San Road, spend a week there and then leave for one of the southern islands never seeing the real Bangkok – which seems to be rather a shame. There's much more to Bangkok than Khao San Road and its surrounds!</p>	<b>BA 30</b>
<p>Khao San Road and the surrounding lanes offer a zillion food options – and most are very good value. Be a little daring and wander away from Khao San Road itself and try something from a street vendor!</p>	<b>BA 31</b>
<p>For an alternative neighbourhood with budget accommodation, you might like to consider Soi Kasemsan 1 in the Patumwan area. It is very conveniently located in central Bangkok, right across the road from Mahboonkrong Shopping Centre. In this particular lane you can find several guesthouses with rooms in the 450 – 500 baht range – and you get a far better room for</p>	<b>BA 32</b>

<p>the money than you would in the Khao San area. The major shopping district of Siam Square is a stone's throw away and the soi is right beside the National Stadium skytrain station which is convenient if you have any business to do in the city, or if one of your primary reasons for visiting Bangkok is either shopping or nightlife, for the best shopping and nightlife areas are all on, or very close to the skytrain lines</p>	
<p>You can actually find cheap hotels all over Bangkok and many apartment buildings will also be happy to rent you a room for a short stay. Even way out in the suburbs you can see apartment buildings with big signs in English saying that they will rent out rooms by the day / week / month.</p>	<b>BA 33</b>
<p><b>Pros</b> The Thai capital is less about tourist attractions – although there are many, but more about the vibe. Friendly people who are easily excited like to have fun – and their attitude and zest for life can be infectious.</p>	<b>BA 34</b>
<p><b>Cons</b> It's a drab, grey city with awful traffic problems. It is also home to some who prey on tourists with various scams. You won't get hit over the head and left for dead, but you might get tricked or deceived out of your money.</p>	<b>BA 35</b>
<p><b>The Bottom Line</b> Worth a few days of your time!</p>	<b>BA 36</b>
<p>* Please note that there is only a limited amount of information on this page about tourist attractions in Bangkok. For more information about the Thai capital you might want to check out the living and working in Bangkok section of the site which has much more information about the city, although it is less from the perspective of a tourist, and more from that of an expat.</p>	<b>BA 37</b>

<b>Content: Phuket (PH)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>It was beautiful Phuket that first lured me to Thailand. A friend had visited Thailand the previous Christmas and raved about Thailand, especially Phuket. We had been friends for a long time and he knew the sort of things I liked and said Phuket would be the ideal holiday destination for me. At that time in my life, I used to love just sitting around in the sun all day doing little to nothing. When I finally made it to the paradise island, I fell in love with Phuket which holds a special place in my heart. In fact when I first moved to Thailand my plan was to go to Phuket and secure a job teaching English down there but for whatever reason, it never happened and I ended up in Bangkok.</p>	<b>PH 1</b>
<p>Phuket is one of the world's premier beach holiday destinations and ranks alongside the French Riviera, the Mediterranean and Hawaii as places where people will happily endure up to 24 hours discomfort on a plane for the promise of the quintessential beach holiday. But is Phuket the quintessential Thai beach holiday? With Phuket now firmly ranking up there as one of the world's premier beach destinations, the secluded beach charm that this island once laid claim to has well and truly gone and we now have a tourism industry centered around the noisy, rowdy and highly touristed Patong Beach. Patong Beach is NOT Thailand – it feels more like a slice of Europe to me, quite frankly.</p>	<b>PH 2</b>
<p>Phuket is an island connected to the Thai mainland by a bridge, and is located about 1,000 km from Bangkok. While most people choose to reach the island by plane, you can also drive the distance, something I did in 2006 in a very brisk 10 hours. Buses all depart Bangkok for Phuket but the train doesn't make it that far. If you wanted to travel by train, you would have to get off at Surat Thani in the south and make your way to Phuket from there by bus.</p>	<b>PH 3</b>
<p>There are many beaches around the island province of Phuket but by far and away the most developed is Patong Beach. Patong Beach is tourist central where all of the nations of the world</p>	<b>PH 4</b>

come together. I have always felt that Patong Beach was like a far flung satellite of continental Europe. Europeans holidaying read European newspapers, eat European style food and demand all of the things that they expect at home. Here you will find far, far, far more Indian and Italian restaurants than you will Thai restaurants, proving just how touristed Patong place has become. One tip with such ethnic restaurants is to check where the chef comes from. An Italian restaurant with an Italian chef likely has better food than an Italian restaurant with a Thai chef.

Patong is the nightlife capital of the island and over the last 15 years has grown into something of a sex tourism destination, not that much different to Pattaya, only smaller. Soi after soi can be found with naughty bars full of naughty women. Bangla Road on Patpong Beach comes alive at night as garish neon signs and almost equally as garish women actively seek out the company of foreign men for the night, for a price of course. The naughty bars can also be found elsewhere in the island, in fact wherever you find Western bars, you find girly bars. There is a smaller number at Karon and even fewer over at Kata. For Phuket nightlife, Patong is the centre.

The beach itself at Patong gets very busy and you may find yourself fighting for space on the beach with folks from every country you have ever heard of and a few that you haven't heard of. Jet skis roar past disturbing the peace and tranquility and touts race around the beach, trying to convince you of the merits of paragliding. Patong Beach remains the most popular spot on Phuket but in my mind it is not the nicest of the Phuket beaches. Venture around a little and you can find some lovely spots.

South of Patpong Beach is Karon Beach, my favourite of Phuket's beaches. 3 km of soft white sand lead gently down to the beautiful Andaman Sea. Karon Beach doesn't have nearly as many hotels as Patpong so there aren't nearly as many people on Karon which makes it that much more relaxing. You also don't have the same number of pests coming to sell their junk which is a relief. If you want hustle and bustle, a great range of restaurants and plenty of nightlife, then Karon may not be for you. But if you want a gorgeous beach with less razzmatazz, a place where you CAN actually kick back, and relax, then Karon is an ideal location.

While accommodation prices have moved in a similar manner to those at Patong, the prices at Karon are more attractive than Patong. Perhaps the one downside about Karon Beach is that the beach is not considered safe for swimming in the monsoon season, which in Phuket is from the end of May until the start of November. A number of Western tourists drown on Phuket every year, many simply do not heed the advice clearly stated on signs saying that one should not swim at these times.

South of Karon Beach is Kata Beach, a somewhat smaller beach that is NOT a private beach for Club Med as some people believe. This, like Karon, is another really lovely beach and a great place to wile away the days and baste yourself under the hot Thai sun. Accommodation and restaurants are a little cheaper there than the other beaches. It is certainly much quieter and less hustle and bustle than Patong.

Throughout the tourism high season from December right through to the Songkran holidays in April, Phuket is over run with Europeans, trying to escape their cold, politically correct homelands. Phuket provides them with a tropical island paradise, but also with the promise of all of the comforts of home. Indeed, Phuket is so developed now that it rivals the aforementioned Hawaii and French Riviera for Western facilities. Ask anyone to name just one Thai beach destination and odds are that Phuket is the one that will roll off their lips first, such is the proliferation of tourism in this slice of paradise.

A decade ago Phuket was affordable to all, but when the Thai currency crashed in the middle of 1997, Phuket hotels adjusted their rates accordingly and Phuket accommodation can now be quite expensive during the high season – fuelled by ever increasing demand. Hotels in Phuket are generally considered the most expensive in all of Thailand, even more expensive than what you find in Bangkok.

Another reason why Phuket has boomed in recent years is the turbulence in Indonesia with the Bali bombings which saw thousands of people cancelling their holidays to Bali and switching

**PH 5**

**PH 6**

**PH 7**

**PH 8**

**PH 9**

**PH 10**

**PH 11**

**PH 12**

<p>to Phuket instead. A lot of these people that previously went to Bali have now found that Phuket offers so much more and Phuket is one big winner...</p>	
<p>One of the downsides of Phuket is getting around the island. If you are daring, motorbikes can be hired from as little as 150 baht per day, but I personally am simply not game to get on the back of one of these and zoom around on the island's dangerous roads. Every year, hundreds of foreigners are involved in motorbike crashes on Phuket and many accidents are fatal.</p>	<p><b>PH 13</b></p>
<p>The next option on Phuket becomes Phuket's public transport, the small red songtaews that the drivers often refer to as tuktuks, which they clearly are not. The drivers of these vehicles ask for and get silly money for what really are short journeys. A typical journey would be the hill road from Patong over to Karon Beach, or vice versa. In 1997, you could easily get this for 50 baht which was fair as it is probably about a 6 – 7 km journey but in 1998, prices had shot up to 150 baht and getting it for any less than that proved quite difficult. Nowadays, the cost is more like 200 – 300 baht. This is a CRAZY price and proves that a false economy exists – there is no way a Thai would pay that price but Western tourists, especially Europeans who may think in terms of the prices in Euros don't even think twice about it. I wonder if there is a huge list of people wanting to become tuktuk drivers on Phuket because with these sorts of fares, they could become rich overnight. Travelling across the island to Phuket Town will cost even more and I guess hiring one of these little vehicles to get you over there would be in the region of 500 baht.</p>	<p><b>PH 14</b></p>
<p>Phuket Town, the provincial capital, is located on the east of the island, 20+ km from the popular beaches where much of the tourism industry is centered. It is a funny sort of a place and almost seems out of place on what can mistakenly seem like a farang dominated island. Sure, there are far more Thai nationals living on Phuket than farangs and other foreigners but it is the foreigners that you notice as you do your rounds on the west coast beaches. Phuket Town is just like any other small non-descript provincial Thai town – with nothing in particular going for it. There is a Robinson's Department Store which makes for a nice place to go and escape the heat. In that particular shopping centre there are a few other shops but really, there is nothing that really warrants making the journey over there. You could go up the hill and get a decent view over Phuket Town or go down and see the port with all of the fishing boats, that is if you are really bored.</p>	<p><b>PH 15</b></p>
<p>A few years back a large Central Shopping Centre opened in the centre of the island, between the beaches on the west coast and Phuket Town. This is the island's largest shopping centre and hope to a modern cinema multiplex. The Thais realise that tourists attracted to Phuket are a relatively well off crowd and it seems to me that everything is expensive, right across the board. Sure, you can get a plate of fried rice for 25 baht on the street if you really hunt hard for it but I don't notice many foreigners eating from such vendors in Phuket. Besides, restaurants selling Thai style food at these prices are well away from the areas where most of the farangs venture. Restaurants are dear as stated already but most everything on the beach is dear too. Deck chairs used to go for 50 baht a chair as opposed to 10 – 20 in other parts of Thailand, but then I have heard they have now gone up to 100 baht – can anyone confirm that? The fellows walking along selling ice creams often sell them at three times the standard price. The paragliding and jet ski prices are about 50% dearer than other beaches in Thailand.</p>	<p><b>PH 16</b></p>
<p>Phuket is a magnificent place for a holiday but if you are on a budget, you may want to consider that a cheaper time can be had elsewhere. Sadly, it doesn't look as though things will change too quickly as tourists continue to visit Phuket in record numbers.</p>	<p><b>PH 17</b></p>
<p>And just to top the expensive pricing off, if you decide to go to Phuket by air, the airport is a bit of a hike from the main beach areas and it will cost you in excess of 500 baht to get a taxi to reach one of the West coast beaches. You can grab a seat in a minivan for 150 baht.</p>	<p><b>PH 18</b></p>
<p>The west coast beaches of Phuket, namely Patong, Karon and Kata beaches are almost entirely tourism based economies and the local Thais are fully aware that it is the farang that lays the golden egg. While scams and overcharging may occur, these beaches are generally safe and crimes of violence or theft against tourists are not common. The locals are very conscious of the need to make sure the foreigners keep returning – and keep spending money.</p>	<p><b>PH 19</b></p>



<p>There are many day trip options available from Phuket. Two of these in particular are well worthwhile. The first recommended day trip is the one that takes you to Phanga Bay and the so called James Bond Island. Phanga Bay is the province immediately north of Phuket and is famous for its limestone cliffs and rock structures that jut out of the water. A lot of the day trips to Phanga will incorporate a visit to the James Bond Island, so named because it was used in the filming of the movie, "Man With The Golden Gun". There is usually a visit to one of the island based Muslim villages where lunch is served, and which are interesting to explore and get a feel of village life. There's usually also a stop at one of the small offshore islands where you get a chance to sit in the sun for an hour or so, soak up the sun's rays and go for a swim in the crystal clear, warm tropical waters. A lot of the time is spent cruising around the scenic bay. The day trip I took in that neck of the woods was probably the best day trip I have taken in Thailand. While you could do it yourself by hiring long tail boats etc, I found that by doing it in a small group on a bigger boat was a lot of fun.</p>	<b>PH 20</b>
<p>The second day trip that is well worthwhile is over to the small paradise like island, Phi Phi. This is the island where every Thai girl's heart-throb Leo Di Caprio filmed the movie, "The Beach". This island is stunningly beautiful and I reckon that 20 years ago, it would have been one of the most idyllic places on the planet. Sadly, this is no longer the case and tourism has all but ruined it. Don't get me wrong, you can go there and thoroughly enjoy it but with it being heavily touristed, one day is enough. Thousands of daytrippers and package tourists go there every day. You can stay overnight or for a number of nights, but accommodation prices can be steep.</p>	<b>PH 21</b>
<p>I am not a diver but there are a lot of diving operations operating off Phuket and I am told that the diving in the area is really excellent. Phuket has totally recovered from the tsunami which hit a few years back.</p>	<b>PH 22</b>
<p><b>Pros</b> Beautiful, diverse island with a little something for most people. Some beautiful beaches. Some SUPERB day trips available including Phi Phi Island and Phanga Bay.</p>	<b>PH 23</b>
<p><b>Cons</b> Phuket isn't cheap. A lot of very jaded Thais work the Phuket tourist scene. Local transport is far too expensive. Food prices, especially some of the restaurants in big hotels targeting Westerners, are expensive.</p>	<b>PH 24</b>
<p><b>The Bottom Line</b> If you want a comfortable beach holiday with Western comforts, Phuket is the place for you.</p>	<b>PH 25</b>

<b>Content: Ko Samet (KST)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>Ko Samet is located about 200 km southeast of Bangkok and as the word "Ko" designates, it's an island. Travelling from Bangkok you will need to get to Bahn Pe where most of the ferries leave the mainland from, bound for Ko Samet, or Samet Island as it should technically be called in English.</p>	<b>KST 1</b>
<p>Ko Samet can be reached from Bangkok in about four hours and there are a couple of different ways of getting there. The easiest way is to go to the bus station at Ekamai, almost beside the Ekamai skytrain station, and take the bus to Bahn Pe, a small fishing town on the mainland from where most boats depart for the island. The cost of the bus is under 200 baht and although the port may not be the last stop for the bus, it stops there and the driver will ask if anyone wants to go to Samet at which point you get off the bus.</p>	<b>KST 2</b>
<p>Once at Bahn Pe, you take a boat over to the mainland. There are a number of different piers with ferry boats going to the different bays on the island – so you need to know which part of the island you wish to go to. The cost of the ferry was 40 baht each way the last time I took it and you buy your ticket before you get on board. I'm not sure if there are any schedules and it</p>	<b>KST 3</b>

<p>may just a case of getting on the first boat while the captain waits for enough people to get on board. You don't usually have to wait too long.</p>	
<p>The other way to get to Ko Samet is to buy an all inclusive ticket from one of the many travel agents in Bangkok, particularly in the Khao San Road area. The all inclusive price to get there varies but is usually around 300 – 400 baht. If you arrange the travel yourself, you will get there cheaper.</p>	<b>KST 4</b>
<p>In choppy seas, the boat trip over can be a nasty affair and many a foreigner has suffered a bout of seasickness and sent some undigested food overboard! The boats usually stop going over to the island early evening so if you arrive in Bahn Pe late it can be difficult to get one to take you over. If you really wanted to go over, you could hire a boat to take you over – no idea how much it would cost but I guess in the region of several hundred baht. You can also hire a speed boat to take you over which is obviously going to save time, and these go for upwards of 1,000 baht.</p>	<b>KST 5</b>
<p>When you first arrive at Samet, presumably by one of the slow boats (speedboats are available but expensive), you will arrive at a pier where you will see a number of songtaews (pick up trucks with bench seats in the rear). The drivers will take you over the small hill to one of the beaches at 20 baht per person to one of the near beaches, or more for one of further beaches. I believe you can hire the entire songtaew yourself at upwards of 200 baht. It is only a few hundred metres to the first (and biggest) beach, so it's an easy walk. A great way to explore Samet is by foot – just wander around and see where you end up!</p>	<b>KST 6</b>
<p>In a shock move that even the TAT complained about when it was first introduced, the government changed the rules applying to the entry of national parks in Thailand. Previously it cost 20 baht per person to enter a national park, a fair and reasonable figure. But in all their lack of wisdom, the Thai government decided to fleece foreigners and put the price FOR FOREIGNERS ONLY up to 400 baht per person. What is most insulting is that you get NOTHING for this. There is little in the way of signs in English, the people taking your money often speak no more English than "you pay 400 baht" and it is foreigners who respect the national parks much more than Thais. Whereas many Thais think nothing of discarding rubbish in a national park, the average foreigner hangs on to that which they intend to throw out and discard it into a bin.</p>	<b>KST 7</b>
<p>You can (or at least you used to be able to) get around this 400 baht but it is not too easy. I do however downright encourage you to try. When on the mainland, you can buy a ticket for 50 baht, instead of the usual 400 baht. What the local entrepreneurs do is go over to the island in the morning and buy a stack of entry tickets for 20 baht, saying that they are for Thai people. They then sell them on to foreigners at 50 baht, making a profit of 30 baht a ticket and the foreigner saves 250 baht. The tickets are identical and do not say whether they are for a Thai or foreigner. It's hard to say how long this will last...</p>	<b>KST 8</b>
<p>The first time I went to this island with beautiful little beaches, I was very impressed. The soft, white sand and the rows of beautiful palm trees and coconut trees nestled up where the sand ends all have an immediate effect on you. It truly feels like you have reached paradise.</p>	<b>KST 9</b>
<p>Samet is small in size and there is very little industry on it apart from tourism, fishing and basic services offered for both tourists and the island's residents. With this in mind, a lot of what is sold on the island has to be brought over from the mainland and this means the prices of basic goods can be much higher on the island than on the mainland. While it won't break the bank, a bottle of water or an ice-cream may cost several baht more than at the 7 Eleven at Bahn Pe.</p>	<b>KST 10</b>
<p>I have heard people rave about the food on Ko Samet but frankly I have never been too impressed. What is of some concern is that some of the food available may not be as fresh as it could be as again, it needs to be brought over from the mainland. With seafood one hopes that you'll be ok as there are fishermen operating in the waters surrounding the island but with some other foods, particularly meats such as chicken, pork and beef which must be brought over, they may not be as fresh as they could be. Have you ever seen the boats that everything is brought over on?</p>	<b>KST 11</b>
	<b>KST 12</b>

<p>Samet is small and frankly, there isn't a huge amount to do there. If you are happy just lazing away on the beach, reading, swimming and just relaxing the days away, you'll probably really like it but if you are looking for an exciting time, this is not the place. I have never stayed more than three days and doubt if I could stay much longer than that – but that is me and you could well be different.</p>	
<p>All over Thailand you find Western men chasing Thai women but it is all a little different on Samet. There are a bunch of handsome Thai boys on the island who chase Western females. Some of these Thai guys are just trying to bed a Western woman for the fun of it while others are in it for the money. Yep, you got it, the Western woman pays him!</p>	<b>KST 13</b>
<p>Ko Samet has a real lack of nightlife and the last time I was there you could not find any of the girly bars so popular in other parts of Thailand. There are a few beachside bars but they are not of the girly variety! If you really want to go there with a companion, pick up someone in Pattaya and take her along with you.</p>	<b>KST 14</b>
<p>Every time I have visited the main beach at Samet there has been a group of transsexuals hanging around, dressed up on drag. I guess that there is some sort of cabaret show (or funny show as the Thais refer to it) held on the island but I've never actually seen it. The katoeys are harmless (unlike their Bangkok counterparts) and seem more than happy to pose and have their picture taken with tourists, especially Asian tour groups which come over for the day.</p>	<b>KST 15</b>
<p>The beaches at Samet are not that big and it's unfortunate that some tour companies now include Samet as a half day trip for Asian package tourists. Arriving late morning all equipped in exactly the same coloured tour group supplied clothes, these tour groups contribute towards crowding the main beach and generally making it less pleasant while they are there. They usually piss off mid-late afternoon and a degree of tranquility and serenity can once again set on the beach and you have every opportunity to watch the sunset go down with your tilac without them all gibbering away in that foul Chinese language.</p>	<b>KST 16</b>
<p>One disappointing aspect about Samet is the quality of accommodation available. A lot of very average places charge an awful lot for what they offer. Plenty of places charge several hundred baht a night for a VERY basic room with a fan and cold water shower – which is far too much really. I have heard that in the high season they might charge a lot more. It's quite simply a case of supply and demand and the demand for Samet is most definitely there. There are more higher end places opening but you'll be lucky to escape paying less than 3,000 baht a night. I don't know about this as I always thought that the appeal of Samet was a more rustic spot, and the idea of higher end places sort of puts me off – or at least that is my perception of it.</p>	<b>KST 17</b>
<p>While one does not want to spend too much time in their hotel or bungalow during the day, in Ko Samet this is further discouraged by the fact that at many establishments the power is off during the day. The beachfront restaurants still have power so if you absolutely need to sit under a fan, head for one of them. Some of the dearer establishments do have power right throughout the day.</p>	<b>KST 18</b>
<p>Almost all of the hotels and guesthouses on Samet have a restaurant at the front that backs down on to the beach. Unfortunately, a lot of the chairs and tables in these restaurants go a fair way down the breadth of the beach making the beach feel a lot smaller than it actually is. You can use the deck chairs and umbrellas at most of these restaurants free of charge if you are either a paying guest at that particular hotel or are buying food or drinks in that particular restaurant. If you just wish to use the chairs and are neither of the above, there is a 20 baht charge for the use of the chair.</p>	<b>KST 19</b>
<p>Samet can get quite busy at the weekend, especially long weekends, when Bangkokians escape the madness of the capital and rooms can be hard to come by. Samet is one of few places in Thailand I would not head to without making a reservation first as there is only a limited number of places to stay, and there are even less in Bahn Pe, on the mainland.</p>	<b>KST 20</b>
<p>I used to really like Ko Samet, but I have gone off it. The encroachment of beach chairs and umbrellas on the beaches means there is less area to play and makes the place less scenic. Add</p>	<b>KST 21</b>

<p>to that the tour groups who come over for the day and make a huge amount of noise and the idea of it being a quite, relaxing place suddenly comes into question. Add into the equation the fact that accommodation is either expensive, or over-priced, and I find that I have crossed Ko Samet off my list of places to stay. What I prefer to do is to leave Bangkok on Saturday morning and drive straight through to Bahn Pe where I take the ferry over to the island and spend most of the day there. Late afternoon I take the ferry back to Bahn Pe where I hop into the car and drive to Pattaya where you can find very good accommodation at reasonable prices, as well as great restaurants and of course, a thriving nightlife.</p>	
<p>If I wanted to go somewhere close to Bangkok for a relaxing few days away at the beach I would choose Hua Hin. If one checks into one of the beachside hotels a little outside the main downtown area of Hua Hin you can find a huge, beautiful trip of beach all to yourself which is much to my preference than the chaos now found on Ko Samet.</p>	<b>KST 22</b>
<p><b>Sunset at Ko Samet</b> <b>Warning 1</b> The people selling boat tickets will always try and sell you a return ticket – there is NO benefit in buying one whatsoever! You might lose the ticket, you may decide to come back by a different means i.e. speedboat and occasionally they play games with the ticket saying that it is no longer valid or it is for a different boat so basically, don't bother.</p>	<b>KST 23</b>
<p><b>Warning 2</b> There are a number of agencies on or near the main road at Bahn Pe who take bookings for accommodation on the island. Why do they offer their service? They make a commission so if you are on a tight budget do yourself a favour and wait until you get over to the island where you can go hunting for accommodation yourself. They may try all sorts of tricks to try to get you to book with them including the classic scare tactic of saying that almost everything is full!</p>	<b>KST 24</b>
<p><b>Pros</b> Not too far from Bangkok and relatively easy to get to. Beautiful beaches on a paradise island. Low level of development – comparatively.</p>	<b>KST 25</b>
<p><b>Cons</b> Not a huge amount to do there – but some would consider that a bonus. Accommodation is expensive for what you get. It can get busy during the high season and the beach can get over run.</p>	<b>KST 26</b>
<p><b>The Bottom Line</b> Paradise is only four hours from Bangkok. A little pricey given the poor infrastructure but a nice place that appeals to some, and not to others.</p>	<b>KST 27</b>

<b>Content: Ko Samui (KSI)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>Ko Samui, once known as an affordable destination and a backpacker's paradise, is the second largest island in Thailand. It sits on the opposite side of the mainland from its bigger brother, Phuket. For so long the backpacker's domain, this island has been rapidly moving upmarket over the past decade and most of the development appears to be in the upper sectors of the market.</p>	<b>KSI 1</b>
<p>You can reach Ko Samui on Bangkok Airways and a return flight will cost you the best part of 8,000 baht for a flight that is a little under an hour. There are several flights between Bangkok and Samui every day. You can reach the island overland by travelling by Bangkok to Surat Thani by road and then taking a boat across. This could take many, many hours and unless money is tight, I would fly. Khao San Road travel agents offer deals from Khao San Road to Samui direct. I am not sure what the latest prices are, but I should imagine it would be in excess of 500 baht.</p>	<b>KSI 2</b>
	<b>KSI 3</b>

Samui is a pain to get to from Bangkok. If you have money to spend, little time or both, obviously the quickest way to get there is by plane. Bangkok Airways which owns the airport at Samui has a monopoly and they are rather expensive to say the least. Current return airfares between Samui and Bangkok are around 7,500 baht. Why is it so expensive? Well, there is no competition, is there? Thai Airways does not fly to Samui and that is a great shame for prices are too dear when you consider that Thai only charges 6,000 odd baht for return airfares between Bangkok and Phuket which is a lot further away than Samui... And just to make things worse, Bangkok Airways uses these old ATR-72 aircraft, hardly the most comfortable planes around. It seems that with even the smallest amount of turbulence you are getting thrown around in the sky. Give me a nice, big American manufactured aeroplane any day!

**KSI 4**

The other options for getting to Samui are far cheaper but take forever. First there is the train / bus / boat combination which costs around 500 – 600 baht depending on whether you buy tickets directly or go through a travel agent. If coming from Bangkok, you take the train to Surat Thani, the bus from Surat Thani to the port and obviously the boat over the water. This journey takes upwards of 18 hours! Finally there is the bus and boat combination and this takes about 16 hours and can cost as little as 300 baht. The choice of expensive transport or a slow boring journey has kept me away from Samui recently. I would love to go down for a holiday but frankly, it's a hassle to get there!

**KSI 5**

Samui is dominated by two beaches, Chaweng Beach which is the largest and most popular beach and Lamai Beach which is a few kilometres south and also very popular, although perhaps a little quieter as it is smaller and has less places to stay than the heavily developed Chaweng. There are other locations all over the island including Big Buddha and Bophut. This photo on the right shows what Chaweng used to look like a few years ago – this is the MAIN road going through the area just up from Chaweng Beach and the main drag where shops, restaurants etc are. This general lack of infrastructure is what I did not like about Samui on my first visit but that has all changed and the infrastructure has been developed markedly since my first visit back in 1998.

**KSI 6**

Chaweng is all the action, dance and song part of Samui where people say that they have come for the "laid back atmosphere" but really all they seem to be doing is drinking, smoking all sorts of weird substances and partying until they drop. The beach itself is quite long and in my mind, it is nice but somewhat over-rated. For my money, you cannot compare this beach to Karon in Phuket or even Lamai, the other big beach on Samui. It is a few kilometres long so even with the hordes traipsing to and are setting up camp on Samui, you can always find your own little plot somewhere along the beach.

**KSI 7**

Lamai Beach is my favourite beach on the island, a gently curving beach that while a lot shorter than Chaweng, is nicer, in my opinion. Very picturesque, Lamai seems to feature in more postcards than its bigger and more popular brother, Chaweng.

**KSI 8**

While everyone does it all the time, it really is hard to compare Phuket and Samui as they are quite different. Phuket is THE Asian international beach destination and Ko Samui is the up and coming star. Phuket has lots of high rise hotels while at this stage, Ko Samui does not, but I would not be at all surprised to see this change in the VERY near future. Phuket has a reasonable infrastructure with sealed roads all around the island while in parts, Samui has dirt track style roads. Phuket does not really appeal to the budget traveller or backpackers whereas Samui does. Samui does not have much of a sex tourism scene though it is growing. Compare this with Patong Beach on Phuket which has a thriving scene that, if it continues, will one day challenge Pattaya. Phuket has a huge number of international restaurants whereas a lot of the eateries on Samui are still Thai style places.

**KSI 9**

The infrastructure on Samui is still coming along and for many that it is one of the big appeals about the place. The island is seeing a lot of development at present and a lot of it seems to be at the mid to upper sector tourists – after all, these are the big spenders and are the ones that the TAT seems to want to attract the most. This is not to say that the bottom end of the market will disappear as the demand from this type of traveller is still very strong but it does demonstrate the changing face of Samui. Wherever you go on the island, you can hear the sounds of band saws, and hammers & nails as groups of Thai builders hurry to put up the next establishment in

time for the next high season. I don't know if you can still get a bungalow for 150 baht if you look really hard, well, you never know.	
Pattaya used to be the place for sex and sand in Thailand and still retains the crown for the sex and sand capital of Thailand. Phuket started to go this way in the early '90s and now has a very well developed bar scene with sois and sois full of bars with girls for hire. For a long time Samui seemed largely exempt from the sex for sale scene. Sure, it did exist but it was never really anything like was available in other places. This has since changed and Samui now has a flourishing bargirl scene. Thai girls flock in from the poorer parts of Thailand to meet the wealthy Western men and now that Samui's identity is slowly changing from a backpacker hangout to another Asian beach paradise, so to do the wealthier tourists arrive. There is an ever increasing demand for girls on the island and the girls are going to Ko Samui in ever greater numbers. Chaweng Beach even has a couple of gogo bars.	<b>KSI 10</b>
Nearby Samui is Ko Phangnan and not far from Ko Phangnan is Ko Tao. Ko Phangnan is where a lot of the backpackers end up these days, a smaller island that is a short boat ride north of Samui. There is nothing on this page at this stage as I have never been there. It happens to be the home of the Full Moon Party when everyone parties all night and gets silly on dope and all sorts of other illicit and dangerous substances – not really my idea of fun but many seem to have a real blast there. Ko Tao is said to be one of the best places in Thailand for diving, although again, I have never been there.	<b>KSI 11</b>
<b>Pros</b> Nice beaches. Has a nice atmosphere, not too quiet but not too developed. Still affordable – but for how much longer?	<b>KSI 12</b>
<b>Cons</b> Getting there from Bangkok is a little pricey. Too many backpackers arguing over who has paid the least for this or that.	<b>KSI 13</b>
<b>The Bottom Line:</b> A nice alternative to Phuket. It is not as developed as Phuket, which may or may not be to your taste.	<b>KSI 14</b>

<b>Content: Hua Hin (HH)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
Hua Hin, approximately 200 km southeast of Bangkok, has been a popular weekend getaway for Bangkok Thais for decades and has gained popularity with foreigners over the past 15 or so years. Over this time it has developed with more big hotels, more restaurants and more things to do and today it is a very real beach holiday alternative to Thailand's more popular beach resorts of Phuket, Ko Samui and Pattaya.	<b>HH 1</b>
Hua Hin is home to Wang Glai-gang-won, the beautifully named palace (it means the palace a long way from worry or anxiety) where HM The King used to reside. Almost everyone reaches the pleasant seaside town by road, be it private car, minivan, taxi or bus. You could take the train but it is slow, and it is hardly worth flying there as you can get there by road in less than 2.5 hours from Bangkok.	<b>HH 2</b>
In the downtown area there are a couple of 5 star hotels, namely the Hilton, the large hotel set beside the beach, right in the best location, as well as the beautiful Sofitel Resort, a lovely low rise hotel complex that attempts to preserve some of the old Thai traditions. There are many 4- and 5-star venues a little outside the main downtown area. It would be handy to have a car to drive between them and downtown. While local transport options exist, having the use of your own vehicle would be much more preferable. Hotel shuttle buses operate between resorts and the downtown area but can be rather pricey.	<b>HH 3</b>
There are a number of mid range hotels in downtown Hua Hin which in this particular beach area means 1,000 – 2,000 baht a night. Prices vary greatly between the different Thai beaches	<b>HH 4</b>

<p>and islands! For this you get the usual air-con room with hot water shower, cable TV and a fridge. The newer the hotel and the closer it is to the beach, the more you will pay.</p>	
<p>While Hua Hin might not be on the backpacker trail, there are a number of guesthouses, some of which are set by the bay – some are even on wharves right over the water. There are also inexpensive accommodation options in the heart of the nightlife area, or back up on Phetkasem Road, that is the main road that runs through Hua Hin which is perhaps 400 – 500 metres back from the beach – easily walkable.</p>	<b>HH 5</b>
<p>Hua Hin is very popular at the weekend when middle and upper class Thais flock there. As such, the rates charged at hotels outside of the traditional December to April high season can be much higher on Friday and Saturday nights, as well as holiday weekends. You can get some very good deals in the low season on weeknights! Also, if you need to get back to Bangkok in a hurry, the roads going back to the capital can be quite suggested on Sundays as Thais and expats return.</p>	<b>HH 6</b>
<p>The beach is very nice – long and the sand is white and soft. The words hua hin in Thai mean head of rocks and the beach has many, many rocks. If you like horse riding, then Hua Hin is the beach for you. Small horses are ridden up and down the beach at Hua Hin by their handlers who try to sell you the romance of a beach horse ride. I really do not know how much it costs these days. Several years ago it was 350 baht an hour but I would not be surprised if it was double that now.. Personally, I think they are a pest. Some of the riders are aggressive in the way they ride the horses, at high speed, close to people trying to relax, and they are aggressive in the way they try and get you to part with your hard-earned.</p>	<b>HH 7</b>
<p>There are fewer beach chairs and umbrellas for hire in Hua Hin compared to other more developed beaches in Thailand where the whole beachfront can be taken up by vendors. At the main beach entrance, there’s a relatively small number of chairs and umbrellas for hire, but that part of the beach isn’t so nice.</p>	<b>HH 8</b>
<p>In addition to Thais who flock to Hua Hin at the weekend – who tend to stay at hotels and in large condo buildings outside of the main city centre – Hua Hin seems to be popular with Europeans. It’s hardly the place for a party animal and the nightlife couldn’t be described as bustling. Frankly, if you are young or at least young at heart, then you may want to consider somewhere else. Still, there are plenty of young people just chilling out in Hua Hin, including many Western couples.</p>	<b>HH 9</b>
<p>I first visited Hua Hin in 1999 when Soi Bintaht was only soi of naughty bars for Westerners. The nonsense was contained in this small soi and didn’t spill over into areas. That has all changed now. There were perhaps 12 – 15 bars back then but goodness only knows how many there are now? More like 50 I should imagine. The bars are small, each with a handful of girls and in a way they feel a little out of place in Hua Hun. They should really be transplanted over to Pattaya.</p>	<b>HH 10</b>
<p>With that said, the bars in Hua Hin is more pleasant than their equivalents in the other parts of Thailand. In Bangkok, Pattaya and Phuket, the girls are often hard and silly. In the bars of Hua Hin attitudes of the ladies are cheerful for the most part, and drinks prices remain reasonable. Prices are a fair bit lower than other areas. Still, let me re-iterate that even though there is an increasingly bigger bar area in Hua Hin, if such things interest you then you would likely have a better time in Pattaya or Phuket. I hear that the Hilton Hotel has a disco but I have never been there myself. I’m not sure about other nightlife opportunities because whenever I go to Hua Hin, it’s to relax, not to party.</p>	<b>HH 11</b>
<p>Several kilometres south of the main downtown Hua Hin area is Khao DaGiap, which translates as Chopsticks Mountain. On the mountain is a very nice Chinese style Buddhist temple which overrun with monkeys. They’re mischievous but fun to watch as they fight each other for bananas and other treats that visitors can buy. It’s worth visiting and well worth an hour or two of your time.</p>	<b>HH 12</b>
	<b>HH 13</b>

<p>Another Hua Hin I never bore of is King Rama 6's Summer Palace, a very small part of which is pictured here, which is located about 15 km outside of the main city area, on the main road between Cha Am and Hua Hun. It's an unusual palace complex, and like Khao DaGiap is very much worth visiting. I've been a number of times and it's disappointing to see few Western tourists there. I think most people who go there would enjoy it. Entry is a paltry 30 baht – although getting there and back will cost you much more.</p>	<b>HH 14</b>
<p>Eating out in Hua Hin is great! You can get fantastic inexpensive Thai food at the night market. The seafood restaurants that hang out over the bay are for my money the best in a major tourist town in Thailand – great food and fair value for money – not such an easy combination to find these days!</p>	<b>HH 15</b>
<p>Downtown Hua Hin has many Western food restaurants and even the fast food outlets are represented. There are many Italian restaurants and you can find them next to each other. If you like Italian – and I do – then try Pizza Mia which is directly opposite the City Beach Resort on a road that leads down to the main beach entrance. It's been voted one of the best Italian eateries in Thailand and I love the place!</p>	<b>HH 16</b>
<p><b>Pros</b> A lovely beach that stretches for mile and miles, Hua Hin has a very nice holiday atmosphere, and is a great place to relax. Not as over-touristed as Phuket, Pattaya or Samui.</p>	<b>HH 17</b>
<p><b>Cons</b> The beach is rocky in parts and getting accommodation can be tricky at the weekend.</p>	<b>HH 18</b>
<p><b>The Bottom Line</b> A very nice beach resort that is sufficiently close to Bangkok as to be easily reachable for a couple of days away.</p>	

<b>Content: Cha Am (CHA)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>About 25 km north of Hua Hin on the way to Bangkok is Cha Am, a beach that curiously you'll read much less about in the guides and brochures than Hua Hin, but which at the weekend seems to be almost as busy, if not busier than its more well-known neighbour, Hua Hin itself.</p>	<b>CHA 1</b>
<p>Pictured here, Cha Am is a long beach which is very popular with Thais and becoming increasingly popular with Westerners. The beach area itself is not quite as nice as Hua Hin but as it is not an area of royal residence, as Hua Hin is, the rules are less relaxed and unlike Hua Hin you get lots of people selling things on the beach, something which very much appeals to the Thais, funnily enough. Yep, they see people bothering them every couple of minutes wanting to sell them something as an opportunity whereas the average farang sees it as a nuisance which bothers their leisure time. don't ever believe that Thais and westerners are not very, very different.</p>	<b>CHA 2</b>
<p>Like Bang Saen Beach, Cha Am is very popular with Bangkok Thais, as well as upcountry Thais, who flock there in droves at the weekend. Good luck trying to find a place to park your car, if that is how you choose to travel there, especially if you are only there for the day. (If you stay in a hotel then you'll be able to get parking there without much trouble). On weekdays the beach is quiet and relaxed and you can have big sections of the beach to yourself.</p>	<b>CHA 3</b>
<p>The big advantage of Cha Am over Hua Hin is that generally speaking, Cha Am attracts Thai tourists who are a bit more sensitive to price than Westerners. That means that things are cheaper. it also means that there is less in the way of restaurants that directly target Westerners but that is not to say that Westerners will have any problems there, quite the opposite. More and more Westerners seem to be heading to Cha Am and I was amazed at how many Western tourists were there on my last visit. The majority seemed to be older Europeans and I would not be surprised if Cha Am is sold as a cheaper alternative to Hua Hin, or perhaps it even gets some of the overflow from Hua Hin in the high season.</p>	<b>CHA 4</b>



I have to say that I am not a huge fan of Cha Am. OK, truth be told, I really have not spent that much time there, just a few hours, but the very reason for going there, the beach, is not all that special. I really think the beach at Hua Hin is much nicer and so I'll always choose Hua Hin over Cha Am. Still, if you are sensitive to price, then Cha Am offers you nice Thai beach resort at very reasonable prices.	<b>CHA 5</b>
<b>Pros</b> Cheaper than Hua Hin, especially in the case of lower end accommodation.	<b>CHA 6</b>
<b>Cons:</b> The beach really is not that special.	<b>CHA 7</b>
<b>The Bottom Line</b> An alternative to Hua Hin.	<b>CHA 8</b>

<b>Content: Ko Chang (KCH)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
Ko Chang, which means Elephant Island in Thai, is the second largest island in Thailand and is located on the Eastern Seaboard, most of the way towards the Cambodian border. The island is part of a national park, but unlike Ko Samet, you do NOT have to pay a fee to enter the island. The fee on Ko Chang applies only to some of the inland areas and to the area with the main waterfall.	<b>KCH 1</b>
Comparisons with Ko Samet are inevitable. Ko Chang is similarly priced in terms of accommodation and restaurants. The infrastructure in Ko Chang is also similar with electricity being a problem at times and not all bungalows offering electricity running for 24 hours. If travelling by the most common form of bus, boat and then songtaew, the beaches at Ko Chang take about seven hours to get to from Bangkok, whereas the beaches on Ko Samet can be reached in four. To get to Ko Chang from Bangkok, you need to take a bus (around 170 baht) from the Eastern (Ekamai) bus station to Trat and this takes around 5 hours. From Trat, you take a songtaew (30 baht) to the coast and from the coast, a boat (50 baht) over to the island. Once you have landed on the island, songtaews (30 – 70 baht) are waiting to take you to the beaches, the bulk of which are on the west coast. So, the total cost to get to one of the beaches in Ko Chang is around 300 baht. Note: The bus from Bangkok to Trat may drop you off on the main highway, before you reach Trat at a location from which you can get a songtaew straight to the coast, thus saving you a little time.	<b>KCH 2</b>
There are several beaches on Ko Chang, most on the western side of the island. They are all ok, but in my opinion, none of the are as nice as the best beaches on Samet, Samui or Phuket. That's not to say that they are not nice, more that the beaches elsewhere are really good. But, the beaches do have other things going for them.	<b>KCH 3</b>
Due to its relatively isolated location, in so much that it really isn't that close to other popular tourist spots, Ko Chang does not suffer from the boatloads of day trippers that Ko Samet suffers from. It also seems free of jet skis and parasailing though you can hire a kayak if you wish and boat trips are always available. Like every beach spot in Thailand, you get the beach vendors trying to sell you stuff but unlike Pattaya where they will sell you just about anything, in Ko Chang, they are not pushy and only seem to sell things relevant to your beach holiday like food and sarongs.	<b>KCH 4</b>
For me, where Ko Chang lets itself down is that it is overpriced for what you get. The principles of demand and supply have pushed prices up to what I believe are unrealistic levels. I'm more than happy to rough it and stay in rustic, sometimes even rudimentary locations, I expect the price to be commensurate with the what you get. In Ko Chang, I feel that this is not the case. You pay a lot of money and get VERY basic accommodation. This has been an unfortunate trend at all of the Thai beaches and islands since late '97, except for Pattaya, where prices have really only moved in line with inflation.	<b>KCH 5</b>
	<b>KCH 6</b>

<p>For those who want to meet one of Thailand's maidens to help them enjoy their stay that little bit more, Ko Chang is not the best place. There is a complex of beer bars on White Sands beach with about 20 or so bars which are very much in the Pattaya style. Ko Chang did not use to be on the sex tourist trail but as it has become more developed and as more and more holidaymakers spend more time there, so has the demand for beer bars increased – and been satisfied by local entrepreneurs! Many of the sex tourists taking it easy on Ko Chang picked up their temporary lovely in Pattaya and brought along for the ride. For the foreign girls, there are a lot of Thai guys who hang about on Ko Chang waiting to pick you up.</p>	<p><b>KCH 7</b></p>
<p>I have heard that Ko Chang gets quite a bit of rain with just about everyone that I know who visited there telling me that I needed to pack an umbrella. Well, the time that I was there was no exception and it did rain a little every day – and this was NOT in the wet season. Still, the showers only lasted a little while and were soon replaced by the sun.</p>	<p><b>KCH 8</b></p>
<p>The internet is available on Ko Chang but when I was last there in March 2001, and it was VERY expensive at 6 baht a minute. (It must have come down in price a lot since then, surely!) A lot of basic items are also a lot more expensive on Ko Chang than the mainland as they have to be shipped over. Ice creams are about 25 – 50% dearer on the island than the mainland as are canned drinks. Toiletries are perhaps 20% more. Very little of what you would typically buy on a beach holiday is actually made on the island other than the bottled water. For some strange reason, beer is cheaper on the island than on the mainland with Heineken available in the restaurants for 40 – 50 baht for a small bottle. There are few places on the mainland where you can get it at this sort of price!</p>	<p><b>KCH 9</b></p>
<p>Quite a few foreigners seem to fall in love with Ko Chang and stay on indefinitely, picking up a job in one of the beach side restaurants or perhaps doing something a little different such as running a dive shop. I can't quite work out how they manage to keep the job as a Thai would do the equivalent job for around 4,000 baht – and that's working 6 days a week. The restaurant / bungalow owner is not going to pay them a Western wage! Still, they seemed happy so it all must be working out ok.</p>	<p><b>KCH 10</b></p>
<p>Ko Chang would be a good place to go when you really want to get away from it. It really is a lot quieter than all of the other beaches and islands listed on this site and at night, you do feel like you are on an island, away from civilization. It is a good place for a quiet scene. If you want a bit of action and razzmatazz, then this is most definitely not the place to go.</p>	<p><b>KCH 11</b></p>
<p><b>Pros</b> Quiet, with only a limited number of visitors. All beaches are still relatively quiet. Its location away from other popular spots means no tour groups come over for day trips. Doesn't suffer from jet skis and other noise pollution.</p>	<p><b>KCH 12</b></p>
<p><b>Cons</b> Accommodation is not that flash and is downright expensive for what you get. It's a long way from Bangkok, and most of the other "popular" places in Thailand. There are a lot of mosquitoes, some apparently malarial. The beaches are nice, but not fantastic, especially compared to some of the other beaches in Thailand.</p>	<p><b>KCH 13</b></p>
<p><b>The Bottom Line:</b> Often described as an unspoiled Thai beach, what they fail to tell you is that it lacks a lot of basic infrastructure. I strongly believe that Ko Chang is a bit of a love it or hate it type of place – you really need to know what you want from a beach holiday and think about whether Ko Chang fits.</p>	

<b>Content: Kanchanaburi (KAN)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>Just two hours by bus from Bangkok, Kanchanaburi is another of the provinces close to the capital that receives a lot of tourists. There are quite a few things to see and do though apart from the Erawan waterfalls, none of them are that impressive on their own. With all of these</p>	<p><b>KAN 1</b></p>

<p>attractions combined together however, Kanchanaburi makes a nice break away from Bangkok for a day or two.</p>	
<p>The Erawan waterfalls are a series of seven tiered waterfalls set about an hour and a half by bus away from the main town. The waterfalls are all in a national park which means that foreigners get ripped off to the tune of 200 baht while the locals only pay 20 baht. This park has the usual collection of park rangers on duty whose job it is to stop the Thais from littering within the park. Yep, I say the Thais as foreigners do not really have the culture of littering in quite the same way that Thais do.</p>	<p><b>KAN 2</b></p>
<p>From the main park entrance, the walk from the start to the top waterfall takes about an hour or more and towards the last couple of waterfalls, the track is actually pretty bad and for older trekkers, there are some points that may prove impassable. At the time of year when I was there, there were parts where you actually had to wade through water ankle deep – though I am not sure if it is like this all year round. Still, most of it is fairly easy. It must be said that the further along the track you walk, the more impressive the waterfalls get and there are many opportunities to take some nice photos. Buses go to and from the national park once an hour or so.</p>	<p><b>KAN 3</b></p>
<p>There is a nice river running through the city and you can go for a ride on these sort of Thai style speed boats that is a bit of a thrill for a few minutes though fairly expensive. When I was last there, we paid about 200 baht for what can't have been more than a few minute dash down the river. Fun but overpriced.</p>	<p><b>KAN 4</b></p>
<p>Kanchanaburi is one of the hottest provinces in Thailand and if you are there during the hot season, with many of the attractions being outdoor type things, it may become unbearably hot. Personally, I don't think I would like to visit during the hot part of the year.</p>	<p><b>KAN 5</b></p>
<p>There are several museums, including a war museum. They are worth a nosy if you like that sort of thing and there are some interesting bits and pieces in the war museum. There are the usual collection of Thai temples and they are always worth a nosy though there is nothing as impressive there as the temples along the river in Bangkok. A friend tells me that there are some caves somewhere but I have never been to them so cannot comment. He seemed to think that they were well worthwhile.</p>	<p><b>KAN 6</b></p>
<p>The Death Railway is what most people who visit Kanchanaburi see. Historical significance aside, it's just a small bridge. It's amusing to watch all of the Japanese going ooh and aaah at the site of where their forefathers mistreated huge numbers.</p>	<p><b>KAN 7</b></p>
<p>In the immediate area of the bridge, Thai vendors fight for the chance to sell the usual Thai food, snacks, cans of Coke etc at tourist prices. Still, this sort of thing happens all over the world so I shouldn't really complain. I don't know exactly what it is but there is something that I find awfully tacky about this particular attraction. You can get for a short ride on the train from the bridge to the main station that lasts all of a few minutes and cannot possibly cost more than a few baht.</p>	<p><b>KAN 8</b></p>
<p>The next most over-rated tourist attraction is the cemetery of the dead allied soldiers who died building the bridge. I guess it is fascinating to see how many of your fellow countrymen the evil and sinister Japanese killed and pay our respects, but other than that, visiting a graveyard has never been my idea of fun. There is also a cemetery of some Chinese settlers in Kanchanaburi although the historical significance of that one escapes me.</p>	<p><b>KAN 9</b></p>
<p>There is a shopping centre in Kanchanaburi Called "Kan" though you would be best advised to save your shopping for Bangkok. In the area immediately surrounding the shopping area are a number of street vendors serving the usual mix of tasty Thai style street food.</p>	<p><b>KAN 10</b></p>
<p>One thing that Kanchanaburi is very good for is accommodation with there being a number of cheap hotels and guesthouses to choose from. Some of them have nice locations set down by the river and they are very reasonably priced. Most of these guesthouses also rent out bicycles and although I have never done it as I prefer to get around by foot, I imagine exploring</p>	<p><b>KAN 11</b></p>

<p>Kanchanaburi town by boat would be fun. There are also a few restaurants set down against the river.</p>	<b>KAN 12</b>
<p>A previous edition of the Lonely Planet guidebook mentions that the samlors in Kanchanaburi are a rip-off and never was a wiser word been said. Myself and a friend had an issue with a samlor driver where he tried to rip us off and in the end, he started pushing and shoving my friend and we had to get a policeman to sort out the problem, which he did, in our favour.</p>	
<p><b>Pros</b> Close to Bangkok. Lots of attractions. Most things are affordable.</p>	<b>KAN 13</b>
<p><b>Cons</b> Some locals in the tourism industry are badly jaded. Double pricing by samlor drivers, national park operators, boat operators.</p>	<b>KAN 14</b>
<p><b>The Bottom Line</b> A nice place for a short break away from Bangkok that has a little bit of everything, history, nature and culture. It's a fairly nice sort of a town.</p>	<b>KAN 15</b>

<b>Content: Chiang Mai (CHM)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>The northern centre of Thailand, many Thais feel that any visit to Thailand should include a trip up to the northern capital – and time allowing, I agree.</p>	<b>CHM 1</b>
<p>Tourism is a huge part of the local economy and the city of Chiang Mai is set up very well for visitors. Accommodation is available in all price ranges, though there are not that many flash places in the centre of the city. If you are looking for lots of 5 star options, you won't have anything like the range of properties that are available to you in Bangkok.</p>	<b>CHM 2</b>
<p>Chiang Mai seems to be home to a zillion guesthouses and a lot of mid-range places, but far fewer really top end places. And prices for a decent place to stay remain reasonable and are not nearly at the same lofty levels as what a room goes for in Bangkok. For less than 1,000 baht you can get a perfectly decent hotel in the city centre, and for half that you can get a perfectly adequate guesthouse, even less if you want to be cheap.</p>	<b>CHM 3</b>
<p>In Chiang Mai there is heaps to see and do. Chiang Mai is different to Bangkok in terms of what to do too. Most of the things to do are outside – temples to see, markets to visit, hills to climb, hill tribes to visit. This is not the place for large glitzy shopping malls but rather, a place to get in touch with the culture of the country.</p>	<b>CHM 4</b>
<p>The city itself is pleasant with a lot of temples and there are a couple of very impressive temples outside the city including Doi Suthep which to me is probably the most impressive temple complex I have ever visited. It is in my mind a MUST visit attraction if you make it up to Chiang Mai. It is up a hill overlooking the city of Chiang Mai and it takes about half an hour to get there from the city centre. The picture on the right here was taken at the temple on Doi Suthep.</p>	<b>CHM 5</b>
<p>Another of the popular trips is to Doi Inthanon, which is the highest point in Thailand. It too is worth a visit but bear in mind that it is quite a hike from Chiang Mai and it is a big trip to go there and come back, not quite a full day, but more than half a day. It's a pleasant spot and well worth venturing too also.</p>	<b>CHM 6</b>
<p>On my first visit to Chiang Mai, which was not until late 2004, 6 and a half long years after first moving to Thailand, I was amazed at the differences between it and Bangkok. First of all, the weather is much more pleasant, it is cooler (though this depends on the time of year), has less pollution and at night it was genuinely cool. There was no air-con in our hotel room and not even the fan was used! Secondly, the food up in Chiang Mai is a little different to what is available in Bangkok. They have their own northern food which is a little different to food from</p>	<b>CHM 7</b>

<p>other parts of the country. Apart from the khao soi, sort of crispy noodles in a mild curry, I did not really care for food from this part of the country, to be honest, though that is more a personal preference type of thing than anything else. The people in Chiang Mai are noticeably friendlier, more polite and generally a whole lot nicer than people from any other part of the country, or at least the places I have visited, which is most of it. People just seem more gentle, more polite, less harried and seem to have a genuine concern that visitors really do enjoy themselves.</p>	
<p>The north of Thailand, of which Chiang Mai is the centre, has done a much better job preserving the culture of the country, and indeed the region, than any other parts of the country and Chiang Mai is THE place to go to celebrate the major Thai festivals like Songkran and Loy Kratong.</p>	<b>CHM 8</b>
<p>It is ironic that it took 7 years living in Thailand before I made it to Chiang Mai for the first time. It is something I want to fix and an extended stay up there is well in order! I have only spent two days up there and thus my report on that part of the country is relatively short.</p>	<b>CHM 9</b>
<p><b>Pros</b> Very well set up for tourism, affordable, pleasant people, pleasant environment and heaps to see and do! It is much more a cultural visit than is Bangkok.</p>	<b>CHM 10</b>
<p><b>Cons</b> I can't think of any but some might consider it a bit quiet compared to Bangkok.</p>	<b>CHM 11</b>
<p><b>The Bottom Line</b> Very much worth visiting!</p>	<b>CHM 12</b>

<b>Content: Isaan (ISA)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>Isaan, the Thai name for the northeast region of the country and home to around 20 million folks, happens to be the most traditional but also poorest part of the country.</p>	<b>ISA 1</b>
<p>Not too many Western tourists make it up into Isaan and it is hard to argue with those people that do not go there, for there are not too many "must sees" in that part of the country – especially when you consider that there is a distinct lack of Westerner friendly tourist infrastructure, unlike the capital, Chiang Mai and the beaches and islands of the south.</p>	<b>ISA 2</b>
<p>Many tourists choose Thailand for the sun and sea and the shopping, none of which are prevalent in the Isaan region. While many people believe Chiang Mai to be the second largest city in Thailand, it isn't and that title actually belongs to the city of Korat, which is also known as "the gateway to Isaan" as it is the first province in the Isaan region that you reach if you're travelling from Bangkok. Unremarkable in appearance, Isaan is a predominantly agricultural part of the country.</p>	<b>ISA 3</b>
<p>What Isaan does offer to visitors to Thailand is a chance to get a glimpse at a more traditional way of life and it is my experience that people who feel a true affinity towards Thailand and the Thais thoroughly enjoy their time travelling throughout Isaan.</p>	<b>ISA 4</b>
<p>Should you mention to any Thai friends that you intend to travel into the Isaan region, you'll sure get a smile, or even a comment or two, for many Thais from outside the region have never been there – and many simply wouldn't be able to comprehend why a Westerner would want to go there for fun. Unfortunately the people of Isaan are looked down on by much of the Thai population who often view them as no more than poor farmers.</p>	<b>ISA 5</b>
<p>Isaan has the reputation of being very hot, something which I have never really understood. I have travelled throughout Isaan many times and have spent a lot of time in Korat. I have always found Isaan to be a bit cooler than Bangkok and certainly cooler than the central regions and the south. You seem to get more sunshine in Isaan than in other places and for sure there are less public facilities with air-conditioning, but as for the region being the hottest part of the country, well, I think I would actually dispute that. Anyway, don't be put off by people saying</p>	<b>ISA 6</b>

<p>it is extremely hot as I have never found the heat to be too much, and yes, I have done a lot of travelling in the region in the hot season.</p>	
<p>If you decide to travel into the Isaan region, and travel overland, be it car, train or bus, there are two major routes. The first and most popular route is to follow highway 2 from Bangkok all the way up to Nongkhai. This road passes through the major cities of Korat, Khon Kaen, Udon Thani and on to Nongkhai. This was the route of my first venture into Isaan and I have done this route a number of times. It is fun, and easy, but really there is not a lot to see or do with a few exceptions. Nakhon Phanom in Isaan sits on the banks of the Mekong River with Laos opposite.</p>	<p><b>ISA 7</b></p>
<p>My preferred part of Isaan to tour through is the southern section. From Bangkok, go up to Korat and from there head east through Buriram, Surin, Si Saket and Ubon Rachathani. With the exception of Ubon, the 3 other provincial capitals are fairly small and frankly, not too interesting to the casual tourist. There aren't too many reasons to stay in these places. So why go this route? Well, assuming you go by bus or train, the scenery is a lot nicer in this part of the country and you get a lot more of the beautiful green rice paddies than you do if you head up to Nongkhai, especially at the end of the rainy season. Secondly, and of much more importance, is that there are some really nice ruins to see in this part of the country. The lower Isaan region is home to many old Khmer style temple complexes and to me, these are a lot more interesting than places like Ayuthaya. The Khmer ruins at Phimai in Korat province and Phanom Rung in southern Buriram are two of my favourite attractions in Thailand, both in excellent condition. Phanom Rung is especially good since not so many foreigners make it there and it is not over touristed like so many spots in Thailand are. In fact all throughout the southern part of Isaan you will find various temple ruins, some of which are merely a small pile of stones, but some of which are a whole lot more. In my Stickman Weekly column of 13/10/2002 I wrote a lengthy travelogue of my journey through southern Isaan so if you want to read more about that part of the country, check out that particular column. And in my Stickman Weekly column of 17/10/2004 I wrote a lengthy travelogue of my journey into the heart of Isaan, a travelogue that many people seemed to enjoy reading. Finally, if you enjoy my nonsense travelogues, I wrote a piece on 19/10/2003 about a journey into the lower north of Thailand.</p>	<p><b>ISA 8</b></p>
<p>As many of the historic sites in Isaan are out of the way, and not necessarily located directly in towns or cities, getting around to see them all can be an arduous affair if you do not have a rental car or a car and driver. Undoubtedly the best way to visit the region is by car. Public transport will get you everywhere but you may be forced to endure long waits for the bus to leave and slow trips on non air-con rural buses. Still, you can meet some real characters on such buses and if you aren't in any hurry, this can be a real fun way to get around.</p>	<p><b>ISA 9</b></p>
<p>The major centres of the Isaan region are slowly progressing into bigger, more modern cities. If you really want to get a picture of traditional Isaan, you need to get away from the major centres of Korat, Khon Kaen and Ubon which are slowly becoming Westernised with improved infrastructure, increasing numbers of Westerners visiting and even all of the Western fast food chains setting up there. These cities are quite urbanised and parts of them are not particularly different from the suburban areas of Bangkok.</p>	<p><b>ISA 10</b></p>
<p>There are many quaint, tranquil spots in Isaan. One of the funny things about the place is the early morning when you are woken by the dogs and the chickens. I have never worked out who starts first but think it's the dogs that start howling and then it's the turn of the chickens to start. Once the chickens have stopped then the dogs resume and on it goes. Sleeping through the early morning is not the easiest task in Isaan.</p>	<p><b>ISA 11</b></p>
<p>While Bangkok may be cheap, life in Isaan is a lot cheaper and here are some sample prices that I have paid in the region in the last couple of years. Obviously prices vary from centre to centre and shop to shop but on the whole, everything that a foreign traveller is likely to spend money on is a lot cheaper in this part of the country than any of the other regions. You can get really good hotels at incredibly cheap prices too. One such place is the Wong Vong Hotel in Buriram where you could get a fantastic room with all the mod cons for just 540 baht a night. Unbelievable value! I guess the price has probably crept up a bit since I was there, back in 2002, but I bet it still represents excellent value. There are hotels like this all over Isaan and where</p>	<p><b>ISA 12</b></p>

<p>ever you are, you never need pay a lot for a decent room. In fact in many places you might not even be able to find a hotel for 1,000 baht a night – the most expensive hotel in the town is often cheaper than that!</p> <p>One of the difficulties of travelling in this region is that the level of English is pretty low, especially outside of Korat, Ubon and Khon Kaen, the three largest and most developed centres. Yes, you can get buy on English alone but even in some low end hotels, no English is spoken and there aren't even any signs in English! Experienced travellers will get by just fine but those folks who have not hit the road before may struggle a little. Further, while general costs are a lot lower for pretty much everything, the locals do know that the foreigner has a lot more money in his pocket and in a lot of cases, particularly the places that do get a few tourists, may try to charge you more than the locals. Obviously, speaking Thai completely negates this. Remember, a lot of the folks that work in the tourism industry in other parts of the country originally came from this part of the country and word filters back about what the silly farang is prepared to pay!</p>	<b>ISA 13</b>
<p>While crime is not especially high in this part of the country, one needs to exercise the usual caution because there are a lot of very poor people there and many of these people live on no more than 1000 baht a month! Flashing several thousand (or more) baht around may attract attention from people that you would probably rather not meet. Further, with the people being so incredibly poor, single male travellers may get certain offers that may not (or may) interest them. A good friend went in to the deepest darkest depths of Surin province and to get to his intended destination, had to use some of the local off road transport. He was sitting on the back of a quasi bus cum pick-up truck and all of the locals were staring at him – some of them had likely never seen a white person in real life. They were talking about him but as his Thai wasn't so good, he couldn't understand what was being said. He was travelling with a Thai friend who did some translating for him. One of the women started asking his friend if he would be interested in her 17 year old daughter – who was also in the pickup truck! My friend politely complimented her and said that the girl was very attractive. After a few questions ascertaining my friend's financial status, the mother went on to say that she would like the daughter to go and live with my friend in Bangkok and she would look after him very well and do whatever he wanted her to do. All my friend had to do was to look after the daughter and send a small amount of money up to the mother every month...TRUE STORY!</p>	<b>ISA 14</b>
<p>The people of Isaan are, in my opinion, the friendliest people that I have met. I have never met so many truly wonderfully warm people and I continue to return to this region just to enjoy the warmth of the people and their remarkable hospitality. The ladies in the above photo (taken at the central market in Korat) are just one example of how these people continue to smile and enjoy life despite the curve balls that life in the poor, rural areas of Thailand continues to throw at them. If you really want to see the genuine, traditional Thailand, then Isaan is arguable the best place to go. Try and go with someone who speaks reasonable Thai and has either lived in Thailand for a while or has been there a few times and that way you will likely have a far more enjoyable experience.</p>	<b>ISA 15</b>
<p>I don't know if it is good luck or what, but whenever I have been in Isaan, the sun shines strong and days are generally cloudless. This gives great opportunity for taking photos and the good weather helps to keep a smile on your face. Obviously if you go in the middle of the rainy season, it won't be like this though!</p>	<b>ISA 16</b>
<p>It is possible however that you will find Isaan boring. Let's be straight about this as it is quite different from all of the popular places to go in Thailand. Isaan is for those who genuinely want to taste a traditional rural slice of Thailand. I have taken a few people up there and some have admitted to me that it was less then enthralling. But those who genuinely love Thailand and the Thai people and who really are interested to know what the real Thailand is like, this is the place for you. Also, to get the most out of it, speaking Thai to a high level really does make a difference. A lot o the rural people speak little to no English so the inability to communicate does reduce your chances of doing anything more than functional conversation, ordering food, specifying how many nights you want to stay in a hotel etc.</p>	<b>ISA 17</b>
<p>The food in Isaan is known for being particularly spicy, and a lot of the dishes from the Isaan region also contain bla-ra, that is fermented fish sauce, something which most Westerners and</p>	<b>ISA 18</b>

<p>indeed most Thais not from the region do not really care for. A typical Isaan meal would consist of a number of dishes from region and be accompanied by sticky rice, which is rolled into balls with the fingers. Typical dishes of Isaan are larb (a spicy salad, usually with some sort of diced meat such as pork, beef, chicken or duck). Other popular dishes are gai yarng (grilled chicken), nam dok (a spicy salad where the meat is cut into larger pieces rather than diced) and the ubiquitous som tum (papaya salad). This last dish is popular Thailand wide, but it is generally agreed that the best som tum, pictured below, comes from the Isaan region.</p>	
<p>I have always felt some of the best, tourist friendly places to try Isaan food are some of the venues on the Mekhong up in Nongkhai. It is a quite delightful setting, sitting there, overlooking the mighty Mekhong and looking across at Laos, which itself is famous for its own cuisine, much of it very similar to Isaan food, and said to be even hotter!</p>	<p><b>ISA 19</b></p>
<p><b>Korat</b> Korat, also known as Nakhon Rachasima, is located 250 km northeast of Bangkok and if you travel to the Isaan region by car, bus, or train, it is the first province you will reach. Korat is also the largest province in Thailand with a population of about 6 million, although like many of Isaan’s province, many of these people live and work outside of the province.</p>	<p><b>ISA 20</b></p>
<p>Downtown Korat really doesn’t have much in the way of tourist attractions. The city square in the heart of downtown is home to the Ya Mo statue and is a revered image for locals of Korat who will visit the statue and make a wish. You could spend an hour or two wandering around this area, getting a feel for the area, but I think any longer than that and one may start to get bored. There is a large market nearby which is interesting if you have not seen any fresh markets in Thailand, and Korat is also home to the largest shopping centre in the Isaan region, called The Mall. There you’ll find branches of all of the usual Thai chain stores and American fast food restaurants. It is of no real interest if you have jut come from, or are about to go to, Bangkok.</p>	<p><b>ISA 21</b></p>
<p>There are many temples in downtown Korat but frankly, if you have seen a few Thai temples already then none are particularly impressive nor worth going out of your way for. There are a handful of very small hangouts in Korat where the local expat population hangs out. There is a piazza shop and a Lebanese restaurant right next to each other – the Lebanese restaurant in particular has very good, inexpensive food. It also has a large screen TV with cable so if you ever want to watch a major sports event that is the place to go. In another part of town is Bule’s Saloon, German owned restaurant with German and other Western food. I have eaten there a couple of times and it is ok. Many of the Westerners resident in Korat are older, and I get the feeling that the very slow pace of life in the city suits them well.</p>	<p><b>ISA 22</b></p>
<p>There are a number of very reasonable hotels in Korat for around, or a little over, 1,000 baht a night, which gets you a comfortable room and a buffet breakfast. At the bottom end of the accommodation market, some of the rooms for just a few hundred baht are a bit average, so if you are on a budget make sure you check out the room before handing over your hard earned! I would not recommend spending any more than one night in Korat as there is not a lot to do. Even the nightlife is a bit sleepy.</p>	<p><b>ISA 23</b></p>
<p>The most impressive attraction in Korat is not in downtown Korat, but 50km north up the main highway in Phimai. There you can find some very well preserved old Khmer temple ruin, and in some ways the Phimai Historical Park reminds me of a very small version of Angkor Wat. This is well worth checking out, in fact the little town of Phimai is a pretty place with some nice parks and is worth spending an hour or two wandering around. Buses leave Korat for Phimai frequently.</p>	<p><b>ISA 24</b></p>
<p><b>Khon Kaen</b> 200 km up the main highway from Korat is Khon Kaen, the place I have always considered the heart of Isaan. This is where you find the best university in Isaan, as well as what I believe is the best hospital.</p>	<p><b>ISA 25</b></p>
<p>Like Korat, Khon Kaen is hardly a pretty place, and neither is there a great deal to do there, either in the provincial capital, or outside it for that matter. However, I have always enjoyed</p>	<p><b>ISA 26</b></p>



<p>visiting Kohn Kaen and have found the people in the town to be very friendly and it is easy to meet up with people to hang out with.</p>	
<p>To me, the only place worth checking out in Khon Kaen is the 9 level temple which is a couple of kilometres south of the city centre. It is an unusual design and is rather attractive. There's a pleasant lake nearby surrounded by a park where you can stretch your legs.</p>	
<p>Khon Kaen has a more vibrant nightlife than Korat. There are a few bars where local farangs meet, and in a lane close to the Pullman Hotel are many discos and bars. The locals are friendly and while the sight of a farang I not completely unusual in Khon Kaen, the locals are till curious enough about us that they may well approach you and try to find out more about you. The Charoen Thani Princess Hotel in the centre of the city provides excellent rooms at a mere 1,100 baht a night and is where I always stay when I am in Khon Kaen.</p>	<p><b>ISA 27</b></p>
<p><b>Udon Thani</b> Another 100 or so kilometres up the road from Khon Kaen is Udon Thani, a smaller provincial capital which has proven to be popular with Westerners in recent years and even has a thriving farang bar scene. There are probably more farang oriented bars and restaurants in the city of Udon than in any other centre in Isaan, and this is no doubt due to the high number of girls from Udon who work in Bangkok and Pattaya where they meet a Westerner, get married, and then they both go and live happily ever after in the Thai countryside. Udon is said to have both the highest number of Westerners in Isaan, as well as the highest percentage of Westerners for a province in Isaan.</p>	<p><b>ISA 28</b></p>
<p><b>Sai-grok Isaan, Isaan sausages, for sale in a market.</b> The city of Udon doesn't have any major tourist attractions, or at least none that I am aware of. The provinces attractions are well outside the provincial capital and include national parks and Ban Chiang, a site where a lot of old fossils and relics were found and a spot said to be of archaeological significance. A friend who has visited was not that impressed but that said, I have not been there myself.</p>	<p><b>ISA 29</b></p>
<p>In downtown Udon there is a large shopping centre with a greater vibrancy than any of the other shopping centres in the major centres of Udon. Here you will see far more Westerners than anywhere else in Isaan, some are tourists and some are locally based. I guess most make it to Udon with their teeruk.</p>	<p><b>ISA 30</b></p>
<p>Across the road from the shopping centre and behind a row of shops is a strip of beer bars, a la Pattaya, that frankly I am surprised are allowed to operate. Directly opposite the shopping centre are a handful of bars, Differen Bar (Yes, that is how it is spelt), Tong's Bar and Barberry. Barberry has women available for the naughty boys and Differen Bar had coyote dancers, at least the last time I was there, in early 2007.</p>	<p><b>ISA 31</b></p>
<p>This shopping centre is where many of the more well to do Udonites venture at the weekend and I cannot imagine what they think of establishments opening that target farangs directly, bars and restaurants.</p>	<p><b>ISA 32</b></p>
<p>Food in Udon Thani is very good. Westerners rave about the Irish Clock, a small Irish bar which I have yet to try. There is also a very, very good Italian restaurant called Roma Piccolo which is superb. It is located a bit outside the city centre, out on the road past Big C. It is well worth going out of your way for!</p>	<p><b>ISA 33</b></p>
<p>One thing I will say about Udon is that the people are very friendly, and the farangs who live in the province, both in the provincial capital, and in some of the surrounding districts, most seem to be fairly happy and in no hurry to up and go elsewhere. As far as actual interesting tourist spots go, Udon is not really famous for a lot. There is Ban Chiang, museum of some pottery remains and relics found in the area that apparently date back to prehistoric times, and there is Phu Foi Lom, a pleasant park atop a hill. Apart from that, I personally have not seen a lot of any great interest in Udon, but that said, like most of Udon, the thrill is in the vibe, and interacting with the people, as opposed to the actual tourist sites themselves.</p>	<p><b>ISA 34</b></p>

<p><b>Nongkhai</b> About 50 kilometres or so up the road from Udon Thani is the pretty city of Nongkhai which sits on the banks of the Mekhong River overlooking Laos. The city is a little non-descript but the people are very nice and there are a number of very pleasant restaurants on the banks of the river looking across at Laos.</p>	<p><b>ISA 35</b></p>
<p>A little outside the city is Sala Gowgoo, one of my favourite tourist attractions in all of Thailand. It is what I could best term a Buddhist statue park where you have a large number of concrete Buddha images. Amazingly, there is just a 10 baht entrance fee. It is a little outside the city so you'll have to get a songtaew to take you if you do not have your own transport but this really is a must see location. I find it all very fascinating and it is all the better if you can take a Thai along with you to translate some of the story that is told across the statues. If you go to Nongkhai and do not visit Sala Gowgoo then you really have missed out on something rather special!</p>	<p><b>ISA 36</b></p>
<p>Nongkhai has a solid stream of foreigners passing through every day, especially the backpacker variety, who are usually on their way to or from Laos. Nongkhai is a charming little town which is well worth a day of your time. Like so many of the towns in Thailand that have a river running through it, Nongkhai has many excellent restaurants on the edge of the banks of the river, looking across the Mekong River at Thailand's nicest neighbour, Laos. Although these restaurants do target foreigners, the costs are still very reasonable and the ambience at some of them is just wonderful. Imagine kicking back in a riverside restaurant looking across the Mekong River as the sun sets over Laos. A typically cool Isaan evening, swigging back your choice of poison, and nodding your head at some rugged looking, toothless local who has been telling you a story for the last half hour that has yet to include one word you understand. He smiles, you smile and everyone is happy!</p>	<p><b>ISA 37</b></p>
<p>Nongkhai has developed a lot in the last decade. I visited in 1998 and then again 2007, and the differences were huge. The whole riverfront area has been developed into a pleasant spot with Thai style salas (pavilions) where you can sit and relax in the shade and enjoy the view across to Laos. There is now a great number of guesthouses right in the riverfront area and the rates are more than affordable. From what I saw from signs posted, air-con rooms could be had for less than 500 baht per night, a very good deal indeed. And there are a heap of new riverside restaurants, the sort of venues that I never bore of. If you find yourself in Nongkhai, it is definitely worth staying a night, and if you want to chill out, stay for a few! The downside about Nongkhai is that it is a sleepy little town and there is little to do after dark.</p>	<p><b>ISA 38</b></p>
<p><b>Roi Et</b> Roi Et, meaning one hundred and one, is one of my favourite spots in all of Isaan. The city is very pretty with a lake in the centre, of which there is an island in the centre of the lake. The people are nice and the city is home to many temples, all of which are walkable.</p>	<p><b>ISA 39</b></p>
<p>Roi Et has the tallest Buddha image in Thailand at approximately 65 metres in height and it towers over the city. The first time I went to Roi Et the I had only planned to stay one night but I liked it so much I stayed two!</p>	<p><b>ISA 40</b></p>
<p>There are a small number of Westerners resident in the Roi Et area so there are at least a couple of Western oriented restaurants including the White Elephant which is just over the canal from the Roi Et City Hotel as well as a pizza shop which overlooks the lake and is the de facto meeting place for Westerners living in the area.</p>	<p><b>ISA 41</b></p>
<p>Truth be told, as pleasant as Roi Et is, unless you really like the Isaan region, you may find it boring. There are a lot of temples in the city, and it is pretty, but there is little to do. Like many of the "smaller" provincial capitals in Isaan everything closes down early and come 9 PM the city can feel like a bit of a ghost town!</p>	<p><b>ISA 42</b></p>
<p>There is a bar area just outside the city moat. Ask any tuktuk driver to take you to "rong bier" and they will know the place. In the area are a number of Thai style venues where very cheap</p>	<p><b>ISA 43</b></p>

<p>alcohol can be had. To give you an idea of just how cheap it is, even in 2010 large bottles of Singha beer in one of the entertainment venues were running around 80 baht...which is only about 20 baht more than you would pay in a 7 Eleven store!</p> <p><b>Nakhon Phanom</b></p> <p>The city of Nakhon Phanom is one of the farthest flung cities in Isaan if you are coming from Bangkok and is approximately 700 km from the capital.</p>	<b>ISA 44</b>
<p>The city itself does not have any specific attractions to draw Western tourists other than that it is simply a very nice spot, on the banks of the Mekhong River with very nice views across to Laos. The city itself is clean and there is a very nice river front area where people hang out and jog in the late afternoon.</p>	<b>ISA 45</b>
<p>About 55 km south of the city is the most revered of all of the Buddhist temples in Isaan. That Phanom is a large, beautiful Buddhist temple of which the style reminds me of many temples I have seen in Laos. 55 kilometres might sound like a long way, but it is well worth going out of your way to check out. I am not sure what local transport is available but imagine that there must be buses running between Nakhon Phanom and That Phanom. You could always get a bus to Mukdahan, the province on the Mekhong immediately to the south, as I imagine they must run through That Phanom.</p>	<b>ISA 46</b>
<p>There didn't seem to be anything in the way of bars or restaurants specifically for the small number of Westerners in the area although there is a bar area not far from the river front. BarKoo was the most popular of the bars that are all within a stone's throw of each other. These bars server good food at very reasonable prices in addition to the Tex Italia restaurant in the little square which serves Thai versions of some favourite Western dishes.</p>	<b>ISA 47</b>

<b>Content: Photography &amp; The Internet (PI)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p><b>Photography</b></p> <p>My main hobby is photography. I know that it is hardly essential or even necessary information for anyone travelling in Thailand but let me tell you a little bit about all things photography in Thailand.</p>	<b>PI 1</b>
<p>First of all, if you are still using an old film camera, film is not so easy to come by in Thailand. Had for Foto File on the ground floor of MBK Shopping Centre in Bangkok for a shop that does stock a range of film.</p>	<b>PI 2</b>
<p>Getting prints of your photos is cheap. 6 x 4 inch prints cost around 2 – 5 baht, depending on how many shots the more, the lower the per print price. Shops can print your digital image files at the same cost as printing film, 2 – 5 baht for a 4 x 6 inch print. If you require a professional lab, I recommend IQ Labs, just off Silom Road.</p>	<b>PI 3</b>
<p>As far as actually taking pictures goes, Thailand is an amazing place and there are always all sorts of interesting or even crazy things going on so there are unlimited opportunities to take lots of photos! Generally, Thai people like to be photographed and don't be surprised to see them jump into your photograph, as opposed to move away when they see a camera! This might be changing a little bit as people become conscious of the internet and the fact that their photos might unwittingly end up on some questionable website! But generally speaking – and especially outside of the capital – Thai people love to have their photo taken!</p>	<b>PI 4</b>
<p>The light in this part of the world is very bright so one has to be careful when taking shots in the middle of the day. In fact any time from late morning to late afternoon with the sun almost</p>	<b>PI 5</b>

directly overhead can be a real nuisance for photography because this harsh light which can wash out the colours of everything, and if you have a great composition, the colours might come out drab, more in shades of brown and grey, than the deep saturated colours you had hoped for. As far as taking landscape and general outdoor photography goes, the cool season, that is December through to February, is best. Also, the golden hour, that short period before sunset, is a good bet to take shots but remember that the sun drops in the sky a lot faster in Thailand than it does in countries that are further from the equator.

With digital photography becoming more and more popular, it seems that many folks want to send their digital photos home via the internet. In practicality, this is not really that easy. First, a single digital photo file may in some cases be many megabytes, which even on a high speed internet connection can take a number of minutes to transfer. Secondly, you may have hundreds of pictures so you could actually be sitting on the net for ages, trying to transfer them all. Basically, it is just not that practical. The best bet is to go to one of the many shops, usually internet cafes or photo shops, that can take the pictures from your camera's memory card and write them to a CD or DVD for you. More and more places are offering these services. Just one recommendation – get a couple of copies of each DVD in case one goes bad. Or even consider getting two copies of everything and sending one copy home while keeping the other copy on your person.

Also on the subject of digital photography, there are a lot more shops around printing pictures from digital images i.e. you can take your camera in with all of the pictures stored on the media, or even just take them in on floppies / CDs and they will print them there for you. The quality is excellent, much better than any home photo printer. My favourite shop for this type of thing is Snow White Digital Photography which is on Phyathai Road, directly opposite Mahboonkrong. The cost of photographic prints in Thailand may be cheaper than home, but in all truth and honesty, the quality is not always the same.

There is always something happening in Thailand and there are so many things that are completely different to what we have in the West. Different modes of transport, different foods and places that sell them, different architecture and the list could go on and on. You could well find that you end up shooting a lot of photographs and I bet that they'll all be interesting. I have found with everything that is going on in Thailand, unless you are an extremely talented photographer, a still photo alone does not manage to capture everything. With this in mind, it is worthwhile bringing a video camera with you if you have one. The video camera allows you to catch a lot more of what is happening and captures the sounds of Thailand too.

**Internet Access**

As the internet becomes more and more important in our lives, so too does internet access while we are travelling. Thailand's internet infrastructure has improved markedly over the last few years and you're never far from a cheap yet fast internet connection. Even in tourist areas, an internet cafe should not charge more than about 30 baht an hour.

The best hotels usually have internet access. They may have hard-wired internet access in the rooms or they may have wireless internet that covers the entire building which will require the use of your own laptop. Some may only have internet access in a business centre where there may be laptop connections and computers to use. In the better hotels you might have to pay for internet access and in the 5 star properties this can actually be quite expensive – internet access in the Oriental Hotel runs 650 baht ++ per day! It is ironic that in the cheaper establishments internet access is usually free!

There are huge numbers of internet cafes all over the country and they can be found in all of the popular tourist areas, be it where backpackers venture or businessmen pass by. More and more venues in Thailand are offering free wireless internet access, or wi-fi.

**PI 6**

**PI 7**

**PI 8**

**PI 9**

**PI 10**

**PI 11**

<b>Appendix 4</b>	
<b>Readers' Submissions: Western writers (RSW)</b>	
<b>Content: You Saved My Marriage (YSMM)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>Dear Stickman</p> <p>I feel that I have to write to you and thank you for all your hard work and dedication you have put into your website, and by reading your true opinions, facts and totally honest statements, you have managed to make my understanding of the bar scene in BKK and other parts of the Thai Kingdom a whole lot clearer, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY SAVING MY MARRIAGE OF 23 years.</p> <p>The facts :-</p>	<b>YSMM 1</b>
<p>Last December 2000 we used Thailand as the starting place of a 3 week holiday through Asia. My wife and I went to BKK 3 days and then on to Phuket 4 days. This is when MY marital problems began. I made the fatal mistake as so many farang's do; I fell for the patter of a bargirl. (and lets make no mistake even my Mrs thought she was drop dead gorgeous). My wife and I spent a lot of time talking and having general fun in a bar in Phuket, on the third day there the Mamasan told us we could bar fine the girl for 400 baht and have fun with 3 in a bed. Well being a full blooded male with a belly and head full of Singha beer I pursued this issue too far with my Mrs and at 4 AM I was forced to return back to our hotel without the lovely Thai named Da.</p>	<b>YSMM 2</b>
<p>The following day we had to continue our holiday plans and caught our plane on to KL, the next 2 weeks in Malaysia were fine, but my Mrs who knows me all to well just knew at times my thoughts were else where (mainly thinking of Thailand and my new found friend Da) even though she touched on the subject a couple of times, she never showed any bad vibes towards me like perhaps many wives would have. When our time was up we returned back to Scotland, and to what I thought would be normality in our lives, but my brain and heart were still in that bar in Phuket. I went on thinking about the time we had in Thailand and reminisced over the fun and Da. Over the Christmas I spoke to my Mrs many times about the best time of our holiday was in Thailand. I was trying to lay the thought process in her head that perhaps we should return back to the Land of Smiles. (But make no mistakes my Mrs knew where I wanted to go and who to I see.) Over the next few months I was scheming and trying all angles to get back to Thailand, and then I had my chance, over dinner on evening I asked my Mrs what she would like for her 40th birthday, and she said lets go away on a short city break somewhere i.e. New York or Dubai. (Fuck I thought, and then I spent the next month trying to convince her that Thailand would be nicer,) anyway she relented and in June 2001 we boarded a plane bound for where I left my heart. On the plane is when my wife started to talk about how she thought I was going through a mid-life crisis and that she said I should start to reflect over our married life, two teenage children, business etc, (but of coarse in my head she was the one that had been a strain on me and our marriage) She also stated that she had been on the internet and researched all about Thai bar girls and would convince me of everything you have stated on your site. Well the plane landed in Phuket, and I had to play it extra cool as she had fired more than one shot over my bow during our conversations on the 12 hour journey, but I must state not once did she show or sound agitated in any way, and now its so obvious she was calculating how far she thought I'd gone of the rails.</p>	<b>YSMM 3</b>
<p>After a short nap, we grabbed a shower and headed out of the Hotel on Karon Beach, outside I asked her where do want to go?, and to my astonishment, she replied lets go and see Da. Well I thought I had won the jackpot, all my dreams would come true and a wife that approved of what I had been dreaming of for the past few months. How wrong I was, we walked into the bar, and she made straight for the bar owners (one Aussie and one Brit both blokes), she then started general conversation with them about</p>	<b>YSMM 4</b>

the girls, and she asked all the right questions at the right times about, how much they earn, how many shorts and longs they have in a month, how many people send them money etc etc etc, and they responded with all the facts that you write on your web-site. Well of coarse I heard what they said, but in my head Da was different "I could save her from all the shit in her life and rescue her and make her life more meaningful". Over the week we stayed there my Mrs stayed by my side and every time we where in the bar, we talked to Da and my Mrs reacted to her if they where long lost friends. Again in the Land of Smiles we had a great time, but I felt worse inside now, how could I go back to Scotland and leave this beautiful creature behind, I wanted to be her Knight in Shining Amour and save her from the evils of bar work. Well I am not ashamed to admit it, when we got back to the hotel on our last night I locked myself in the bathroom and cried and cried my eyes out over my darling little Da. Of course my Mrs knew I was crying like a new born, and of coarse she knew why, but again all she tried her hardest to convince me Da was only a HOOKER and there was a string of blokes giving her one night after night, and yet again during our conversation my Mrs was showing no signs of anger or bad vibes and that she knew it was hard for me to accept, but my head and heart would just not listen.

Within 7 days of us landing back in Scotland, I had it all worked out how I would get back to my little Da on my own without that bloody wife near my side. The master plan: – being in business I thought it a good idea to take some of my better clients on a jolly to you know where, but of coarse I couldn't be seen to make this offer. After a bit of collusion with a client, in the post came an invite for me to join him and some of his work colleges on a Golfing Trip to Thailand. Well you know it, I paid for the whole trip for four persons, and because of how much I wanted to get back to see Da the expense didn't matter, and I tried to convince myself they were good clients and it make our business rapport even stronger. What mental bullshit and the lies I had to tell my wife and kids, anyway June 27th 2001 we took off from London bound for BKK for a 6 day break. You can only begin to imagine the talk on the plane, 4 blokes escaping to Thailand without the wives, what we weren't going to do. Yes we were only going to BKK or so my Mrs thought, but I had already booked connecting flights to HKT without her knowing. Within hours of landing in HKT my darling Da was within my site and somehow I was alone without my Mrs by my side.

**YSMM 5**

All seemed to good to be true but then came the biggest bombshell I had ever felt in my life. I was just sat at the bar with Da by my side just having fun and laughter, when suddenly she said he had to go and talk to someone else. I looked over to see who she was talking to, and to my total horror she was all over a fellow farang. Approaching the Mamasan I asked what was going on and she replied that the farang was with was a regular and looked after Da very often. Well I felt if someone had totally gutted me with a blunt knife and felt totally sick inside, a pain I had never felt before. After a few minutes Da came over to me and said she was sorry she had to go off with other farang or she would have been in trouble with the Mamasan and lose where she worked and her room. She said she hated her job and needed help to get her out of the bar. She portrayed so much sorry in her face it only deepened my thoughts that I must rescue poor little Da from this living hell she was trapped in, but as quick as a flash she was gone.

**YSMM 6**

The following evening I headed for the bar dead on 8 o'clock because I knew this was the time Da started work and the bar would be quite at this time of day. My perfect opportunity to sit with Da, and try to make everything OK in her life. We sat in a cosy corner of the bar and we talked, she again portrayed so much sorry in her for the life and how she was forced to do bar work, she only did so she could look after her Mamma and Pappa and knew no other way to make a living. We sat there for at least 2 hours holding hands across the table, we laughed and we cried together so many times over

**YSMM 7**

this period, this again only deepened how I felt for poor little Da (Shit I had it really really bad.) Then I heard one of the other bar girls shout too the Mamasan –Phone – Phone, not taking to much notice I just sat there with Da letting the chit-bin take the strain, then suddenly the Mamasan shouted across the bar Da PHONE. Instantly my thoughts went to that farang she was with last night and he was making arrangements to see her again later, I felt mortally sick inside. I could see beautiful Da on the phone and I just sat there and waited for her to come back to me just in case I had got it oh so wrong about the farang calling her. Then I noticed Da just place the receiver on the bar and walk towards me, she took my hand and said, The phone- The phone for you its your wife. Well I nearly died on the spot, but I somehow I knew it was true. I picked up the phone and sure enough on the other end of the line there she was. Well the conversation started with, how's it going are you having a nice time, and then the normal stuff like, you must think I'm stupid not to realise where you were heading for on that plane. Again she showed no signs of anger or frustration in her voice, it was just like a normal conversation over the phone we would have at work. The only time she made her mark was she insisted that dead on 2 PM the following day I would have to login in an Internet cafe and read and the email she had sent me, to this I agreed but for why I did not know why.

After I put the phone down, I went straight back to Da and the Mamasan and asked what my wife had said to her on the phone, to which they replied in their broken English – your wife very good lady she says its OK for you to be here with me, but I can never off with you, I think your wife very nice and good lady you and your wife good farangs. As the evening grew into the early morning we continued our talk into how I was going to rescue poor little Da from this life of torment. Again we laughed again we had are moments of sorrow, and all I knew was that my feelings for Da were getting stronger by the second. I trusted Da and the Mamasan on what they were saying to each other in Thai, that it was only good and that they generally thought of me as a friend and not the normal farang. Anyway by 4 AM its time for me to go back to the hotel room alone and contemplate the days events. I paid the chit-bin as they insisted on and thought just briefly “Oh shit did I really have that much to drink”?

The next day as requested I went to an internet cafe and logged on about 1.55 PM just to satisfy my curiosity on what the wife had sent me via e-mail, all types of thoughts were going through my head – like You Bastard just wait till you get home, my name is Bobbit from the USA and she will have nothing on me, to – I have filed for divorce – you've made you bed so you can lay in it, but none of this mattered, all I wanted was little Da.

As I logged on to Hotmail, an “instant buddy” message came on the screen — Thanks for logging on, but I need you to one little thing for me, — then the messages flew back and forth across the internet something like this.

me – Ok what's a matter, what do you want me to do?  
wife – Please Please can you go to this website and read all the pages.  
me – Ok send me the URL  
wife – Before I send it, I want you to promise me one thing you will read it fully, and that you will stay logged on so I can ask you questions so as I really know you are reading it fully.  
me – OK.  
wife – <http://www.stickmanbangkok.com/girls.html>  
me – site coming up now.  
wife – need you to scroll down about 2/3 and tell me what you reading.  
me – OK now reading.  
wife – Please read it fully and stay on line and remember I have always LOVED YOU and I always WILL.

**YSMM 8**

**YSMM 9**

**YSMM 10**

me – I’m reading it fully, hang on I’ll prove it to you. (then I wrote back some wording to prove I was taking it in )  
 wife – Do me a favour and ask Da if she would like you to take her out shopping.  
 me – Why – you just think Da is like all the others on this site, I tell you Da is different.  
 wife – Just do it for ME, and then hopefully you will realise what is going on over there. (If I’ve got it wrong I’ve lost you for ever and I am taking the biggest gamble of my life I LOVE YOU).  
 me – OK I will go and see Da at 8 PM and ask the question.  
 wife – Sorry to ruin you holiday, but I need you to come home to me like the person I once knew. Please take onboard what the site says. And call me later.  
 me – OK I promise.  
 wife – Have fun, but please try not to be angry with me nor feel bad if I’m right. Spend what you have to, but try to take the view of the website, but most importantly come home to ME. (LOVE YOU) now logging off.

With that statement she was gone, and I just sat there and read you site over and over and over again. As I read the more things sank in, like the massive chit-bin bills the statements made “I need money for Mamma & Pappa” the portrayal of affection the portrayal of un-happiness in Da’s life. When I left the Internet cafe my brain was in total turmoil. What was going on in my life? A wife that tells me to go out with another lady who she knows I am head over hills with, a website that tells me I am being taken for a mug, and back in the good old Scotland a wife that states she loves me but letting me make my own mid up about our future. Yet I was supposed to keep all this from the clients I was with, I thought I was going mad.

**YSMM 11**

I headed back to see my mate Da at 8 PM, I was greeted again with total enthusiasm, but this time I just had that shadow of doubt in my head, that little seed my wife had planted and the statements on you website had somehow started to grow in my head. So I played along with what Da wanted, she wanted to sit and talk- talk about how she could come out of the bar scene if only she could afford to have English lessons, how she could get a proper job which would pay better money so she could look after her Mamma & Pappa. Again she sounded Oh so sincere, but all that I had read earlier in the day came flooding back into my head. Then she mentioned my wife; I suddenly remembered the shopping trip my wife asked me to take her on, I thought this was my ploy to see if I was really being taken for a mug. We spoke about how I would meet her the following day and she would take me to all the good places to buy jewellery for my wife and how if I bought Da gold she would love me for ever. Now the seeds of doubt had grown even bigger, so I made the excuse I had to go but will be back tomorrow at the arranged time. My thoughts had now turned to sneaking back later and just watching from a distance on what my true love was up to. Well I can tell you that even before I left the bar she was making a beeline for other farang there. Realising I was being taken for a C\*nt with a capital “C” I’d knew now in my heart of hearts Da and the Mamasan were pissing up by back.

**YSMM 12**

The next day instead of meeting Da, I just phoned her to say I was up town with my friends from Scotland and I would see her later in the day. (At this point I had no intention of going shopping with her) All day long I thought of how I had been so gullible and how brave my Mrs was being by helping me and trying to show me I was making a total C\*nt of myself. Later that afternoon I phone my Mrs, and confirmed what she had said was coming true, during our general chit-chat she just asked me to get Da’s email address tonight, this being the last evening I would be in Phuket.

**YSMM 13**

I went back to the bar later that day, only to be greeted by the Mamasan saying my wife had phoned before I got there, then the normal banter started in her broken English – your wife very nice lady your wife special because I know your wife, you can not be

**YSMM 14**



<p>butterfly with girls she knows. With that, she thrust a girl at me that I had never seen in the bar before telling me that she not know wife, and she got her specially for me from her sister, what wife not see is OK. This somehow seemed to prove to me that somehow in their tiny little Thai Bar minds my Mrs had gained some sort of respect from them, but they were now pissing up both our backs.</p>	
<p>During the evening I spoke to Da, and again she was spewing out the stuff mentioned above, and how she wanted me to help her get out of the bar life. But there was one difference this time I heard what she was saying, but I had learnt before it was to late not to be taken in as I was before. After a few beers I left the bar with the email address and the blessing given to me of the Mamasan (not going there, make your own mind up:-)</p>	<p><b>YSMM 15</b></p>
<p>The next day it was time to pack and head for the airport, on the journey back to Scotland I had plenty of time to reflect over the events of the past few days. My mind was full of my Mrs and how right she was, how trusting she had been and mainly how brave she had been by letting me sort my head out. Strangely I felt the need to be home, at home with a woman who I have been with since the age of 17, a woman that showed affection in different ways to the Thais, but to a woman who I knew who loved me for who I am. On my arrival at home, it was just amazing, like I had been away for years; she was so pleased to see me home, and started crying and hugging me just making sure I was back to my normal self.</p>	<p><b>YSMM 16</b></p>
<p>Well all I can tell you is, Thailand is like a decease, when it gets you it get you bad it's like the Devil but also like and Angel and make no mistakes if screws up your senses, it fucks up your brain and it nearly fucked up my marriage. I am going back to Bangkok in October this year on a genuine business jolly, and this time I am returning with the right aspect on life over there, and make no mistakes this time I will enjoy Thailand for what it is, and no Bar Girl will ruin it for me ever again.</p>	<p><b>YSMM 17</b></p>
<p>Just one thought as I write, I've been sitting here typing for what seems hours, but my thoughts have drifted to my Mrs on many occasions. She is one Crafty Cow, She did gamble everything by making those phone calls and making me read your site while I was away. (IS SHE AS CALCULATING AS THOSE BLOODY THAIS?) I ask myself? – Yes of coarse she is but she did it for all the right reasons, but what does make me wonder is what she said on the phone those nights. That is one thing she has promised never to tell me.</p>	<p><b>YSMM 18</b></p>
<p>The wife knows I coming back later this year, and this time it's with her blessing, she knows in her heart of hearts I'm back on track (well nearly – Thailand has got under my skin as well she knows) but what I find more amazing about my Mrs is she wants to go back to Phuket with me later in the year. (Haven't quite worked that one out yet) but I just reckon its to prove to Da and her Mamasan the best lady won !!!</p>	<p><b>YSMM 19</b></p>
<p>Well Mr Stickman, you may find this hard to believe, but rest assured its true, there is even more details that I could write, but this has nearly turned into a novel. Would love to meet you and buy you a beer, I feel I owe you that at least.</p>	<p><b>YSMM 20</b></p>
<p><b>Stickman says:</b></p> <p>This was the email that prompted me to start the "Readers Submissions" section. This was just so powerful that I had to include it on the site, and so this section of the site was born.</p>	<p><b>YSMM 21</b></p>

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## Appendix 5

### Readers' Submissions: Western writers (RSW)

Content: For Jiraporn (FJ)	Paragraph No.
<p>Four years ago my Thai wife died of ovarian cancer. By the time she was accurately diagnosed, the cancer had moved into her lymphatic system. She died the day before my 65th birthday. During the course of a year she changed from a beautiful 38-year-old woman into a living skeleton. She was still beautiful and loving to the end of her short life. The cancer treatments left her bald and horribly sick and weak. During the last visit to the hospital the oncologist told me to take her home and prepare her and myself for the inevitable. No amount of preparation can steel your soul against the pain and loss that follows the death of your loved one. Jiraporn's family was very attentive to both our needs. During the Songkla Festival the family decided to go on a trip to their relative's Hamlet. Jiraporn's Mom and I stayed behind to care for her. That night it was raining hard, blowing rain, driving up against the sides of our house making a constant sizzling sound like bacon in a frying pan.</p>	<b>FJ 1</b>
<p>The rain stopped around 7 pm that night. Jiraporn was sweating profusely and was complaining about being cold. She refused her pain medication. I wrapped her up in a blanket and talked to her about anything I could think of. Anything just to keep her talking and awake. She was slipping away before my eyes and there was nothing I could do about it. Nothing at all. She would not survive the night. All I cared about was keeping her with me for a few more hours. Selfish and greedy, I could not let her go yet. Jiraporn's mother was sleeping on the sofa in the living room. She had not slept for days, constantly taking care of us with nervous maternal energy. Finally, she collapsed on the sofa from exhaustion.</p>	<b>FJ 2</b>
<p>Jiraporn closed her eyes and began to sleep. I wanted to wake her up and talk to her, but let her sleep. After seeing the constant pain she was in, I wanted to stop her pain. I thought of giving her an overdose of Demerol, but could not bring myself to do it. Later, lying down next to her, I wished with all of my might that God would take me instead of her. A dreamless sleep took me over soon thereafter. Jiraporn was calling my name. I awoke with a start. Jiraporn was barely audible, she asked me to hold her, to talk to her. She was frail and light as a 7-year-old child. I picked her up and held her in my arms and sat down in the rocking chair. She was crying and talking so softly that I had to strain to hear what she was saying. She said she could not feel me, could not see me any more. I talked to her and told her I loved her and gave her a kiss. She managed a weak smile and then the muscles in her faced relaxed. A strange glassy look was in her eyes. She began to gulp snatches of air. She was staring into my eyes and into every fiber, every cell of my being. The life slowly departed her body, not all at once but over time, such as an oil lamp burning the last of the oil in it's wick with the flame dimming as every drop of fuel is consumed till only wisps of vapor and a tiny smoldering ember remained. I felt death take her, I saw it, and did not understand why.</p>	<b>FJ 3</b>
<p>The moon was up and the moon shadows crept through her flower garden in the back yard. The shadows moved across the yard and lit her flowers with a colorless and cold light. I looked out in the garden and felt nothing. Nothing came to mind, just blackness and moon lit shadows. The frogs began to trill, hoping to find a mate. I remember watching the sun come up, hearing birds singing, the frogs stopped trilling. I remember hearing screams of anguish, not being sure it was Jiraporn's Mother or I. I remember closing Jiraporn's dark brown eyes with my fingers, scared I might hurt her if I used too much force. I remember getting up and placing Jiraporn on the bed; she was stiff and cold-a bony and emaciated statue. I remember the wails the family; I remember her 16-year-old daughter Khae curling up in my lap in the rocker and sobbing for hours. Numbness had set in. I could not feel anything. During my life I have seen death a number of times. This time it was different. I remember.</p>	<b>FJ 4</b>
<p>I wish I didn't, but I remember with clarity and detail that tears deep gashes in my soul. The next week was a blur to me. The funeral pyre and rites from the monks, the chanting and incense. Sitting in front of the house burning a campfire because she might come back to me alive and well. Jiraporn's mother and Khae forced me to drink and eat. Whisky did not faze me, nor make me feel better. I did not sleep. After 10 days I began to shake violently when I stood, my speech was slurred as if I was drunk; uncoordinated and clumsy. Cold blackness took over</p>	<b>FJ 5</b>

when I sat in the ez-chair in the living room. I remember being so angry that my body would betray me. Two days later I awoke. Khae said I had been talking in my sleep constantly for two days. She told me some mumbo jumbo crap about the ghosts talking through me. She said I would yell out in Vietnamese and French and then speak in Thai. Khae was weepy and touchy; anything I said about her mother would set her off into a crying jag. I understood what she was going through. She had lost her Mom; I had lost my wife and the love of my life. You only get one love like that boys, and mine died in my arms when the moon came up after the rain stopped. Food seems to be a universal comfort offering when someone dies. Jiraporn's mother and relatives would come over and cook a feast every night and talked about Jiraporn. Quite frankly, I did not want them over, nor did I want to eat. Khae would make pancakes in the morning, she learned how to make them from me and developed fairly good cooking skills from her Mom. I ate her pancakes, but hardly anything else.

**FJ 6**

A month after Jiraporn died Khae and I went to Bangkok to close Jiraporn's accounts and go through the legal paper work tangle. I brought Jiraporn's jewelry with me to put into my safe deposit box. My great-great grandmother's diamond ring was with the modest amount of baubles Jiraporn had amassed. Some gold chains, the emerald earrings I bought her for our 5th wedding anniversary, a small jade Buddha on an intricate gold chain necklace. As one would expect, the legal crap and red tape was daunting. I had prepared for this and had all the forms and official stamps done earlier to facilitate the matter. Still, it was a challenge with the banking officers, but they relented. Khae would be entering college a year early and I told her that I would pay for her education. Jiraporn made me promise to take care of Khae and to make sure she would stay in college and get her degree. Khae was eight years old when Jiraporn and I married. At first she just regarded me as her Mom's husband, but then she began to relate to me as her father. I laid down some fairly strict rules for her, which she followed (mostly). Khae's biological father did a runner when she was two years old. Khae wanted to stay in Bangkok with her cousins; she needed to get away from the house and the memories it held. She wanted to stay away from me for a while to get her bearings. I was Ok with this, but had the father-daughter talk about drugs, drinking, and safe sex. I made her promise to make her future lover use a condom no matter what. This embarrassed the hell out of her, but she made a promise to me and to the memory of her mother.

I stayed in Bangkok for a few days and hooked up with some of my old buddies. Too many 'sorry to 'ear that mate' and 'I'm so sorry for your loss' statements were flung at me. Enough. I took the bus back to my home.

**FJ 7**

At first I thought I was getting old and absent minded: Items around the house began to disappear. The Soligen chef knives from the silverware drawer, some knick-knacks of Jiraporn's. When the microwave went missing, I knew that someone had been ripping me off. I talked with Jiraporn's mother and father about the situation and told them that someone in the family was stealing from me. They seemed not to be concerned about my questions and their general response of 'mai pen rai'. Never mind?!?! I was getting ripped off and they could care less. My microwave was sitting on their counter by the stove. Ah, to hell with them I thought. I can always buy another microwave.

**FJ 8**

Later on that month I noticed that my personal belongings had been rifled through. Enough. Locks and window bolts were installed the next day. A bad feeling began to creep into my mind. The family was slowly turning against me. For some time I had noticed that the family had slowly and quietly excluded me from their gatherings, from their holiday celebrations. Questions were asked of me 'when you go back to America?', 'Why you stay here?' Obviously they had a plan to get rid of me, to make me feel unwelcome so I would leave. As a few months went by, the statements became more pointed and terse.

**FJ 9**

My house was built on a small plot of land that Jiraporn owned. It was small, but a nice place, it was mine. I paid for it and was not willing to have her relatives run me off so they could take possession of the house. The atmosphere was getting downright ugly. For the first time since I had been in Thailand, I was afraid for my safety in my own home. Before I met Jiraporn I lived in Bangkok and associated with a bunch of retired military guys like myself. I purchased an old Spanish .32 caliber self-loading pistol from one of my poker buddies when he needed \$50 to pay his rent and some bills. The pistol was loaded and ready in my nightstand. I hated what the family

**FJ 10**

was doing to me; they were slowly freezing me out. I began to understand the true nature of Thai people. A farang will always be a farang. We are tolerated, but very few ever make it into the inner circle of the ‘family’. I grew up in New England. If you weren’t born into the community, you were considered an outsider. Thailand takes that notion to a perverse level. Leaving my hamlet or Thailand looked like it was an event that was inevitable.

**FJ 11**

I met Stasha at a local outdoor restaurant. Stasha is a rotund middle-aged Polish guy who lives close by in another hamlet. He and his wife were planning on building a house. Over a short time we became close friends. They came over and we had dinner together many times. One night Stasha was griping about how much money it would cost to buy appliances and furniture for his house. A flash of inspiration hit suddenly. I told Stasha that I was going to leave Thailand and that he could make me an offer for the furniture, appliances, and household fixtures. After a few hours of haggling, we struck a deal. He even wanted the windows and TV! I sold him my household items for roughly 25% of what I paid for them. A good deal for him and his wife and a great deal for me.

**FJ 12**

Stasha and his brother-in-law showed up a week later with a truck. They loaded the furniture, appliances and my portable a/c unit onto the truck. Stasha said he would be back in the morning to pop the windows and casings out. After Stasha left, Jiraporn’s uncle came over visibly upset. ‘Why you sell stove, why you sell furniture?!?’ he demanded. I looked at him and told him ‘because I need money’. He was getting angry and yelled at me ‘Why you sell our house things?!?’ AH-HA: OUR HOUSE THINGS! He confirmed what I knew all along; they regarded my house as theirs! Time was running out for me so I made reservations for a flight back to the U.S. the next day. I called my brother and told him that I was coming home for a while and needed a place to stay. No problem, come live with him and Phyllis. They had more than enough room since their kids had grown up and moved out. I also called Stasha and asked him to come over early the next morning, I told him of the situation with the family. Stasha wanted me to leave and come over and stay with him and his wife.

**FJ 13**

Early the next morning Stasha arrived with the truck and his brother-in-law. They took out the windows and casings and the remainder of the furniture from my house. Stasha and his brother-in-law left. Stasha said he would be back in an hour to come get me and drive me to the airport. Everything of value to me was packed in my three suitcases. Photo albums, mementos, legal paper work. I was ready to leave. Jiraporn’s uncle and two male relatives came over and began to yell at me. Jiraporn’s uncle went berserk and began to gesture wildly at me while screaming in Thai. He began to throw stuff at me. The situation was getting very dangerous. I took off my windbreaker and set it on my bags. They saw the pistol tucked in my waistband and calmed down immediately. I told them to leave immediately. They left without saying anything else. My tolerance limit had been breached. I piled Jiraporn’s clothes, my unneeded clothes and the various cancer cure books from the bookshelf into a heap on the living room floor. I opened my wallet and apologized to the picture of my wife for what I was about to do then dumped several containers of cleaning fluid and kerosene into the pile and waited for Stasha. Everything of any value was taken from the house, either ripped off, or sold by me. It was an empty shell, nothing but memories, nothing but pain for me. I went outside and disconnected the cooking gas bottle from the fitting and dragged it into the brush. I opened up the valve and let the gas bleed off. Stasha was taking forever. 45 minutes seemed like a day. I hated the family for what they had done to me. I hated their naked greed; I hated my wife for dying and leaving me to face the greed of her family. I hated God for allowing my wife to die a horrible death. I hated life. I hated that I was not the one to die and to have my wife live. At that moment I was ready to do something horrible, to myself or to Jiraporn’s uncle and greedy relatives.

**FJ 14**

Stasha came skidding around the corner from the main road. He was going way too fast and nearly clipped a sawtaw tree on his way over to my house. I thought he had been drinking and was too bagged to drive me into Bangkok. The opposite was true. He was stone cold sober and jumped out of the car. He was really concerned for me because his brother-in-law told him something very bad was going to happen to me. He wanted to leave in a hurry and froze when he saw the pistol in my waistband. I smiled at him and told him that everything was Ok. He loaded my bags into the back of his brother-in-law’s car. I told Stasha that I had to get one last item from the house. I went in and stared at the pile of clothes and worthless cancer cure books. That day I quit smoking. I lit my last cigarette and tossed the pack on to the heap of clothes on

the floor. I also tossed my Zippo lighter onto the pile. Walked out, closed the door, threw the keys through a window opening and got in the car to go to the airport. Jiraporn had been after me for years to quit smoking. That day I quit smoking forever. As we were driving away I saw smoke come out of one of the window openings.

Stasha thought I had gone insane. On the way to the airport, I handed him the pistol and told him that it was his to do with, as he wanted. He stuffed the pistol under the front seat and said nothing. Stasha was in the military in Poland, perhaps he could use the pistol for a paperweight. We arrived in Bangkok early; Stasha puts Asian drivers to shame when it comes to lunatic driving. We stopped off at a bar near the airport and had a few drinks. He asked me why I had gone off my nut and torched my house. He asked, so I obliged and told him the whole sordid situation from stuff being stolen from my house, the families 'mai pen rai' attitude about the theft and the slow freeze out of me from their family life. I detailed the conversations with the relatives and greedy behavior that ensued after only a few months after Jiraporn's death. I called Khae, she met us at the bar and was rather distraught that I was leaving and going back to America. I told her what had happened over the past few months. She was my daughter, not by biology, but by shared love of Jiraporn and our life experience together. I gave her Jiraporn's jewelry sans my great-great grandmother's diamond ring. She didn't want to take the jewelry. I insisted – it was hers to do with as she wanted. I told her to never sell the emerald earrings and jade Buddha. The funds from Jiraporn's accounts had been transferred into Khae's account, plus a little extra from me. The money was for school and that the family was not to be allowed access to her account. She understood. She had enough for four years of college and rental of a reasonable apartment for five years. I gave her a detailed budget plan showing her the how, where, and why of managing her money for school and living. Khae was not happy. She was really pissed at me because I was leaving her. She was angry because I had cut ties with the family. She understood what had happened with her family's attitude towards me. She was still pissed off at me for leaving. During the eight years we had been together, we had formed a strong father-daughter relationship. She had taken on a Western mindset and was independent enough to make it on her own. She is very intelligent. She is able to hold her own when we discuss Philosophy and Human Nature issues. She would be the only person I would miss when I left Thailand.

**FJ 15**

I told her that I would be back in the future and that is was now time for her to move into her life without me, without her mother. She was ready, unsure of herself, but she was ready. She wrote down all of her contact information, her college, everything she could think of. I had the information already since we had gone to the University together to get her enrolled and set up with her class schedule. She needed to write all this down. I was not going to refuse her. Within three months she would be in college. She was ready, but terrified of being alone. She had her cousins but it would never be the same as it once was. The old phrase 'You can never go home' echoed on my mind. We hugged for an hour at the airport. She was not weepy but rather sullen and sulky. Stasha would check in on her periodically. My flight to Arizona went surprisingly fast. After customs I went out into the reception area. God did this place feel alien to me. Everyone was talking English! I looked around for my brother, didn't see him so I headed toward the phones to give him a call. Someone tapped me on the shoulder and said 'Where you going?' I turned and saw a fat, bald old man. He smiled. My god it was him, my brother Steven! He was unrecognizable to me. 'What's up? You walked right past me!' 10 years had passed since I last saw him; he had turned into an old man. Geeze, he was only 5 years older than me and looked like a geriatric nursing home patient! After the shock wore off, we hugged and left the terminal. Steve asked me how I was handling Jiraporn's death. It all began to pour out of me. For the first time since my mother's death, I cried. Steve pulled into a local park and we sat and talked for hours at a picnic bench. Steve is a retired psychology professor and is by nature a person who you could talk to about anything. He also pulls no punches. He told me that I was a downright complete idiot for torching the remainder of my house. Why not let the family have the empty shell? Hatred, hurt feelings, abandonment, exclusion, all that crap was the reason. I was not right with the world; I was not ok with myself. Steve knew this and was ready to be a big brother again.

**FJ 16**

When we arrived at the house, I went in via the carport door. Phyllis was there, hunched over with a walker. She laughed and ambled toward me and gave me a big hug. 10 years had gone by and they had both aged badly. Phyllis was the same age as me and was crippled up with arthritis and a host of other maladies. We sat down and talked into the late evening. Phyllis made pot

**FJ 17**

after pot of coffee. Her coffee is quite good. She and Steve seem to be living on it. Later on, Phyllis excused herself and said she was going to bed. Steve hauled my bags into the spare bedroom and told that I was welcome to stay as long as needed, forever if I wanted. At least I could keep Phyllis off his case about house chores and yard work. How could they sleep after drinking so much coffee? I was jumping out of my skin with caffeine.

**FJ 18**

I called Khae later that night. She was overjoyed to get my call and began to tell me everything that had happened to her that day, just like a little kid telling Dad about her first day of school. I listened and felt like crap because I had to leave her. We talked for an hour. The family was outraged that I had burned down 'their' house. She said that they all were really pissed off at me. Jiraporn's mother was the only person who was not pissed off at me. She understood me. Khae said that the police were called but that there was nothing they could do since the house did not belong to the family. The land was deeded to them after Jiraporn's death, but the house remained the property of the owner – Me. Khae told me that Jiraporn's uncle had already asked her if Jiraporn or I had left any money to her, or if Jiraporn had any bank accounts still open. Khae told him that I had pre-paid her college and room costs for four years. He asked if I had given her any of Jiraporn's jewelry. She lied and said 'no'. Good girl! Khae said that she was taken aback by his asshole matter-of-fact attitude and that what belonged to Jiraporn was now his. Khae saw the family through my eyes, if even for a short time. She didn't like what she saw and talked about it with me.

**FJ 19**

For me the most painful part of leaving my Thai family was that they knowingly began to freeze me out of any meaningful social interaction within the family—even though I asked questions and tried to re-insert myself into the family. Jiraporn's mother was powerless to intervene since she was a woman whose duties revolved around the family. As painful as it was, the situation was a real eye opener to me. As a foreigner-A 'Farang': I had the status of a 'Farang' the family merely tolerated me because I was married to one of their members. When Jiraporn died, the gloves came off and they showed me what they really thought of me as a person and as a member of the family. In Stickman's reader submissions there are many references to 'face' and 'family honor' and that the best social level to marry into is the 'middle class'. It does not matter if you marry a poor Thai girl or a Rich Thai Princess. The end result is that you will always be regarded as a 'Farang' no matter the family dynamic or level of social hierarchy. Some families will just barely tolerate you after their daughter has died, some will get hostile and try to force you out of the family, some will even get violent to get their way. This may be an overly broad generalization, but it is mostly true from my experiences and observations.

**FJ 20**

Six months went by at my brother's house. The highlight of the week was Friday when Phyllis made Taco Pie and the old Greek neighbors came over for card night, most of the times it was Bridge or Canasta. I counted 38 pill bottles by the kitchen sink. Phyllis and Steve were medicated to the gills. Pills to stop aches, Pills to stop cholesterol, pills to stop heart angina, pills to make you shit, pills to stop you from shitting, pills to sleep, pills to wake up, pills to make you happy, pills to stop the side effects of other pills. There was no way I was going to become a geriatric pill junkie. Walk 5 miles a day to stay in shape was my regimen. I joined a health club; they had the balls to insist I get a doctor's ok certificate before working out. That refusal worked out well because I was able to pound the six-month rate way down because they had discriminated against me because I was a senior citizen. Hell, I did not feel old. I felt out of my element back in Arizona. Everything was too predictable, too tame, and too bland.

**FJ 21**

A year went by and I was getting tired of American style retired life. Tired of listening to people bitch about their spastic colons, bitch about medicare, bitch about the cost of prescription drugs. I was tired of eating my dinner at 4:00 pm with Steve and Phyllis. I missed sex with my wife. I found myself drifting into the Asian part of the city during the days. I ate at local Thai and Vietnamese restaurants and began to socialize with some of the local Asian women. They thought it a curiosity that I could speak Thai and Vietnamese. They asked if I fought in Vietnam. Hah, I was stuffed in tiny sweatbox office in Texas translating French and Vietnamese dispatches to English for 5 years during the war. I dated a few Asian women in their 50's, they were fun and endearing and quite sexual, but they had become too Americanized for my tastes. For a while I was happy and content just to exist. Khae was in school and doing well. She was still unhappy because she was alone in Bangkok, even with a roommate and her cousins. She called me weekly and filled me in on the local news. Sometimes she called to hear my voice, she called so I would

re-assure her. My heart ached because of her pain and loneliness. She was all I had left of Jiraporn.

One night after the infamous gut bomb 'Taco Pie' I began to evaluate my life while sitting on the crapper. It's funny how life's questions get answered while you are dumping a load. Arizona would be a slow and prolonged torturous existence for me. Steve and Phyllis were content to live for card night, Taco Pie, and their grandkids coming over on Sundays. I felt sorry for them. They were so medicated; they let life pass them by. When I was 10 years old, my parents took me to visit my grandparents at an old folks home. I saw despair and sadness, grief and loneliness. I did not understand it at the time. Later on I swore that I would never end up strapped to a bed, crapping all over myself, waiting for someone, anyone to pay attention to me.

**FJ 22**

My flight was booked for the next evening. I was going to go back to Thailand. Phyllis and Steve were not happy with my decision, they said my place was with them, we were family. I had one remaining family member that needed me more than Steve and Phyllis. Later on in the day Phyllis came out on the patio and talked with me. She said that if I left, she had the feeling that we would never see each other again. She was disturbed that I considered Khae to be part of my family. Racism takes many forms, Phyllis did not want Khae to be part of her family. That was Ok with me. Khae is MY family. The next evening Steve drove me to the airport. He told me that he knew I would go back to Thailand someday. It was a just matter of getting perspective on my life. He dropped me off at the terminal, hugged me and told me to write. Steve is a big proponent of writing letters. The art is disappearing with email and cheap long distance rates.

**FJ 23**

An hour later I was on my way to Thailand. I arrived at the next day dead-dog-tired and hung over from the free drinks in business class. Took a taxi to the Florida Hotel and showered and called Khae. She talked about her day, how boring the literature courses were and the general news. I asked her if she had eaten dinner yet, she replied 'No', she would go out and get something later. I asked her if she wanted to go to dinner with me, she got irritated with me and told me not to tease her because she really missed me. I told her to meet me at the Chitlom station in 30 minutes. Silence on the line: 'For real Dad?' I just replied 'Yep, meet you there in 29 minutes. I'm in Bangkok, see you in 28 minutes, bye' I hung the phone up and dressed for dinner. Khae was waiting for me when the train came into the station. Tears were dripping off of her face. We walked down the platform. I gave her a bear hug and a kiss on the forehead when no one was around to see. We went to dinner and talked for hours. Before we knew it, it was 3 am. I told her to go back and get some sleep. She needed it to be ready for class. She was going to blow off class that day to spend it with me, but I would not let her slide. She pouted a bit, but knew that I could not be persuaded on that point. I went back to the hotel and slept. For the first time in a year and half, I slept soundly and really felt good inside.

**FJ 24**

My contacts in real estate in Thailand managed to find a condominium at very good building for a reasonable price. Khae was there with every spare moment she had. She told me she was afraid I would leave again and leave her by herself. She was growing up fast, but was still a little girl in so many ways. In retrospect, she really needed a parent when I originally left. I was so mired in my own grief; I could not see her pain and suffering. She wanted to make sure I was here to stay. She needed me and I needed her. When we met her friends, she introduced me as her father. Some of her girlfriends giggled and talked to each other in Thai: 'I didn't know her father is a farang' 'How many more children does he have?' 'Does he understand Thai?' I just smiled and nudged Khae. She giggled and told them that her father spoke Thai and could understand what they were saying. Poof! -Immediate bursts of giggles and blushing on all of the girls' faces. Ah, what I would not give to be 19 again!

**FJ 25**

Khae told me that she would not tell her 'other' family that I was back in Thailand. Good, leave the cretins to their greed. I wanted nothing to do with them, except for Jiraporn's Mother, but if she knew I was in Bangkok, the entire family would know. I do not need to deal with them ever again. Too much bad blood. A few weeks after I bought my condominium, I placed an ad for a housekeeper. Out of 117 responses, I selected 5 and interviewed the women. Two were obvious bargirls, tattooed to the hilt and looking for a sugar daddy. One was a jaded housewife looking for extra money, one was a divorced woman that wanted a part time job, and one was a professional maid moonlighting from the Dusit Thani. The divorced woman looking for part time work was my choice. Tui is her name. Tui would come over twice a week and clean the condo,

**FJ 26**



<p>wash my clothes, do the household chores. For 200 baht per time, it was a good deal for me. For Tui it must be a dream job: 2-3 hours work for 200 Baht! Not as much as a prostitute, but at least she made her living by working a decent job and not sponging off her kids!</p>	
<p>Khae came over when Tui was cleaning one day and was surprised to see another woman in the condo. She asked me who the woman was. When I told her that it was my maid, she had a meltdown! She ran out of the condo crying and did not return my calls for a few days. Khae came over a few days later in the late evening. She had her ‘We need to talk NOW Dad’ face on. She asked my why I hired a maid. I told her that I needed someone to clean up and do laundry. Khae was angry at me because she considered it her job to take care of me, to clean up, do laundry, be a good daughter. After a while she let me talk again: She was in college and that every minute of time was to be spent in class, avoiding boys, studying, or sleeping, and that I could take care of myself. I was here to stay, not going to leave again. Khae is horribly jealous of anyone other than herself in my life, she is becoming a Thai woman; Khae is also becoming a mirror copy of her mother, which pleases me and also concerns me deeply. Her mother used to shamelessly guilt-trip Khae at every available opportunity. At 20 years old, Khae is more mature than most 35 year old women I know, but she is still 100% Thai and has the thought patterns and hormones of a 20 year old Thai girl, even if my time with her has changed her vantage point to a western view. In the long run Khae accepted Tui and managed to wrangle her jealousy back into the green bottle.</p>	<p><b>FJ 27</b></p>
<p>Tui has become more than a maid. She has become my lover. At 46 years old, she does not have many prospects in her future. Tui talked of love and marriage one night after sex. I told her of Jiraporn and that I could never love a woman that deeply again, and that marriage would never happen for me again, just too much pain. Tui understood and accepted that fact. She accepts me for what I am, nothing more. Tui spends more time with me than her family. She’s gets a small weekly salary for the work she does, cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping. She’s happy just being a housewife. Tui is a pretty woman for her age, slim, not beautiful, just average. Her personality is truly Southern Thai. She takes care of me like a husband. She is content being with a man who will not beat her or cheat on her. I am content with her as a housekeeper, cook, and lover. I want to personally thank the chemists for creating Viagra. They did the world a needed service by creating this little blue pill. Tui does not know about my use of Viagra, she just thinks I am a very horny old farang all the time. She does not seem to mind my behavior one tiny bit. So what if the laundry does not get done until tomorrow? I’m in no hurry.</p>	<p><b>FJ 28</b></p>
<p>My holidays are spent with Khae and her friends. Weekdays are spent with Tui, but not with her family. Life goes on. People leave. Situations change.</p>	<p><b>FJ 29</b></p>
<p>Sometimes when the moon rises I feel Jiraporn’s touch, I hear her voice. I smell her scent. When the rains come I dream of her dancing in the flower garden in the moonlight. I Dream of her in her rocking chair softly singing old Thai love songs to me.</p>	<p><b>FJ 30</b></p>
<p>Late at night my memories and pain sometimes drive me to think of death again. Sometimes I regret giving Stasha my pistol. My health is good and I have a good life for the time being. Nothing lasts forever except my love for Jiraporn and Khae. Khae is the only person keeping me here in this life. Turning 69 did not bother me, I don’t celebrate my birthdays any more. Steve died in his sleep a year ago, Phyllis had a stroke and died a month after Steve. Most of my older friends have died off also. I lift my nightly three shots of Bourbon whiskey to their memories. They were all kindred souls to me. Take it from me lads, find the right woman and live your life by the day. The end will come much quicker than you will expect. As the polka song says “There is no beer in heaven, that’s why we drink beer today”.</p>	<p><b>FJ 31</b></p>
<p>Jiraporn’s bamboo rocking chair is the only piece of furniture I kept. When I die, it will be part of my funeral pyre, unless Khae wants it. When I die Khae will get the proceeds from the sale of my great-great grandmothers diamond ring. I had it appraised when I was in Arizona. Khae will never need to worry about money, neither will her children. I won’t break my promise to Jiraporn.</p>	<p><b>FJ 32</b></p>
<p><b>Stickman says:</b> There is little to say. This is one of the very best submissions sent to this site and it tugs on the emotions. I’m sure Khae will develop into a fine woman. For what its worth, I think your decision</p>	<p><b>FJ 33</b></p>

making and actions are first class, and totally on the money. Burning down the house brought a wry smile to my face.

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<b>Appendix 6</b>	
<b>Readers' Submissions: Western writers (RSW)</b>	
<b>Why I Never Married A Thai (WINMT)</b>	
<b>Content: Introduction (W:INT)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>Some of you (very) long-time readers of this site may remember that a few years ago Stick provided a section on his website that listed forthcoming articles. One of these was entitled “Why I Wouldn’t Marry a Thai,” or something similar. I awaited this article of his for some time, but realized after his marriage that it would not likely ever be published. As a result of this omission, I decided to discuss the reasons why I didn’t marry a Thai. Please note that these are my observations, I don’t expect you to necessarily have had similar experiences or opinions.</p>	<b>W:INT 1</b>
<p>Because this is a rather long submission, the links below will let you jump to the 5 issues that highlight the main differences between Thai and Western culture and which undermined the relationships with my Thai girlfriends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Honesty-Integrity</li> <li>- Intellectualism-Style v. Substance</li> <li>- Value of a husband</li> <li>- Accommodation, Compromise, Gratitude</li> <li>- Sex</li> </ul>	<b>W:INT 2</b>
<p>Some background about myself may help provide context to this submission. I first arrived in Thailand as a foreign exchange student, in the 1970s. I can’t remember all the reasons why I decided on Thailand (Bangkok region) as a place for a year of high school, but some factors were that it seemed to be as out-of-the-way place as you could find in the world, that no one I knew was really familiar with the country (although my father had been stationed nearby during the Vietnam War), and that I like to explore. I had almost no knowledge of the country back then and I certainly didn’t know anything about the Vietnam Era R&amp;R thing that was going on and for which the country would become infamous.</p>	<b>W:INT 3</b>
<p>I later taught English in the country for a time, and also returned to study at one of the (supposedly) top universities in the country, again living with a middle-class Bangkok family. Since then, I’ve also worked at several jobs in the country, including international organizations and Thai employers (government and non-governmental). In my current work I now visit the country about once a year (sometimes residing for several months) and at one time wished that I could find acceptable long-term employment there, but not with a Thai employer (Stick has pointed out several of these frustrations in his columns). Over the years, I’ve worked closely with about 80 Thai colleagues, and have had @20+ Thai acquaintances that I would get together with for social occasions. Today, I keep in regular contact with about eight Thais and count three of them as close friends (not including spouses and kids).</p>	<b>W:INT 4</b>
<p>The total amount of time I’ve lived in Thailand is about 10 years and the pattern of trips I’ve made has been an advantage as I’ve been able to better appreciate the many changes in the country over the past 30+ years. My time away from Thailand has also provided the advantage that I haven’t become so enamored or bored with the place that I either wish to live there permanently or never wish to return. I think this option has provided a perspective on the country that has allowed me to appreciate it more, while at the same time moderating the incredible emotions and frustrations that everyone I</p>	<b>W:INT 5</b>

<p>know who has ever lived in the country for a stint of more than one year (sometimes far less), has reached. Also remember that Thailand has changed quite a bit since I first arrived, especially the liberalization of attitudes about dating, relationships, and getting to know members of the opposite sex. Today it is MUCH easier to meet and date Thai women, so if today's attitude about dating were present in the late 70s &amp; early 80s, perhaps I would have married a Thai, on the other hand, even though I would have met many more women or at least gotten to know them better, the issues I discuss below could have easily resulted in the same situation as today.</p>	
<p>As you read the remainder of my statement, remember that I like Thailand and the people; I also don't buy into the idea that Thai men are no good, that they are poor husbands, or that they don't care about their wives and families. The vast majority of married Thai men I've known care deeply about their wives and families, and would never allow themselves to be distracted by a female to the detriment of their family, unlike many, many Westerners. Also note that my familiarity with the country is NOT based on the nightlife of the country. I had lived in the country for over three years before I ever had a drink at a bar in a farang nightlife area, and while I've met many Thai women over the years, before 1988 I had talked to less than 5 women who to my knowledge had ever worked in the sex industry. My introduction to Thailand then is definitely not from a tourist or sex enthusiast perspective.</p>	<b>W:INT 6</b>
<p>I've met dozens of regular Thai women over the years and I've had a 'handful' of Thai girlfriends; it was one or more of the five factors below that kept appearing when I would become serious about a long-term relationship which would ultimately result in our break up. While most of these factors are not exclusive to Thai-farang relationships, I believe that they are more common to Thai-non-Thai (especially farang) relationships and so my thoughts may provide some degree of insight about the different ways that our two cultures see the world. The order in which these factors are listed is based on the size of the problem they became in my relationships, but none of them singularly resulted in the demise of the relationship.</p>	<b>W:INT 7</b>
<p>Note that I am not saying that the practices noted below are not found in western culture, they are, but they are far more prevalent in Thai society and to a degree that I have found to be incompatible with my interests in a spouse.</p>	<b>W:INT 8</b>

<b>Content: Honesty-Integrity (W:HI)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p><b>1. Honesty-Integrity</b> Above all else, I appreciate honesty and integrity in my close friends and my spouse. As most of you know, these traits are hard to find in LOS, perhaps because they are also related to the important issue of face and the significance of duplicity common in Thai society. While there is also plenty of dishonesty and lack of integrity in my own culture, what I am discussing here is the way in which these actions are manifested in Thailand and the rationalization and inability to accept truth when it conflicts with other important issues such as face. This is the most difficult portion of the paper to write, as there are so many examples I could discuss and so many ways in which the Thai can be seen by farang as dishonest. I don't think that there are many more divergent ways of distinguishing among Thai and farang than how we view honesty. There are few Thais in whom I can place my trust or rely on.</p>	<b>W:HI 1</b>
<p>Part of the problem is that Thais try and accommodate every one with whom they come in contact and perhaps because they are always in search of their own identity, they try hard to be all things to all people. This is very different from the NW European culture</p>	<b>W:HI 2</b>

that I grew up in, which suggests that compromising your integrity for the sake of others is tantamount to making a pact with the devil, and there are clear firm lines of demarcation between right and wrong and honest and dishonest behavior.

In spite of its Buddhist basis that alludes a strong moral ethic, in practice Thai culture has been very lenient in condemning actions that may seem incongruous with the religion. Right and wrong is certainly a matter of interpretation and there are few easy hard-and-fast rules that apply. Everything is transient and everything is flexible. More appropriate to this section, however, is that the Thai try very hard to be all things to all people. They befriend everyone with the goal that they can play one group off against the other as the need arises. WWII is a good example, while officially at war with the allied powers, the Thai ambassador to the US declined to deliver the formal declaration of war and instead helped to support the Thai anti-Japanese effort to fight the Japanese. In other words, the Thai want it both ways, they choose to play both sides of the game because they want to be on the winning side. The morals or ethics of the situation are really irrelevant because it is more important to be on the winning side. Read up on what happened after WWII, what did the Thai do? This is why the Nana Hotel is always full. Never place your trust or faith in the individual to come through, but rather befriend all and you maximize your chances.

**W:HI 3**

One of the things that really annoys me about Thai ‘friends’ is that they are only your friends when things are going well, while in bad times, they will desert you for the other side. Are these friends? Thai ‘friends’ often ask me to do some sort of favor inferring that I am the only one whom they have taken into their confidence or who they have asked. Many years of experience with these situations has taught me that it is never the case that I have been the only one they ask the favor of. When a Thai asks a favor of you, it is nothing special; basically they have asked several people hoping that one of them will come through. To many Westerners this seems like a breach of trust as our culture teaches us not to be greedy when asking favors and if we do ask we must really be in need. In addition, if we say yes, then our reputation is on the line. For me, this situation combines the importance of trust-integrity with reliability, which is important among friends and paramount in a spouse; failing to follow through on this type of agreement signifies unreliability and lack of trust. Unfortunately, it does not have the same connotation in Thai, who for a variety of reasons will commonly breach this type of agreement. To me, this breach is another form of unscrupulous behavior by a duplicitous individual, but that is not how most Thais will view the situation. They have an impressive ability to rationalize actions that seem to Westerners to be in contradiction with their cultural – ethical system.

**W:HI 4**

Thais are particularly good at using their skills to mislead or deceive others, especially us farang; and often times we are either too ignorant, too blind, too stupid to see what is happening, or just simply in denial. I think one of the major concerns any Westerner should have when marrying a Thai is to determine why she is marrying you, love, economic gain, no other options, etc. There is no way to tell what her motives truly are before marriage; in fact I would go so far as to say that she probably has many motives for marrying you, and is just waiting to see which opportunities present themselves. This statement shouldn’t be seen as necessarily something negative, as all women probably have many reasons for marrying a particular person, but given the basic view of honesty in Thai society, the lack of remorse, and the exceptional ability to rationalize unscrupulous acts, the potential for dishonesty, manipulation, and deceit is very high.

**W:HI 5**

The Thai seem to think that they will never be caught in a lie and even if they do they believe that they can either sweet talk their way out of the situation or their countrymen will take note of the lie but try gloss over the situation, once they both realize that the lie has been caught, in order to help the perpetrator from losing face. Because this type

**W:HI 6**

of recognition is not present when dealing with a farang, or it is not a concern, the Thai are very willing to take their chances to see if you, a farang, can catch them. If you don't catch them in the deceit, then no harm done! If you do think you have caught them, rather than fess (face) up to the indiscretion, they will do all in their power to find a way out of it, by fabricating an even bigger lie. Thais have, or pay little attention to the ethics of these situations as we do in the West, which is tiresome for me as I dislike dealing with individuals who are such blatant liars, not just from my perspective, but their actions also breach the basic tenants of the religion to which they profess adherence. This situation ultimately eliminates as friends or spouses most of the Thais I have come to know over the years. If I can't trust them, then they cannot be my close friend. A friend is someone whom I can trust, which doesn't seem to be an important problem for Thais.

In my formative stages of studying Thai, Thai culture, and Thailand, I came across one scholarly work which argued that Thais don't really have friends in the same sense as Westerners, as Thai friendships are more like foreign relations among countries. This is because Thais never fully trust the individuals whom they refer to as friends; in fact they may not even like the folks in their 'phuen fung' (circle of friends), but that they make certain to maintain contact and some sort of relationship with these individuals. This is because they never know when someone's assistance might be needed. It is best to never completely sever ties with anyone, but rather keep in contact (minimal) with as many people as one can, while the 'circle of friends' will be constantly in flux.

While I've known many Thais, I can't say that I trust any of them implicitly, which is not necessarily a condemnation of Thais, as there are very few westerners I've met who I would trust implicitly either. But my dilemmas with trust sometimes come down to silly little things that a Westerner believes a true friend wouldn't do, because they are so small we wouldn't risk a friendship by doing these minor things. Perhaps to the Thai they see things a bit different, if we are friends, then I shouldn't be bothered by the little things. Unfortunately for me, I am bothered by them.

Perhaps the best example of this situation is the friend who used to let me keep some clothes and other household items at his house when I was out of the country. Over the years I began to notice certain items missing, and thought it odd that they should disappear since my friend didn't have use for them. I later learned that he was 'loaning' these items out to his Thai friends, which of course made him more important in their eyes. I discovered this when I would return unannounced to find some things gone and he would tell me that they were at his office, etc. He never once asked if his friends could use these things, and he knew that I wouldn't have wanted them to, but as long as I was away and wasn't using them, I guess he felt it was alright to lend them to others. Of course, when they were lost, wore out or broke, I was the one who had to replace them.

Except for my Thai mother, there are only two Thais who I really feel I can take into my confidence and whom I believe I can count on if needed. One of these people is a Thai woman whose personality seems to run counter to Thai culture. While quite attractive and well proportioned, she might seem at first glance to be every western male's dream faen, but most men are very surprised at how bright, outspoken, quick witted and quick tempered she is. Much more important to me than her physical attributes, is that she is someone I trust. I am often asked why I never married this female friend, and the reason is simple, we learned years ago that we would not be a suitable couple, as we wanted very different things out of life. She once told me that she would probably never be married for any length of time as she was too difficult to get along with, but that she would take a series of lovers throughout her life (only one at a time-serial monogamy as it is now known under the politically correct term in the

**W:HI 7**

**W:HI 8**

**W:HI 9**

**W:HI 10**

U.S.), which would allow her to travel the world, meet new people, and she wouldn't have to change much because she could always split from her lover when he tried to get her to change. I guess she is very characteristic of Thai women in one way, as she is cunning, stubborn, and expects her men to do accede to her requests. She has now had 3 long-term lovers since we met and each time I meet the new boyfriend, I get a bit of amusement out of wondering how long they will last as a couple. I have a deep amount of respect for this woman because she is honest almost to a fault. Just like she told me 20 years ago, she also tells her lovers what her intentions are. Those who enter into a long-term relationship with her should be fully aware of what to expect. My friendship with her is built on honesty. She has no pretense, does not care about 'face' (part of my next topic), and she will always respond to my inquiries with the absolute truth. She doesn't come up short on any of the issues that I discuss in this submission, but we never married because I knew that she wanted something very different out of life than me. My respect, admiration, and appreciation for her honesty is immense and I wish there were more people (everywhere) like her.

Years ago, my Thai 'mother' told me that I was no longer farang, but Thai, because I could discuss just about anything with her in Thai and she felt that Thai women would love this ability. Well, it didn't exactly turn out this way. Knowing the language well does have advantages, but today it also has some big disadvantages, which in the past 10 years (since the Asian Economic Crisis) has meant that more foreigners are coming to Thailand who are sufficiently stupid (ignorant-to be nice) and rich to attract almost any attractive woman seeking the upward mobility of having a rich farang boyfriend. Fifteen-20 years ago, I frequently met Thai women who only wished their farang husband could communicate with them in Thai like I could, and I often met Thai women married to farang men who would say how nice it would be to finally be able to really understand their spouse when they talked to one another.

Now in 2005, when Thai women hear me speak Thai, I certainly don't get the same response as a decade ago. What changed? In my opinion, it was the Asian Economic Crises, which exposed many European and Japanese to Thai women, due to the impressive foreign exchange rates that were found at the time (Hey, I don't belittle these fellows' interest in being with Thai women. In fact, I'm impressed with the tenaciousness and abilities of many foreign men who come to Thailand seeking a spouse). The result is that today, Thai women can find lots of men that (as I've been told by many Thais) are just stupid foreigners. Increasingly Thai women don't want you to know Thai, because they want to be able to mislead you and because they want to be able to talk about things with their 'friends' that would not put them in a favorable light in your eyes. Maybe this is why you hear Thai women say that Thai men are no good. Why? Because Thai men can see through the deceit? NW European style honesty has never been a big factor in Thai relationships and if you can't understand the language (speaking- reading) of your spouse how will you ever know what she is saying to her friends, or emailing to others on the computer? This lack of knowledge on your part is desirable for all Thais, not just bargirls. Within the past decade, the farang (pejorative) have increasingly shown how naïve they are and how easy they can be deceived. (Thanks to Stickman for providing the forum to point out these many frauds). Why would any gold-digger want to waste her time dealing with someone who understands her culture and what she is saying or writing when there is a 'lonely-sex crazed' idiot just down the next block who can be easily misled and who will give into just about any request?

These days I still meet and talk with many Thais, only to find out that when I speak Thai, they become very cautious and concerned about what my interests are in the country. Today it seems as though the women are certain that I am a whoremonger or worse, have either been married to a Thai (and divorced-for shame). What used to be

**W:HI 11**

**W:HI 12**

**W:HI 13**

an asset, language, is almost a handicap. In my mind, though, I am one of the lucky ones who had the fortune to meet real Thais before the (idiot-sex-tourist) language/knowledge issue became a problem. I am lucky, because now I know how to separate the gold-diggers from the legitimate interests. It can take a VERY long time to convince a Thai that their ignorant beliefs are wrong, for no other reason than because Thais are NEVER wrong, and because it is difficult to overcome cultural-intellectual handicaps.

I also feel sorry for the legitimate Thai women that are seeking friends on-line or through dating services, and who want to meet farang men. These women have to compete against the unscrupulous male (idiots) and female (gold-diggers); and for a farang who doesn't know Thai or Thai culture, this is a problem. Personally, I don't understand why Thai women seem to be inordinately attractive to western men. Mainly I think Thai female's main relationships with non-Thais are often based on a sham (money-looks-superficiality), which in the end will do them in, but perhaps not before they have schemed their way into their faen(s)' finances.

I think that this is especially true for the relationships initiated over the Internet. In most cases, these relationships seem to me to be based on the idea that the women felt that they could 'mould' their man into something that they want (see my later discussion on compromise). Many Thai women today seem to be desperate to get out of their relationship and figure out the way to 'deal' with it is by looking for a replacement. In short these women are incredibly immature and naïve in how they approach their relationship with the farang. I would add again, though, that the situation is not helped any when one partner is not honest with the other; this very important to most farang relationships, but is not as important in Thai relationships. I wonder what proportion of Thai-farang relationships have actually succeeded? I believe most of the failures can be traced back to a lack of honesty, where at least one partner misled the other into thinking that they are something they are not. This is something that is very common in both societies, although it seems to have been elevated in Thai society to an art form (next topic).

Although the basic tenants of honesty in Thai culture are similar to Western culture, Thai culture seems to have taken the rationalization of actions without apparent consequence to a level that westerner culture has yet to master. Thailand is way ahead of the West in some ways. Amazing.

**W:HI 14**

**W:HI 15**

**W:HI 16**

<b>Content: Intellectual Curiosity, Style v. Substance (W:IC)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
Intellectual Curiosity, Style v. Substance – The pursuit of the superficial, an inability to distinguish among salient and insignificant information and issues, and the need to be entertained.	<b>W:IC 1</b>
There is a long held joke in U.S. society about the dumb blonde that has been around for so long that today the caricature is a standard form of saying someone may look nice, but they are stupid. To be blonde is to lack intellectual substance. In a way, the Thai are the blondes of Asia. The Thais are wonderful people and the women are pretty, sexy, and fun (suay, sexi, sanuk), but they are also not an intellectual force... in any way. You may enjoy looking at them, and having fun with them, but long run commitments to them soon become tiresome as there is little intellectual curiosity that creates a long-term interest; the longer I am with them the more I feel that I'm taking care of a child, not dealing with someone who is supposed to be an adult.	<b>W:IC 2</b>



One of the things about Thai ‘culture’ that I noticed after living in the country for about a year, and after I had begun to understand Thai customs and the Thai mentality, was how different Thai intellectual interests were than mine. Thais have very astute observational skills, but they are not focused on things that Westerners consider to be significant. Thais often fail to notice a driving force that would result in an accident or a potential future development that would result in a major problem in their life. They are, however, masters at the art of the superficial; if I needed a haircut, hadn’t shaved, or I was wearing a pair of pants and shirt that didn’t match (according to Thai fashion) it would be noticed by everyone. I could be a brilliant scientist, but this ability would not be recognized by the Thai if I did not have the right LOOK.

**W:IC 3**

If my work is viewed by Thais as requiring a necktie, or wearing the most current fashion, then presentation is usually far more important than ability. If I look right, then I must have the ability. I agree that in the business world, and some other places, appearance can be important, but the Thai have taken this type of superficial appearance to a level that places it above any other factor, and to which few Thais can see beyond. Apparently, if you look the part, then there is no reason why you are not that person. The idea that appearance is the most important component in one’s life is something that I can’t fully understand, as my western-Greek-logical tradition suggests that looks can be deceiving and it is not looks, but works that matter most. In this regard, Thai and western cultures are almost diametrically opposed.

**W:IC 4**

Thais also love to gawk, not because they have a passionate desire to analyze, but rather their passion is confined to the superfluous; they want to see the accident, but never wonder how it occurred or how it could have been avoided. They are far more interested in the form or style of something than the components that make up the object of interest; initially I tallied this mentality up as a lack of an intellectual tradition that rewards insight, forethought, and forward planning, and the inability to identify problems before they smack you in the face. I have now come to believe that this perspective is a result of two things, an educational system that basically teaches rote memorization rather than analysis, and a general lack of interest in learning for its own sake (keep in mind what our Western word for education came from the Greek word [schole] that meant leisure; yes, learning was a leisure activity!), instead what the Thai will more frequently tell you is yaa kit maak (literally-don’t think too much). This last comment may be a bit harsh, because the statement is normally used in situations that would be more appropriately translated as ‘don’t worry about it’, but it underscores my point about how differently the Thai language is from English in its use of the concept of thinking, thought, and analysis. Fortunately for Thailand, some of the population are able to escape from the initial handicap that their tradition and education has provided and have gone on to provide the intellectual capital that the country needed as they grew economically, even if not intellectually. Unfortunately, though, this component of the culture represents a rather small proportion of the overall population, while the Thai elite (an even smaller proportion) come from a different intellectual tradition, as they were either born into a family tradition where the goals of higher education were understood and/or they were educated in Hong Kong or the West where they acquired the analytical abilities that would make them successful wherever they lived.

**W:IC 5**

Individuals without the same options as the rich or fortunate will struggle their whole lives to catch up with the rest of their Asian counterparts, but only a few will ever succeed. Over the years, I worked with several Thais possessing a very high level of education, and it was clear which individuals had the benefits of both the education and the intellectual curiosity. One of those individuals who did not have both of these benefits even came from a wealthy family and had never wanted for much. In spite of his doctoral degree from a very well known Western university, he had almost no curiosity about anything intellectual outside his field. He spent most of his time

**W:IC 6**

working, and when he did have free time, chose to watch TV, watch movies, or go to a club. He barely learned to drive, could not do any repairs on his car, would not cook for himself, could not fix anything in the house, and even eschewed changing a light bulb if it burned out; although he did know how to wash his own dishes and clothes, but had never ironed his own clothes. This fellow's response to inquiries about his lack of ability or interest in basic household (life) chores was that he could always pay someone else to do what ever he really needed to be done. (He would ask a friend to change his burnt out light bulbs). The only area where he seemed to excel was in his work. In spite of all the movies he saw and the music he listened to, he never bothered to find out much about either the directors of the movies, his favorite bands, or the evolution of the music he liked.

While we would occasionally go out together, usually to the latest trendiest restaurants so he could see who was there and be seen, there really wasn't much to talk about because we had almost nothing in common. He had no interest in politics, world events, or the economy (he was from a wealthy family, why should he be concerned as his parents could always help him if the need arose), he never watched the news, never watched a documentary film (too boring), had never read a novel (Thai or English) since his high schools days when it was required (I've probably read more Thai novels than him in the past 15 years), and he had no interest in playing any game that required general knowledge, intellect, or ability to analyze (i.e. Scrabble, Boggle, and Trivial Pursuit) – the only exception was poker. It was after I met this man that I fully realized the great intellectual gap between the Thai and myself. I am not especially bright, but I am very curious about the world and why things work the way they do. I love taking things apart and putting them together, my upbringing instilled a curiosity about the world, his did not. As a result, I would just as soon fix something myself as pay someone else to do it, not because I don't want to pay the money, but because I really want to know how things that are integral to my life function. I can't imagine going through life uninterested in the world around me and I am surprised by the lack of interest the Thai have in understanding the world around them.

**W:IC 7**

There are some true Thai intellectuals, but to my regret I've never had the benefit of getting to know them very well. I've known lots of Thais with a higher education, but very few of these people could be considered intellectuals. They had a degree that gave them a certain status and a job, but they were not particularly curious about the world and their analytical abilities were minimal. Thailand is not without people with this curiosity, as I've met several Thai women who were as bright as anyone I've ever known (only one of whom attended the country's 'best' university), and I would have loved to have developed a relationship with these gals, but I was unsuccessful.

**W:IC 8**

When I think of Thai intellectualism, I am reminded of a dear European friend who was as well read as anyone I've ever known. He could read and write 4 European languages, in addition to English (which was not his native tongue), and he had read a far greater volume of classic English literature than I will likely ever read. He had traveled the world and had lived in Thailand for many years, yet the only Thai he had learned was sufficient to order a meal, get the check, find a restroom, and give directions to a cabby. When I asked him why he didn't learn more Thai he said that it would only increase his frustration with the country, as he never found a Thai whom he would really want to or could have substantive conversations with, in Thai; the Thais, he said, "had almost no interest or perhaps ability for in-depth discussion or capability to analyze an issue, they are too interested in the superfluous". While I thought this might be a bit of an overgeneralization, he did have a point. Any Thai that my friend would want to get to know would probably speak better English than him and he would never be able to learn Thai as well as a Thai intellectual would know English, so there was no real reason for him to learn Thai, as anyone with whom he

**W:IC 9**

would want to converse would soon, be able to converse with him most effectively in English. He was a very generous man and almost every Thai who met him enjoyed being around him. He also had an incredible ability to make everyone comfortable, and he had a gift for communicating with people, even if he couldn't speak much of their language. This latter point was perhaps the only thing about the country that we didn't agree on.

While I don't necessarily agree with my friend's lack of interest in learning Thai, I do concede to his argument and keen sense about Thais, Thailand, and Thai culture. In the 2+ years I attended school in Thailand (high school and university), there were perhaps less than a dozen occasions when I had a substantive conversation with my classmates, yet I spent hours each day talking to them before and after class, during lunch, etc. By the time I finished my studies at the university, I had become tired of the superfluous, meaningless, inconsequential, and incessant chatter that passed for conversation, and I slowly became less and less interested in engaging Thais in conversation.

Interestingly, my friend's lack of Thai language skills did not seem to hinder his ability to find girlfriends, as at one point I was rather envious of him because his girlfriend was one of the brightest Thai women that I've had the pleasure of meeting; I would have loved to have her as my girlfriend. Unfortunately, however, even though my friend was a gifted intellectual, he still made stupid mistakes on occasion, such as when he cheated on this girlfriend and she dumped him. Som nam naa [serves him right!].

When I first arrived in Thailand, I was continually surprised to see how often Thais would tout and flaunt their education and the numerous titles that they had acquired over the years, especially if it involved graduate level university degrees, schooling abroad, or some type of government rank. It didn't take long to realize just how meaningless these degrees and accolades usually were. In many cases, the recipient of a degree must have been lucky to have just graduated, much less learned anything....or perhaps these people didn't really do the work themselves. Several years ago, I met a woman from another country in Southeast Asia who had received her doctorate from the U.S., she mentioned how she had two fellow Thai students in her doctoral program neither of which were terribly competent, in fact they would often get 'sick' before every exam and then ask their fellow classmates about the exam before they took a make-up. These two students did graduate with doctoral degrees and one of them became Dean of her faculty at a prominent school in Thailand. My friend was surprised at this situation because she thought that scholars who rose to the level of academic prominence of 'Dean' in her country would be considered top scholars in their fields, and she knew that her former classmates simply didn't have the intellectual rigor to be the Dean of a college in her country. Since I had attended school in the country, this Asian woman asked me what I thought of Thai students. I relayed an experience from my second year of graduate school.

While working on a graduate degree at a well-known university on the U.S. west coast in the 1980s, I was assisting with an undergraduate course in my field and had almost no input into the grade. On one occasion, I was invited to dinner by a Thai student in my class who was living with her Asian boyfriend. I decided to accept the invitation, and at the end of the night, the gal and her boyfriend made their pitch by talking about what it would take to improve their grades in the course and trying to suggest that maybe I could help them out. I got a real kick out of this blatant attempt to get a higher grade, as there was no way I was going to divulge anything about an exam, and the only thing I could provide was help in studying for the exam. Neither the gal or her boyfriend, ever bothered to invite me out after that, she (nor her boyfriend) ever dropped by to ask for help on the exam, nor did either one of them receive the grade that she was hoping for in the course. School for this gal didn't seem to be about

**W:IC 10**

**W:IC 11**

**W:IC 12**

**W:IC 13**

learning, but rather a necessary requirement for receiving a college degree from the U.S. and since no one would ever know the grades she received in her courses, it would be easy to lead others into thinking that she was a stellar student.

Because there was an active international student's organization at my university, including a number of Thai students, it was easy to get to know many of these people and learn about their relationships, much easier than at my undergraduate institution where the Thais seemed to be rather stand-offish and had almost no interest in talking to me, especially in Thai. One Thai gal at my graduate institution, stood out among the others as she was both quite pretty and also seemed to change boyfriends every year, both Thai and farang. In three years I knew her, she had three separate boyfriends. Later, I learned from one of the boyfriends (farang) that at first he couldn't believe his good luck in landing this gal, but over the course of the year he found that she was increasingly asking him for help with her school work, and by the end of the year he had written about half of her Master's thesis before he graduated, moved, and they broke up. No worries though, as the next year this gal had a new boyfriend and was finally able to finish up that pesky thesis and return home triumphant in her 'educational' success! I know her last boyfriend (a Thai) felt a bit used by the situation, which just goes to show that it isn't just the farang who can be duped by the pretty face and great smile. These reflections are just a few examples of the Thai students whom I have met over the years, and I am amazed at how adept many of them were, especially the women, at obtaining 'help' in their studies.

**W:IC 14**

I don't believe that this lack of interest in learning and the focus on getting the degree by any means, is an isolated example of a few Thais; take a look at the minor scandals that have arisen among Thai politicians over the past 20 years and involve the legitimacy of the degrees that they have received; there are several. This situation is also not unique to Thailand, though, as by the time I finished my formal schooling, the type of superficial learning experience I am talking about had become a major factor among many of students I met at school (here is an area where perhaps Thailand was leading a trend rather than following); it is probably also reflected in the type of westerners that increasingly seek to live permanently in Thailand.

**W:IC 15**

A related issue to intellectual curiosity is face, which is so important that to the Thai it negates the importance of issues (that I believe should be) of greater concern – remember this is my view of what is important to a relationship. A Thai friend once told me that she had to spend a lot of time and money to dress well for her work, because how she dressed expressed what she was. Thais do seem to live life on the surface and appearance is perhaps the most important element in this quest. Unfortunately for me perhaps, I see things a bit differently. To take my friend's argument to a logical conclusion, if I choose to dress a certain way does that really make me the kind of person that my dress mimics? In my very narrow Calvinist/Puritanist view of the world, if I try to appear as something that I am not, then I am a charlatan, and this issue has very important consequences to society. Suppose that because of the way I have presented myself, as a specialist in some area that I am asked to help. What do I do? The charlatans have considerable time perfecting the art of diversion, by claiming to either be busy or tied up with something else. How many Thais have you met who can talk all day about their abilities, but have never been required to demonstrate them. Some of you may not agree with this view, but I abhor pretense. Even if I were rich, I wouldn't show it off, and if I were not, then I damn sure wouldn't pretend to be rich or affluent. To me this is not just dishonest but ridiculous and embarrassing. Yes, I know this type of activity is a handicap in Thailand, to making Thai friends, and to attracting Thai women; however, my view is that I would rather not have a girlfriend or spouse with whom I have to live my life on the surface, or as

**W:IC 16**

an imposter. At some level, I think this is the issue what most people are addressing when they talk about the basic dishonesty among Thais.

Thais are very conscious of wanting to be all things to all people, and they spend incredible amounts of time and energy working and hoping that they are never pinned down to prove or manifest their abilities in an area that they have superficially made claim. This is why Thais have become masters of deception and duplicity, which helps them to avoid embarrassing situations while still allowing them to come off looking good. I think this is also one reason why Thais often seem to hire Westerners who are among the least capable farang I have ever met, as all it seems to take to impress a Thai is an easily acquired superficial appearance, rather than the much more difficult to acquire, ability, capability, and expertise that takes time to acquire and to ascertain in an individual. Thailand has attracted an assorted hodge-podge of underachievers over the years who have been able to ‘con’ their way into employment simply because they pass the ‘form-superficiality’ test.

**W:IC 17**

Face also plays a factor in the issue of style v. substance – Thai women place themselves on a pedestal and are only interested in marrying up, not down. When was the last time you met a Thai woman who married a man either younger than her or less educated than her? There are some, which shows that some Thais are able to accept this potential loss of face, but the vast majority of the women would never consider marrying below their station in life; and even when they do marry someone with the right pedigree, they are usually highly driven to insure that they will never have to bear the unsightly loss of face that comes from living below their ‘perceived’ status. The gatekeepers of status, class, and hierarchy in Thai society are the women, the wives who benefit from the wealth, status, and respect that is a result of their husband’s occupation. Because traditionally Thai women didn’t have many opportunities to generate or expand this status on their own, they now make damn sure that everyone knows how important they are. I sometimes think that if the men had it their way, Thailand would be much more egalitarian, but the simple fact is that the wives can’t control the need to flaunt their status. When was the last time a Thai man told you how much he spent on something, a trip he took his wife on, or a present he gave her. He doesn’t have to, or doesn’t get the chance because his wife makes sure to tell everyone who will listen, ad nauseum.

**W:IC 18**

I’ve had a number of male Thai co-workers over the years and one of the things that I found interesting was how much these people’s lives changed when they married. One fellow told me about the time when he was still dating his wife; she was not particularly demanding and never really asking for anything. They both had careers and he felt that when they wed, this aspect of their lives would continue on in a similar vein. He mentioned how it wasn’t long after marriage that his wife began to ask that he begin buying more and more items, expensive cars, a second home in Chiang Mai (a middle class Thai mark of success?), etc. because their position in society now demanded that they show their success. It didn’t seem to matter that they already had two perfectly good older cars, they needed at least one new vehicle every few years, and even though they already had a large mortgage on their house, and only visited the north maybe once each year, they still needed a second home in Chiang Mai.

**W:IC 19**

Another fellow (farang) whom I knew over 20 years ago told me how after meeting his wife during the Vietnam War and setting up a home in northern Bangkok, things were fine for while, but in the mid-1980s, his wife began asking him to buy a car. They didn’t own a car, and as any old timer in Bangkok can tell you, traffic was horrendous in the city and most people could easily get by without one, especially if you didn’t have to commute to work. The wife couldn’t drive and the couple really had no need

**W:IC 20**

for a car. They were next to a major bus line that connected them with routes throughout the city and taxis were cheap if you could speak Thai and knew the price. However, because he was a farang, the wife had told him that she was losing face in front of the neighbors because some of them were buying cars, so in order to keep her from being embarrassed about marrying him, he had to buy the family a car. In 2005, a car in Bangkok might make sense, but in the 1980s, it was both incredibly expensive (200-300% tax) and the lack of roadways was so sparse that it wasn't practical to own a car back then, if you didn't need one to commute to work. Remember, no expressway when you drove from the airport to Siam Sq., today's major roadway (Viphaowadi Rangsit Rd.-now the expressway) was only completed in 1976. Phaholyothin Road was THE north-south connection and traveling from Bangkhen to Siam Sq. and back was about 2 hours each way. A trip to Lard Phrao Road and back was about as far as anyone usually went in a day. To stop his wife's continuous complaints about a lack of personal transportation, he bought a car, and it sat in his driveway for years as the wife never learned to drive, and he only drove it when they went upcountry, about once each month. However, it did provide face. I kept wondering if the \$20,000+ (1980 dollars 25 baht/dollar back then) was worth it.

It is not always the wives who complain about money-face related issues though. I've also had several male acquaintances that needed a car or a mobile phone (in the early 1990s cell phones were as big as a shoebox, weighted a kilo or more, and cost a fortune), and strapped to their side like an old West gunslinger, they provided an obvious form of face. My colleagues were broke, but they had style. While I think it is generally a waste of money trying to keep up with the latest style, what really bothers me about the practice is that it is often placed above what I feel are more important issues, such as ability and capability.

At this point some of you may suggest that this superficiality is also common to western society. I agree, it is increasingly prominent as westerners are becoming too lazy to teach analytical skills to their children, to demand them in the workplace, and by their unwillingness to demand much from the books they read, the movies or TV they watch, or the kinds of things they do to pass the time. Western society is becoming increasingly focused on the superficial rather than the substantial. However, an important difference still remains between the Thai and farang, which is that if you confront westerners about their lack of substance, and its value, they will generally concede that we have increasingly focused on form, but that it is the substance that really is more important to the system which allows us to have our superficial lives. Thais usually can't even understand this argument, and sadly, an increasing proportion of westerners can't either.

While some people may suggest that my intellectualism – style v. substance factor is not so important, I suggest that you reflect on your perception the next time you have to rely on someone for something important, for your personal safety, to finish a task you need to accomplish in a timely fashion for your job, or to complete something that needs to be done in a very specific way so that you don't have to undertake repairs a month later to fix what should have been done right the first time. I don't care how the engineer dresses, as long he/she is competent. I want a doctor who can correctly diagnose a medical problem, and a 'specialist,' in any important matter regarding my life, to be able to analyze, explain, and solve the problems that I've asked for their help with. I don't want a smooth talking visually appealing caricature of the real thing.... and I want a wife who recognizes the difference. I also want a wife who will keep quiet about my/our personal finances.

**W:IC 21**

**W:IC 22**

**W:IC 23**

<b>Content: The role of husband (W:RH)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>3) The role of a husband. This section is based on my observations, and my discussion with former girlfriends and Thai female friends over the past 20 years; (note that some Thai women will occasionally change the order for the benefit of the potential or actual spouse).</p>	<b>W:RH 1</b>
<p>The order of importance of individuals in the life of a married Thai female seems to be: a) children, b) her parents, c) extended family/maybe husband, d) the neighbors, etc.; note I would be, at best, third on the list. Secrets are also important; keeping them from me is annoying. I think the general tendency about secrets is: (correct me if I am wrong here Stick as I last discussed this issue ten years ago with a very close Thai female friend, in which case this would be a change among current Thai women aged 20-30) that while the Western male tends to see their spouse as someone whom they can both trust (control) with most household matters, they are also someone with whom you can discuss issues in confidence, and share secrets. That is NOT the case in the traditional Thai family.</p>	<b>W:RH 2</b>
<p>The average Thai woman will tell her closest girlfriends many more secrets than she will tell her husband. Why? Well simply, her husband is not her top priority in life, she controls the household budget and related matters, is equally, or more, attentive to her parents than her husband, whom she may or may not love, and she has not married her 'best friend'. The wife's best friend(s) are her school chums, her mates, or those whom she knew from the neighborhood she grew up in. Each of these groups has a greater chance of finding out her secrets than her husband. Furthermore (as Stickman has admirably noted in his web posts) Thai women have many secrets that they will not share with anyone else. Compare this to the European tradition; my parents always shared everything. There were NO secrets, of that I am absolutely certain; same for my sister and my extended family. It is counter to the NW European (Calvinist?) tradition that I grew up in, that spouses have secrets.</p>	<b>W:RH 3</b>
<p>Now, as the husband of a Thai woman, some suggest that I am supposed to do several things. Provide a dowry, provide for her, provide for her family, produce children, and provide for her parents. Well, how about my cultural background, doesn't it matter? (more about this later).</p>	<b>W:RH 4</b>
<p>I think that one of Stick's earliest submissions stated this issue quite well. In his submission, the fellow's problem with the girlfriend was that she saw him as not a particularly important priority. Apparently I am only there to produce offspring and to support her, the offspring, and the family of the person who gave birth to her. Sorry but this is a real problem for me, leaving the Thai cultural issues aside for the moment, but to which I will return later.</p>	<b>W:RH 5</b>
<p>To be a bit direct, as a husband in the SE Asian tradition, I am apparently there only as a sperm donor and financial support. My job is to provide genetic material and a dowry to the wife's family (which in the Thai tradition is really supposed to be returned to the wife, as a means of support in case of divorce – got that guys? I've lived throughout most of Thailand, except the south, and NONE of the families I discussed the dowry issue with have intimated otherwise. In the past 20+ years(?), however, there seems to be a growing knowledge among poor, especially NE Thai, families of how 'ignorant' farang are willing to pay exorbitant dowries for their daughters and maintenance to the in-laws (Shame on them and you desperate idiots who pay this ridiculous type of extortion!).</p>	<b>W:RH 6</b>

Thais know when the family is really in need, and then it is ALL the kids of the parents that chip in to help, not just the richest siblings! This issue varies somewhat, by region and income level, but that is the main idea. In short, if your potential in-laws, are asking for a dowry that they aren't going to return to the wife, then they are nothing short of greedy gold-diggers.

**W:RH 7**

I've had the wonderful opportunity to live with Thai families for more than one year on two separate occasions. My Thai 'mother' who was raised in central Thailand, educated in Bangkok, married to a central Thai government official, and sent six kids to university that included the top three universities in the country and Ramkhamhaeng-apparently the last kid was a disappointment, have taught me a lot about Thai society. These experiences have allowed me to meet many wonderful Thais for which I am very grateful. This 'Theravada Buddhist' Thai family also firmly believed that it was important to speak the truth. Yes, they were a very unusual and an amazing family, to whom I will always be indebted. The mother of this household also told me that a common dowry for her university educated daughters would be 50,000 baht (@1980), which would either be returned to her daughters and/or used for the reception, depending on circumstances. There would be NOTHING else. They didn't expect that their son-in-law would provide anything else (got that guys? – I can't believe how many of the people to Stickman's site say they are avid readers of his site and yet willing give in to this Thai brand of extortion. Why are some of you [idiots by many of my Thai friends perceptions] still giving money to your in-laws? Stick has already noted this in his column). This is NOT a standard Thai tradition, although it appears to perhaps be an up and coming 'Thai' tradition among a certain section of gold-digging families upcountry, only because so many desperate farang are willing to support the practice.

I lived in NE Thailand for over a year in the mid-1970s, and no one mentioned a monthly check to Mom and Dad to me. Of course, I knew Thai pretty well before I moved there, and I also took the time to try and learn the language and I didn't have much money at the time. The Thai wife craze was also only common to Udorn, Ubon, and Korat, where U.S. military were stationed, so perhaps I missed out on something, but I still believe that this monthly allowance to the in-laws from the husband is not as common as one might expect. I'm also curious if these (clueless farang) westerners willing to give these large monthly allowances to their families also give to all the charities in the West that seek donations by showing a 'destitute' child on the tele? Did they assess the real need here, check out the aid organization, its financial status, and the amount of donations that went for administration v. actual aid or did they just say heck, these people look destitute in need of care, and the kids seem so needy that I should really give? Thais excel in their ability to sense desperation in others and are seldom loathe to take advantage of this, so I often wonder how desperate some of the farang men are to land a Thai faen. Desperation = Baht to most Thais.

**W:RH 8**

My Thai mother would have never asked for financial help other than perhaps help in times of absolute, incredible, and dire need. She was also the Thai who first told me that 'you don't live beyond your means', (I guess she really was an oddity in Thailand based on Stick's reader's submissions.) My European cultural traditions see this exactly the same way. You help family when someone is really in need, you are close enough to them to understand when they need help and you provide it, without them asking. You don't require them to ask (beg), so that they have to appear destitute, you give it to them because they are family and you know that what they need and what is necessary. When you provide help, you also don't do so, in a way that will make them out to be beggars.

**W:RH 9**

A few years ago, I met a gal that I was interested in but who soon told me that not only would I have to pay a dowry that went to her parents, while they also expected that I

**W:RH 10**



would be giving them something every month for as long as they lived. I asked why this was the case and how much they expected from their other children? The answer was of course most disappointing, as I was informed that because I was richer than the other potential 'luk kery' (son-in-law), I should paying the most, of course her salary was going for her 'needs'.

This is also the first gal that surprised me not long after we became a couple by stating her love for me, using English. Please note that this is not what it may seem on the surface. Thais 'love' to use ideas (concepts) in English that they are uncomfortable with or unable to say in Thai, curse words for example, or anything that sounds sophisticated or 'modern'. Sorry but my gal will have to do MUCH better than this. She must be willing to tell in Thai, the proper way. On another occasion she expressed this love using the phrase (nickname, rak khun); well those of you who know Thai understand that this is a ridiculous way of espousing one's love for someone. The Thai language has a very succinct way of stating someone's true love for someone they consider as a spouse, 'chan rak ther'; NOT (nickname or chan) rak khun, and for someone who is relatively competent in Thai (taken university exams and regularly done simultaneous Thai-English-Thai interpretation as part of my job), her ridiculous expression was an insult. It also violates other aspects of my criteria for a spouse as it is not honest, and tells me that that this gal thinks of me as perhaps just another idiot farang.

**W:RH 11**

I told this gal that she either had to express her love for me properly or not say anything at all. If she wanted to show she loved me, she should demonstrate it and also say it correctly in Thai, and if I ever heard that ridiculous statement again our relationship would be over – I realized at that moment, that she really didn't think I understood Thai very well, as she always wanted to speak English-more about this later. If she was either too stupid or incompetent to appreciate my ability in Thai, then we had no future together and if she ever insulted me again, that way, then I would leave (We did end our relationship soon afterwards, not necessarily because of this statement alone, but it was a signal to me that this gal thought of me only as an idiot-farang).

**W:RH 12**

My view is that if your girlfriend expresses her love for you in Thai, in the inappropriate way noted above, forget her. She may say, "I love you" in English, but this is easy to say in a foreign language that doesn't begin to provide the same connotation and meaning to her as when expressed in her native tongue and in the proper way. You really need to understand Thai in order to appreciate the significance of the language nuances, in this context. How many of you have learned a little Thai and tried to show off by interspersing Thai words in your sentences, e.g., the food is ped, or something is sabaai? Now you think you've gotten the hang of the language and you have learned some Thai slang and tried to show of your expertise using these terms only to find your Thai friends shocked or laughing at your statement as it was used in appropriately. How many of you have heard Thais use English slang phrases and thought how ridiculous they sounded? (Hint: one of the quickest ways to undermine your credibility in a foreign language is to misuse slang phrases; which are very difficult to learn to use in an appropriate context; if you don't think so just reflect on your last English language conversation with a bar girl who was using a lot of slang. It is not just the words that matter, but also the context, and in Thai there are many ways to state feelings that may all seem to be the same, but which have radically different meanings. The use of the word love (rak) is one of these. In short, if your gal really loves you and knows that your Thai is pretty good, then she should be willing to espouse her love for you in Thai, the proper Thai way. A Thai's unwillingness to do this for me is a giveaway that she doesn't respect me, AT ALL. (I shouldn't need to discuss the issues related to referring to her older 'faen' [boyfriend] – either to your face or especially her friends or anyone else – as lun, [Uncle]...dump her you fools!!!). Also, keep in mind that Thais will VERY seldom express their intimate feelings for

**W:RH 13**

<p>another. When your Thai gal expresses her love for you, you may learn more about her feelings for you than you expect, especially if she says this in public, as a Thai (male or female) would NEVER state this love in public, as it is too embarrassing. ONLY WHORES/GOLDDIGGERS DO THIS!</p> <p>My devotion to my wife is above EVERYTHING else, the kids come second, and then maybe OUR parents, etc. If I can't have a similar commitment, I want her to at least be willing place me just after the kids. If my wife were Thai, she also better be able to espouse her love to me properly.</p>	<b>W:RH 14</b>
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<b>Content: accommodation and compromise (W:AC)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p>4) Accommodation and compromise...or just giving up – In the movie, “When Harry Met Sally”, Billy Crystal explains to Meg Ryan that there are basically two types of women, high and low maintenance, which is determined by what the woman felt were the necessities in life, what they could do for themselves, and what others should provide. Meg Ryan said she was low maintenance, while Billy Crystal responded that Meg was the most difficult combination of the two as she was a high maintenance gal (because she wanted things the way she wanted them) who thinks she is low maintenance. Most of my Thai faens were this latter type of high maintenance, who like to believe they are low maintenance. I’ve had many female friends over the years, and many of them were truly low maintenance, at least it seemed this way to me. Fun loving people, who didn’t require much to make them happy. Most also seemed to be fairly independent, which is both a characteristic of low maintenance people and a trait I admire in all my friends and seek in a spouse. Unfortunately, something happens to Thai women when they get a faen. They quickly transform themselves into rather needy and demanding high maintenance women, who don’t think they are much of a burden on anyone, or at least think they can smile and connive their way into getting what they want. One day you wake up and wonder what happened?</p>	<b>W:AC 1</b>
<p>Even Thai adults still often remind me of stubborn self-centered children, who need instant gratification and have to get their own way most of the time. The idea of compromise, especially with a farang, is difficult in the best of circumstances as it almost becomes a contest of face and will that is often engaged in for the superficial reasons of being able to beat the foreigner at something.</p>	<b>W:AC 2</b>
<p>How many times do you say no to your gal about something she wants and then shortly afterward are asked the same thing again? How many times does she have to ask before you give in? Does this seem childish? It is not just poor uneducated country girls who do this, as my experience with middle-class gals is similar. Apparently, the man is supposed to give in, and she is supposed to be able to get her guy to do things her way. If not she will pout, sulk, won’t talk and of course, no sex. Sometimes it seems like everything with a Thai woman requires a great deal of negotiation, although if your wife is relatively ‘educated’ and can appreciate western style logic then it is much easier to deal with these things. I would be happy to try and learn her Thai system of logic and use that, but I have yet to meet a Thai who can explain their system of logic to me in a way I can understand as a philosophy that seeks consistent reliable outcomes. I still have much to learn about Thailand and Thai culture. Anyway, if you have trouble dealing with the supposedly easy compromises in Thailand, here are my extreme examples that I try to point out to my girlfriends what I could be asking to negotiate when they think that they are really going overboard in trying to accommodate me. How many of your faen will understand these issues?</p>	<b>W:AC 3</b>

I come from a NW European background (my parents were immigrants to America) where the bride would bring a dowry into the marriage. So why should I be the one to provide the dowry for my Thai wife? A logical point to make is that since both Thai and European cultures have contrasting views about this issue, then we could split the difference, i.e. have no dowry at all. It is equally reasonable for me to ask for a dowry as for her to ask, so why should I be the one to give in? Why should the Thai tradition take precedence over mine? Now you say that I come from a wealthier background, or that I am one generation from my European roots, or that the husband should concede to the values of the wife in this case. Why? None of these points are any more valid or logical than my argument as to why we should have no dowry all. My father was the first man in his family not to ask for a dowry, he made a decision to lose this cultural trait when he moved to America because he wasn't in his home culture anymore and the woman he was marrying was not of the same cultural background. If I am asking a Thai woman to come live with me in America, why can't she be willing to forgo this tradition since she is marrying into, and would be living in, a different culture?

**W:AC 4**

Also remember that the purpose of the Thai dowry is NOT for the parents but for the wife, her 'nest egg,' in the event of a broken marriage. The parents are not supposed to be receiving any of this. Any divorce in America would reward her with much more in the long run than any dowry I would provide. It should also be relatively easy for her to find a job in America, that is if she is really as well educated as she claims. Why is the tradition of dowry so important? I once asked a girlfriend if we married and moved to America how she expected me to provide for her parents. I then asked what she would do with her salary if/when she started working. Of course, she (the same person who couldn't adequately express her 'love' for me) explained that my income was for the 'family', for the kids, and for her parents, and that if she made any money it was hers. Sorry, but this doesn't work for me. Several years ago, I remember reading an article written by a prominent Thai businessman who addressed this issue. He noted that when he married, since both he and his wife worked, they decided that the best way to handle this is was that 10% of each of their salaries be given to their parents, it seemed reasonable that they should each contribute to helping both parents (of course they also both came from similar economic backgrounds).

**W:AC 5**

So now my question is raised about taking care of parents when one is farang and one is Thai. What is the most equitable distribution of income? If my Thai wife is working, how much should she be contributing to supporting the family? Keep in mind that my cultural tradition suggests that, what ever my gender, I still have responsibility to my parents, even if helping them in their old age can be costly. So what about my parents? My girlfriend innocently inquired why the U.S. government wasn't taking care of my parents. Sorry, but this gal was sorely misinformed; in the U.S. the government provides only a small amount of assistance in this regard. Families should have pensions or retirement income from work or savings to cover most of these costs, or equity in their houses, which they often have to sell, either to pay for care of the elderly or in order to lower their financial assets so that the government will provide increased financial assistance.

**W:AC 6**

For several years now, my mother has been in an assisted living center. My sister and I had to put her there because Mom can no longer take care of herself. Mum needs someone to keep an eye on her, and my sister simply cannot do this on her own as she has her own family and a job, and I don't live in close by and also travel frequently. So, my sister and I decided that an assisted living center would be best for Mom. Mother loves it there, as she doesn't have to cook, she has lots of new friends, they do all sorts of fun things, show plenty of movies and take trips, and she never has to worry about being looked after in case she falls and breaks her arm again, etc. Perfect, but it ain't cheap! Between my father's pension and Mom's social security, Mum still doesn't

**W:AC 7**

have enough monthly income to pay all the bills. So where does my Thai 'faen' get her wild ideas about marrying 'rich' farang? It is perfectly clear to me, between my sister and myself we split the difference of the portion my mother's bill not covered by mother's income.

So now, am I also supposed to take care of my wife's family? How much support is my wife required to provide and how much support from me? My position is this, I will take care of my mother's assistance (my income is higher and my mother's care costs are higher), if my wife is working at a decent job in America, then she can take care of her family using her own income. This seems reasonable to me, but in reality Thai women I've known don't seem to see it this way. I am supposed to take care of her parents... as well as my own. Well, sorry but this Thai perspective doesn't work for me. First, I am supposed to cave in on the dowry, and now be the sole supporter of her parents? What is my wife going to compromise on, and what else am I suppose to give in to?

**W:AC 8**

Well, here's what else. How much Thai do you speak at home? It seems to me that this issue should also be something of mutual benefit. In the past, it was no question with my girlfriends that my Thai was better than their English. However, over the past 10 years, many Thais have really become proficient in English. This is great, as I like to speak the language in which we can best communicate, English, Thai, it doesn't matter, although I think spouses should be willing to help each other learn their native language.

**W:AC 9**

One of my problems with Thais today, is that they have this incredible need to be able to show me how well they speak English. I am impressed at the speed with which many Thais have improved their English language skills in the past 30 years. It used to be that whenever I was in Thailand, I used only Thai, except when speaking to high-ranking government officials or leading businessmen who had to work with English on a regular basis. This is no longer the case. In fact, most Thais who I now work with speak much more grammatically correct English than I do. I'm impressed by these individual's abilities and I am happy to use English. However, I also want to keep up on my Thai.

**W:AC 10**

If you know a Thai who wants to learn English, though, you are apparently supposed to be their private tutor. Twenty years ago Thais would frequently tell me how well I spoke Thai. Today, however, due to my lack of opportunity to speak or need to read the language and the sheer number of gifted young farang who now reside in the country my Thai abilities are almost never complimented when I speak in Bangkok, although I do receive compliments upcountry, but my Thai abilities are declining because I don't get to speak the language as much as I used to.

**W:AC 11**

So the question to my girlfriend/spouse is, "what language do we speak at home"? Can we speak both languages so that we both become or stay fluent in the language foreign to us? Does this ever happen? Here is how it has worked for me. My Thai girlfriend says "I don't have the chance to speak English", as I can't afford either the cost of English lessons in Thailand or a trip to America. OK, so we can speak English in Thailand so you can practice, but if we are in Thailand all the time, when do I get a chance to speak English? Well silly, I'm suppose to speak Thai with everyone else...all the other Thais, but of course these people all want to speak English with me as well, for the same reasons. How about when we are in America, what language will we speak with each other then? Well silly, she says, "when we are in America I will speak English with you because that is the language used in America". So, I ask, when we will have a chance to speak Thai with one another? This, of course, hasn't dawned on her because this issue isn't about helping one another, it is all about her. She wants

**W:AC 12**

me to be her private English language tutor, because after all, I speak Thai so well that I don't need to practice. Well, sorry but that is crap as she usually just wants to make me feel good by feeding my ego. Thais don't want me to be able to know the language really well anyway, because they are threatened by a foreigner who can understand their language well. If I don't continue to practice the language, I won't speak well for very long.....and of course that is the point; you only speak Thai well when you have a chance to practice, but apparently not with your faen, you are supposed to be speaking Thai with everyone else. You are there to serve her education in a foreign language and your interests are tangential to her wants.

So why can't we divide our use of the language equally? When in Thailand we speak Thai to each other, when in America we speak English. If we are at a social event, no matter where we are, then we will most likely speak English, unless we are out among our close Thai friends or relatives. If we do not live in America that much, then we can do it this way. Three days of the week we speak English with one another, three days of the week we speak Thai, and the other day, we speak in our native language with each other. This sounds like a 'fair-reasonable' logical argument to me, but NO..., not for Thais. While they may start out speaking with you in Thai, as they learn English and communicate with your friends in English, they want to use English, almost all the time. They don't want me to keep practicing Thai, as this issue is about them learning English, not about me maintaining my proficiency in Thai. Am I unreasonable?

**W:AC 13**

Now suppose I did not speak any Thai. It seems reasonable to me that if my girlfriend/spouse wanted me to help her learn English then she should be equally supportive in helping me to learn Thai. How many of you readers with Thai wives can say this is the case in your homes? I doubt that many wives have been willing to take the time to help their spouse learn her native tongue, but it seems reasonable that your teeruk should be willing to help you learn her native tongue to the same extent that you will help her learn yours. In 30 years, I've only met 2 couples (out of more than 20) where the wife was making a substantial effort to help her husband learn Thai. Why is this the case? She doesn't have to be a language teacher to be able to help her spouse, just someone who is willing to talk to you and provide input on the correct words to use. Perhaps this is too much trouble.

**W:AC 14**

In defense of many Thai women with farang spouses, though, this omission may not be the result of the wife's lack of interest in helping her husband, but rather the lack of the spouse's interest in learning Thai. This is something that I don't understand, why wouldn't a husband be interested in learning his wife's native language? Sure it isn't easy but remember, she has put a lot of effort into learning her husband's language, so why can't her spouse reciprocate by trying to learn her language and why isn't she willing to help him learn Thai? Well, she can, or should, but often she doesn't want you to learn her native tongue to the same degree that she knows yours!

**W:AC 15**

A final example in the difficulty to compromise can be seen from the idea of prenuptial agreements. Similar to the first example I noted under this section, why should my faen's cultural traditions always be paramount to mine? My family's NW European culture dictates that the woman should bring along a dowry when she married, so I once asked my Thai girlfriend why it was important that I provide a dowry when she didn't think I should be asking for one? Why should her traditions take precedence over mine? How about this; I'll provide a dowry, but in lieu of a dowry for me we will draw up a prenuptial agreement so that my assets cannot be taken from me upon the possible demise of our marriage. This way I am also protected financially, why should I be the one engaging in the financial risk? Isn't her traditional view of a dowry about minimizing financial risk in the event she loses her husband? Unfortunately, I doubt her family would be willing to agree to a similar situation for me.

**W:AC 16**

By my comments, you'd have thought that I had just farted in a room full of neighbors. My girlfriend's jaw dropped, and she was aghast that I would be so concerned that she would be marrying me for my money! (Yes, a woman-any woman-would never do that!!!). I told her that this document would also double as protection for her, because any divorce in the U.S. (and it is almost certain we would have a residence in the U.S.), would naturally look into how to divide up the assets, and the agreement would make everything much simpler, and hopefully keep the divorce from becoming both a drawn out fight as well as something that would take money away from our settlement. Am I being unreasonable? Any Thai woman who has a stake in her family business would be certain to separate and protect her families financial interests, so why isn't it prudent for me to do the same? Why is my request so outrageous? Well, it is not outrageous, it is just the Thai problem with 'compromise'. The term compromise among most Thai women seems to mean 'my way'.

**W:AC 17**

At this point, some of you may wonder if I am unwilling to compromise at all. I am happy to compromise about many things in life and in marriage, but I am least willing to compromise about issues of honesty, integrity, or idiocy. I believe that honesty and compromise are integral to any long-term relationship, although I also need intellectual curiosity and basic integrity, which are two of the most rare traits in Thailand.

**W:AC 18**

Another matter, related to the issue of compromise is gratitude; Thais will seldom thank one another and it is not just a matter of training, or perhaps it is; it is often important to recognize that someone else's interests are at least as important as our own. I believe that Thais express gratitude so seldom partly either because they don't want to recognize the opinions or contributions of others or because they want to avoid obligation (krengjai), something that most Thais would rather avoid. Situations where westerners think would be important to recognize the help of another are often not responded to unless they are public gatherings when someone other than the beneficiary of the act can see what is happening. For example, when I am willing to send in a letter in support for a permanent visa (green card) for a Thai married to an American, I would think the woman would at least be willing to thank me in person. It's been almost five years now and I doubt she even gave the matter a second thought after she had the letter. Maybe she thinks I was somehow obligated to helping her anyway, since her husband was older than me and he had done me favors in the past. Unlike her, though, I did take the time to personally thank her husband on the occasions he has assisted me.

**W:AC 19**

The Thais I have talked to about this issue are split between saying that this act (especially given its importance to her) showed a real lack of gratitude on her part, and those that don't have an opinion, as they would need to more about the particulars (perhaps the same non-committal attitude that one finds when a Thai doesn't want to say something negative to your view). In my mind, this example is similar to the lack of gratitude that some of the women I've talked to when their marriages/relationships ended. Many Thai women in this situation usually like to begin by saying how difficult it was to live with the person because he was so much older, or because the culture was so much different than hers, or that she had to do some unsatisfactory thing in the marriage like keeping house, cooking, cleaning, while she thought that the husband should have someone else to do those mundane chores. They seem to forget about all the places he took them they would never be able to travel to by themselves and all the things he bought them so they would look nice, not just clothes, but skin lightening care, plastic surgery, straighten her teeth, etc. all those physical attributes that make her more appealing to other men. Lady, unless your husband is abusing you, there is no room for complaint. To most of these women I just say it's too bad that he didn't divorce you before you got the surgeries and the green card.

**W:AC 20**

<b>Content: Sex – in the long run (W:SL)</b>	<b>Paragraph No.</b>
<p><b>5) Sex – in the long run.</b>  Some of you may say well I know that my sweetie doesn't measure up to my criteria for the initial factors, but she is wild in the sack and that this expertise makes up for her shortcomings in other areas. My view has always been that I want my wife to be someone who is both a dear friend as well as my only sexual partner, and who can also 'go the distance' when it comes to sex. To me, sex is as important to a marriage as anything else. This doesn't mean that she needs to be willing to do it twice-a-day, everyday, every week, or just once a month (really pushing it), 69, doggy-style, or 'Dana' style, but she does have to be engaged in the act and a handjob doesn't count. I also want my wife to be interested in sex and in pleasing me sexually, as I should also want to please her (which I think most of you will agree is almost as good/sometimes better as the receiving end), even when we get older. I lived in Thailand for over 4 years before I first had sex with a Thai, so I think I can speak about this aspect of the culture from a fairly levelheaded perspective (pun intended). I'm not marrying for sex, but it is an important part of the marriage, even when we get old.</p>	<b>W:SL 1</b>
<p>My parents had, by my account, a great marriage. I never heard them yell at one another, never heard them argue, they worked as an incredible team, and they never were apart in their 30-year marriage-dad's death ended it- for more than a week, except when my father had to go on business. Us children were important to them, but they were not my parent's top priority, the most important person in their lives was each other, while the kids came second. One of the things that may have made my parent's marriage great was sex. I remember one day, dropping by the house after my father had been away on a business trip. I was eager to see him and hurriedly ran into the house and inadvertently realized that he was in the bedroom... with Mom. It was at that moment I realized my parents were still sexually active (my father was in his late 60s and my Mum in her early 60s). WOW, what a revelation! Yes old people still have sex! Thinking about it now, why wouldn't they?</p>	<b>W:SL 2</b>
<p>While I believe that people from a European tradition generally tend to think of intimate physical sexual relations as a life-long pursuit, I don't think that this is the case in Asia, and certainly not in Thailand. Ask your Thai girlfriend, ask your male 'Thai' friends, how long they expect Thai women to be sexually active. In general, I think traditional Thais tend to view sex as something for the young and that it is demeaning for 'old' people, especially women, to engage in this activity. I can't speak for the first family I lived with in Thailand, but in the second family I lived with, the mother was even sleeping in a separate bedroom than her husband and she had told the father no more sex. He wasn't expecting any either. I have mixed feelings about this subject because I think it is very important to be faithful to one's spouse, but if my wife had no interest in sex, then I am not sure what I would do. It would be VERY difficult not to consider fooling around, which creates my dilemma about this issue. It is not a problem if the wife is willing to at least have some sex, but if she is unwilling/uninterested in her spouse in this regard, then it does become problematic, and is the same if the husband were not willing to sexually satisfy the wife. Would he be willing to allow her to have an affair, if he were not sexually interested in her? Perhaps this is an area where having a Thai wife is an advantage because even if she is no longer interested in having sex with you, she does care about her husband enough to try and keep him sexually satisfied, as long as the family (her) 'resources' are not compromised.</p>	<b>W:SL 3</b>

At this point maybe you should ask your girlfriend or wife how long she anticipates she will be having sex. This may seem to be a strange question for a potential spouse, but I'm pretty sure that Thai women have thought about it much more than western women, and it is a very legitimate question.

**W:SL 4**

Maybe this example will prompt some of you to learn more Thai; I only became interested in phone sex when a Thai girlfriend recommended it to keep me company while I was away. While this submission mainly addresses some negative aspects of a relationship with a Thai woman, this item is something that I really adore about the Thai faen I've had. I love the way Thai women talk sexy to their boyfriends, especially when they do it in Thai in that sweet soft, innocent voice that is full of nuance coming from the wonderful combination of affectionate terms and endearing particles that gives Thai a much greater depth of emotional language (for sweetness, love, endearment, anger, scorn and embarrassment) than English has yet to muster. While I soon get tired of listening to the same whiny voice of the female newscasters on the telly day-in day-out, I am yet to tire of the quiet musings from my faen, especially when I'm away from home and we talk on the phone. The greatest phone sex in the world comes from your Thai speaking faen, if you understand the nuances. It can be a real kick for both parties.

**W:SL 5**

Unfortunately, once most women are married and certainly after they have children, the amount of sex diminishes and by the time the kids are in their teens or the wife is in her 40s, Thai women tend to see sexual relations as either demeaning or at least a very, very low priority. Thai female friends (not just my girlfriends and not bar girls) have stated this position to me on more than one occasion. Once the kids are capable of supporting their mother there is no reason for them to keep having sex. (After all, at a basic level they don't really need anything else from their husbands).

**W:SL 6**

I think one reason for this view of sexual activity for older females is related to the Hindu-Buddhist tradition that nurtures the idea that toward the end of life one should seek spiritual, otherworldly, goals that don't relate to the yearnings of the flesh. Almost counter to contemporary western culture, Thais tend to view sex among older people as either shocking or deviant, and in either case something that no decent woman would admit to engaging in. On one occasion, a western acquaintance married to a much younger Thai woman, even asked her husband if I thought that he and his wife were having sex. Amazing! Of course I assumed they were actually having sex, they were married!!! In Thailand, older women (especially) and perhaps younger women married to older men aren't supposed to be having sex.

**W:SL 7**

Many years ago, when I read the wonderful Thai novel 'Letters from Thailand' I remember how the author states that after a long marriage, the wife, concerned about the husband's morose behavior, asks him if it wouldn't help some to go out and find a young gal who might help bring zest back into his life. I couldn't help wondering why the wife wasn't doing anything to help. It seems to be accepted among Thai women that at a certain age, they will not be having sex with their husband, but that to keep the husband satisfied, he can go play around a bit, so long as he remembers that she is the 'mia luang' (major wife), i.e. who gets the money; the wife is fine with a 'fling' as long as the mia noi doesn't get any of the husband's fortune.

**W:SL 8**

Awhile back a girlfriend told me she would probably not be interested in sex around the age of 40. What she was trying to tell me, if I was listening properly, is that if we were married she wouldn't be having sex with me after age 40. I asked her why she felt this way, but she had no specific answer. I asked her if her parents were still having

**W:SL 9**



sex; she laughed and said, NO, of course not. I think her parents were in their early 50s. She said that Thai people don't have sex when they are older, especially the women. Sorry, but this attitude doesn't work for me.

Now some of you will say great, if your wife cares about you, she will accept your indiscretions with a young short time diversion. The problem for me is that when I marry I expect us to both be faithful to one another, and an important part of the relationship is having sex with one another, even when we are old. While most Thais may not understand this, I think most farang will not think it unusual. A few years ago I had a western girlfriend who was older than me-in her late 40s (arghh you say); this gal was GREAT in bed. The longest she had been without sex since age 18 was about one month. She loved sex and she really knew how to please. I was captivated by her abilities in this area and in many others too, as she was also intellectually bright and had great social skills. She taught me a lot about sex and many other things, and surprisingly, I started thinking about a life with her. Unfortunately, however, after about 6 months together I had to return to Asia for work, and she was unwilling to accompany me (she had a very satisfying and good paying job) or to wait until I returned. I'm sure she is now keeping her current beau (age @60+) very happy in the sack.

**W:SL 10**

I enjoy sex immensely, but it is not my top priority, and because I have been to Thailand, I know that it shouldn't be. To me great sex is a result of being with someone who you know well, care about, and are committed to pleasing. To me the physical part is small (but very crucial), while the mental part is huge, and I really need to have a commitment to the gal and feel she has a commitment to me in order for sex to be great. Just getting my rocks off with her is one thing, a silly matter that satisfies a basic instinct (the main focus of sex tourism), but I want more. I've tried threesomes but these situations don't work for me as I find them distracting [apologies Eden Club] and while I enjoy watching genuine girl-on-girl action (not the pseudo shows you see in Nana or Patpong), when I want to become physical with someone I love, I really just want it to be with her, with no one else messing around to divert my attention, I don't like or need the distractions. Basically, I've never been with someone sexually that I really cared about who I wanted to share with anyone else. I know many of you readers have different preferences than mine and I respect that. In fact, I've learned a lot more about sexual fetishes, fantasies, and fixations from Stickman's readers postings than anywhere else; these posting have been very informative and I really thank Stick for making this type of discussion available, so please understand that for me, I want my wife to be my life-long sexual partner (yeah I know, I'm probably boring).

**W:SL 11**

One of the things I enjoy about Thailand is how different the culture is from my own, and how this forces me to reflect on and reconsider my beliefs and how they came about. One of the many things that I only began to ponder once I came to Thailand and had learned more about Southeast Asian and especially Thai culture, was the question "what is a prostitute"? There are plenty of gold diggers in the U.S., but the Thai girlfriend takes this idea to a different level that brings about some curious questions that I can only answer for myself. Often there is NOT any easy or clear differentiation between a girlfriend and a prostitute <Classic sentence this, SO TRUE – Stick>. I love the way Thai culture forces us westerners to reconsider all the values that we grew up thinking were universal. Thai and Chinese culture seem to be the most contrary cultures to NW European traditions that I have found in the world, which makes these places fascinating to me.

**W:SL 12**

But....back to the question I always ponder about my girlfriend: "Can/will she go the distance"? If not, how many of my other criteria does she fulfill and where am I willing to compromise?

**W:SL 13**

There seems to be a very small group of people in Thai society who exemplify the positive aspects of the traits I have noted above. In general they seem to be middle class families where the parents were able to complete formal public schooling, while their children were able to obtain a degree at a four-year college. If they haven't had a lot of formal schooling, they have held a legitimate job in the 'modern' industrial economy and understand the value of hard work to earn one's way in the world. They are not looking for a handout. While these criteria don't necessarily mean that these children will have the intellectual curiosity or integrity I am interested in, but it certainly raises the chances that these individuals, or their offspring, will possess the capacity to both understand how their own, and other cultures, understand right and wrong, as well as an ability to critically reflect and perhaps examine their own culture in a methodical manner, which I also do to mine. Traditions or practices that can't the pass the rigors of scrutiny should be discarded, no matter what tradition they come from.

**W:SL 14**

I've met several Thais who are especially bright, even if they have not met the formal schooling criteria, but these individuals seem to be exceptions to the norm. One individual was a girlfriend of my European friend, and although she had only a high school education, she was one of the brightest Thais I have ever met. Unfortunately, though as bright, perceptive, and smart as she was, she had still not acquired the integrity or face that is important to me for a long-term relationship. Perhaps a good example of this is a situation that happened with this gal. She was great looking and had an incredible petite figure, very sexy, and was someone who would have been a natural in a porno video. The three of us (I had no girlfriend for most of the time that they were a couple) often went to clubs together, traveled around the country, and generally just hung out together whenever we both had free time. Although my friend occasionally told me how much and how great the sex was with this gal, it never entered my mind to sleep with her, as he was my best friend.

**W:SL 15**

One night after a lot of drinking the three of us returned to our separate rooms (3 doors away on the same floor) in the same apartment complex. I had just lay down to sleep and there was a knock on the door and the girlfriend asked to come in because my friend was really drunk; in his state, I knew he could get angry if he had to listen to her whine about something, and that night she had seemed to be in a whining mood. When he got angry it would hardly show, he might yell a bit, but he would never hit her; instead he would just tell her to leave his place and go home. So I assumed that he had told her to return home for the night. She looked far too drunk to be able to get home safely by herself and it was a long way, so I told her to just stay in my room that night. No big deal. I grabbed a pair of baggy 'fisherman's' pants similar to what the backpacker on Khao San Road like to wear, and a T-shirt and gave them to her to sleep in. I turned out the lights, rolled over and was trying to sleep when she crawled on top of me. It took several seconds before I came to my senses and realized that I couldn't have sex with my best friend's faen. She had her arms around my neck and was pretty intent on not letting me go and the only way to end things without getting violent was to cover my face so she couldn't kiss me and to roll onto my stomach. She caught the hint, and stopped. My telling her to stop didn't work, probably because she could tell I was physically ready to go and what I was saying to her didn't really reflect what my body was doing. I was torn, but I finally got her to put her clothes on and I then led her back to my friend's room and told him that he had forgotten something before he locked his door for the night.

**W:SL 16**

I talked to the gal the next day, trying to try and find out why she had wanted to have sex with me, and I came away very disappointed in her, as I found out she had been cheating on him for at least once a month with former boyfriends while he was out of

**W:SL 17**

town on work. I decided that my encounter with her might have been an attempt at another side fling. It wasn't just what his girlfriend said to me, but what she would say in Thai to her girlfriends or to other men, and which her boyfriend couldn't understand, but which I could – perhaps another reason to learn Thai – that confirmed my suspicions. She rationalized her actions by saying that she was sure my friend was cheating on her. This was rather ironic, because while my friend did have a bit of a reputation in the nightlife areas as a bit of a womanizer at one time, I was pretty sure he had not been with anyone else while they were a couple. I later learned that he did have absolute fidelity to this girlfriend. To him, she was his last great shot at marrying the 'ideal' Thai, as it wasn't likely that he would ever find another gal as smart as this one, and in my opinion no where near as sexy, she was incredible. My friend was considering marrying her, and I have to agree that she initially seemed to be everything he could want. I discussed the indiscretions with his girlfriend who initially looked shocked, and then tried to feign crying. She didn't want to believe me, but ultimately she was convinced that her boyfriend had never cheated on her; she also seemed to show some remorse and concern that he not find out what occurred between us. I told her that I had no intention of saying anything to him immediately, because she should be the one to tell him what was going on. If she didn't he was sure to find out eventually and then he would be unwilling to forgive her, but if she told him now, then she had a good chance of keeping him.

That day she apologized (a big surprise) about the situation and swore to me that she would tell him about all her indiscretions. Days dragged into a week and then weeks and my best friend was still clueless about his girlfriends actions with me and her previous acquaintances. This situation began creating problems for me because one of the reasons my friend wanted me to meet this gal was because he really wanted my opinion of her. One night he cornered me with questions and wanted to know what I thought about the woman he loved. Because he was my best friend and he knew that I would not lie to him, I finally told him what had happened between myself and his faen, and that I was sure she was seeing others behind his back. To try and lessen the shock of my statements, I suggested to him that given his past history, he had also probably fooled around on her. That's when he told me that she had been the only one since they had met, for two reasons; first, he really loved her and was trying to figure out how to marry her, and two, that she may be a nymphomaniac because she wanted more sex than any gal he had ever been with, so he was usually too tired or satisfied to want to go with anyone else. He thought he had found the perfect wife, a bright, witty, beautiful, sexy, and intelligent Thai woman, a very rare commodity in the country; the only thing that could be more rare were if she were also trustworthy. Because we were so close and understood each other so well, he knew I was speaking the truth. After that, my relationship with this fellow became like brothers, while unfortunately, his relationship with his girlfriend began to shatter and with me it broke entirely, because I couldn't be 'trusted' to keep a lie or deception from my best friend. Well, I guess I am not that Thai yet!

To conclude, when people ask me what I think of Thai women and why I never married a Thai, my short response is that I never found a Thai woman that met my expectations for a spouse. I am sure that one exists, but I never met her. (I have had two Thai girlfriends that did meet my expectations, but they were not interested in me as a spouse, which perhaps shows just how bright these women were.) The Thai view of what is important in a spouse is very different than my own, and ultimately the factors I've discussed above outweighed the many pluses that are also common in Thailand and to Thai women in particular, e.g. manners, compassion, zest for life. I wish more westerners could learn these wonderful traits, which for me makes Thailand such a wonderful place to visit.

**W:SL 18**

**W:SL 19**

There have been many successful marriages between Thais and farang and I think that the vast majority of the successful marriages were the result of both spouses' agreement about the important factors in a marriage where I think at least four of the above criteria would be present. I am happy for those couples who have found the love of their lives and/or a successful long-term commitment. My time and experiences in Thailand are generally positive, but I think it is important to recognize that there are many significant distinctions between Thai and western culture, traditional and modern Thais, and Thai – farang perspectives that create important differences important to long-term successful relationships.

**W:SL 20**

One of the great differences between our cultures is that Thais (and an increasing number of my own countrymen) have many similarities to children in that few have ever developed the patience or work ethic that results in satisfying rewards. Immediate gratification is the goal. These people can see that you are wealthier, and they need to have clear boundaries set if you want to remain friends. If you let them get away with something, then they will keep trying. They need to be told the first time that their actions are not appropriate.

**W:SL 21**

While it takes time to earn the respect of Thais, it can happen, but it does not come by being stupid, or by a lack of knowledge about their culture or their country. I am no longer surprised when I read about a farang being taken by the Thais, especially when it comes to romance. In dealing with the Thais a good general rule I've found is to think of your interactions with them as possible economic transactions, they sure do. In fact there are probably few cultures in the world that tend to equate their actions with monetary gain or loss, and who affix a price to their person as much as the Thai. If you were going to buy a car, but were tempted to buy one from a stranger living in a strange place, wouldn't you be a bit conscientious about giving the car a pretty good check? You'd probably want to know how many miles it had gone, whether the odometer had been tampered with, the engine maintained, etc. and you might also want to have a good idea about the way the price was determined. I doubt you would arrive in the country, go to the dealer and say, I am rich and have so much money that I enjoy spending it with abandon, so how much do you want for your cars? Why would you be surprised that the dealer would rip you off? Well, you wouldn't, but many farang admit that they do basically the same thing with a Thai woman, who was probably brought up in an environment where she came to view her worth in monetary terms, and when she meets someone who appears to have a larger supply of income that she could ever dream of having otherwise, why wouldn't she and her family be interested in testing how deep this stranger's pockets are? After all, Thais have all heard the stories about the rich and stupid farang, so why not test the waters? What do they have to lose?

**W:SL 22**

Perhaps the following thought that my Thai mother mentioned many years ago will be helpful to all foreigners interested in learning about the country, and may also be something to use as a guiding principle, "if you are Thai-ignorant and money-foolish, you will always have Thai 'friends'".

**W:SL 23**

Over the past 30 years, I have known about two dozen farang-Thai couples. Five of these couples have been together for more than 10 years, 8 of these couples have split. In two cases the wife divorced and left their husbands to raise their children shortly after obtaining permanent residency in the U.S, and neither of these women had ever been involved in the bar scene. I sometimes wonder how the other marriages turned out.

**W:SL 24**

For those Thai-farang couples who are in long-term (>10 years) relationships, I applaud you, and I am curious about what made your marriages last for so long?

**W:SL 25**

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<p><b>Stickman's thoughts:</b></p> <p>My God, it is as if everything this site has been working towards has been articulated and summed up in 19,000 odd words.</p> <p>This is, in my mind, the best submission this site has ever received and to use an often used cliché, this submission is <b>COMPULSORY READING</b> for all farangs interested in pursuing a relationship with a Thai woman.</p>	<p><b>W:SL 26</b></p>
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## Appendix 7

### Readers' Submissions: Thai writers (RST)

Content: What Farangs Don't Get About Thai Women (WFDG)	Paragraph No.
<p>Mr. Stickman, I've been reading your column on and off now for years and have never found the inclination to write. I must say that I find much of the rantings here to be somewhat entertaining (albeit in a morbid sort of way). But I will say that the experiences that many farang men have had with Thai women are tragic and sad and I feel for these guys. But collectively, they seem to paint a rather unflattering – and grossly unfair – picture of Thai women as a whole. What farang men never want to concede is that they all seem to be drawing water from the same tainted well, which is why they disproportionately get the unsavoury stuff. To put it bluntly, there is a huge difference between a “typical Thai woman” and “Thai women who date farangs.” This is going to be harsh, but it explains why so many farangs seem to get the short end of the stick with so many Thai women.</p>	<b>WFDG 1</b>
<p>Just a little about me. I'm a Thai, born in the USA, but raised in both the US and Thailand. I'm fluent in Thai, but actually prefer English as I believe it to be my native language. I'm now here in Thailand to stay. I have MANY farang colleagues and friends. I must say that most of my closest friends, here and back in the states, are farangs so I'm certainly not going to mindlessly bash farangs here. But believe me when I tell you that Thais will share with me stuff that they'll NEVER share with farangs, not even if they're married to one. And I'll say this – most of the farangs in Thailand really don't get it. They really don't see how things are, how they're perceived by the average Thai, men and women, what Thais talk about when farangs aren't around, why Thai people “smile” a lot, etc. All they know is what their wife or GF or their small circle of friends and relatives have told them, which is of course usually completely biased and distorted. But on rare occasions, I'll read something from a farang and I'll say to myself, “man, this dude gets it.” Your comment about the Isaan women in your 17 July 05 column shows that you “get it.” (from your thread: “The average Western guy seems to have a thing for the women of Isaan, as opposed to women from other parts of Thailand. They'll say they like short, dark-skinned girls with a 6 year school education but perhaps the truth lies in the fact that Isaan women often throw themselves at the first farang that comes anywhere near them”). I'll go a step further and quote the words of an American comedian who once said something to the effect that “the woman that most men get are frankly the best that they could do with the options available.” More on this later.</p>	<b>WFDG 2</b>
<p>So why do farang men seem to frequently find the worst of Thailand when it comes to Thai women? Firstly, farang men do have a reputation in Thailand, some good, some not so good. I'll narrow it down to the two that seems to matter most. (1) Thais think that all Farangs are wealthy. Can be good and bad...more on that later. (2) Thais believe that farang men are whore-chasers and connoisseurs of low-class women. Farangs need to understand Thai's belief in class distinction to really appreciate the importance of number 2. And before you go about beating up Thais for falsely believing number 2, understand that Thais know what's going on in Pattaya, Phuket, and the seedier areas of Bangkok. They see farang guys trying to pass their hookers off as girlfriends and they know. Heck, everyone knows. So if you want to blame anyone, blame these true whore-chasers who are still out there every single day. It never ceases to amaze me how farangs get upset when Thai folks mistakenly assume their wives/GFs are hookers, yet see for themselves other farangs with hookers and don't even bat an eye. Thais only believe that Thai women with farangs are BGs/ex-BGs because it's true the majority of the time.</p>	<b>WFDG 3</b>
<p>Back to the topic. So Thai women believe that farangs are wealthy. What kind of women will this attract? Well, certainly women who are into money. I'll say that most women consider this to be desirable, but only a few believe it to be the most important thing. The ones who have it on the top of their priority list will certainly be after guys that have it. But then there's the number 2 rep that farangs carry around, the whore-chasing thing. Most Thai girls are actually conservative by nature and really don't want to be seen as “that sort of woman.” So that takes out the “nice” girls. And the women that are educated and well-off – well they don't need that stigma either. I mean, why be looked at as some low-class gold-digger when you've already</p>	<b>WFDG 4</b>

got your own money? So what you're left with are the poor desperate types who really aren't concerned about their reputation or what other people think because quite frankly, they have much more pressing problems.

So what I'm saying is that farangs have got the typical Thai women pegged all wrong, yet they're probably right about the Thai women that they've been with. And this is because most of the Thai women that farangs end up with are not typical Thai women. Most farangs are not going to want to believe this. They'll want to believe what the women who they've met have told them, that farang guys are every Thai women's desire, that Thai guys are all drunks and cheats, blah, blah, blah. But seriously, what else are these women going to tell you? That they'd rather be with a Thai guy, but are with the farang for financial reasons? I'm sure that will go over well with most farangs. The truth is probably that many of these women have had some bad experiences with Thai guys and although they'd still prefer a decent Thai guy, he's probably out of reach. And the clock is ticking for her and her family. So why is this "decent Thai guy" so out of reach for these "Isaan" type women?

**WFDG 5**

There's a well-kept secret in Thailand that every Thai person seems to know but no farang does (or maybe can't grasp what it means). It boggles my mind actually because you can't get three Thai people to agree on anything but nearly everyone agrees on this, both men and women. That farang men only date ugly Thai women. Now this is where there's a huge perception difference between Thai and farang men. It's the Isaan factor again, but let me try to explain it so that the average farang can relate. Thais look at dark-skinned women sort of the same way that Americans look at fat white women. Most American guys don't dream of waking up every morning next to an obese woman, but admittedly, some guys are into that sort of thing. And if you are, you've got the pick of the litter. And that's how it is with Isaan type women. Thai men of reasonable means are not going to be interested in these type of women and these women know it. Don't believe me? Heck, just watch some Thai TV and see what they're touting in the commercials. Constantly seeing products that are alleged to lighten women's skin. Look at the Thai women soap stars. Certainly doesn't fit the profile of a girl typically seen with a farang. Now I honestly don't believe that farangs "prefer" these Isaan type of women, although most seem content with anyone who's thin and young, regardless of what they look like. But that's really all that's available to most farangs.

**WFDG 6**

Something interesting that I've noticed is that it's almost pointless to be a good-looking farang guy in Thailand. Because you're going to have access to the same pool of women as that fat, hairy, smelly, 55 year old German guy sitting at the end of the bar. You're not going to have access to the same type of women that I have – and I say this almost apologetically. Back in the states, you see a good looking guy and you expect him to be with an attractive woman. And he almost always is. But here, you see a good-looking farang guy and chances are that his GF/wife will be the same Isaan-type woman that all the other farang guys run around with. There's a young farang guy in my company who's got the classic GQ look. I mean this guy would be a serious ladies-man back in the states. Nice guy too. Yet, his girlfriend is just oh-so-typical Isaan-type. And another guy, not as GQ, but in his late 20's, better than average looking, making solid money, and his new wife has two kids (not his), and of course...well, no need to beat a dead horse. Nothing wrong with this, by the way, if they're happy. Just an observation.

**WFDG 7**

Which brings me back to the "secret" thing. It's not really the intention of Thais to deceive farangs here or keep him from the truth. Thais really don't like hurting people's feelings, farangs or otherwise. But there's no way to tell the guys and honestly, why would we want to? If the woman is attractive to you (and a good person to boot), it shouldn't matter what everyone else thinks (ever seen the American movie Shallow Hal?). I've run into many situations where my farang colleagues or friends would show me a picture of their new GF, just gushing with their new found love expecting me to shower him with compliments of what a Goddess she was. Believe me, these gals were almost always hideous, but I just usually nod in agreement. What the heck am I going to say?

**WFDG 8**

My advice to farang men who are still searching for love: if a Thai woman comes after you, watch out. As I said before, Thai women are conservative by nature. This is how a "nice" Thai girl approaches a guy she's interested in. Has happened to me countless times. Her friend or acquaintance will approach me and say that someone's really interested and see if I'm

**WFDG 9**

<p>available. I'll ask some questions and the friend will never reveal who it is until he/she knows that it's a green light. I always end up saying I have a girlfriend (which I do) and I'll never find out who this girl is. But if she approaches me directly, it will be very subtle and it won't even appear like she's interested. If a Thai woman drops these subtle hints and the guy doesn't get it (or isn't interested), she won't pursue you for long. Point here is that they are very conservative when it comes to courtship and the man really has to be the aggressor. If the woman is the aggressor, then she's really not the type of woman that I'd be interested in. Women libbers in the states are going to hate this, but that's still the way it is in Thailand.</p> <p>Something else: if she says that she really likes farang guys and that's what she's looking for, don't just walk away – freakin run. Because what she's essentially saying is that she wants a farang guy and ANY farang will do. You're nothing special, just the target of opportunity. And why do you think she prefers a farang guy? Hint: it's got nothing to do with your charm and personality (check number 1 above). Why would you want to be with a woman who'd basically take up with any other farang guy if given the opportunity? What you really want is a Thai woman who's not interested in a farang guy. Actually prefers a Thai guy. You win over that sort of woman and you've got something. Then you'll know that she's interested in you for you and nothing else. But it'd really help if you took the time to learn some Thai. I'd be a little suspicious of an uneducated Thai woman who speaks English a little too well, but that's another topic for another time.</p>	<b>WFDG 10</b>
<p><b>Stickman's thoughts:</b>  <i>Absolutely spot on, another submission that really is compulsory reading for farangs who spend time with Thai women.</i>  All rights reserved. © Stickman 1998-2016  <a href="mailto:stickmanbangkok@gmail.com">stickmanbangkok@gmail.com</a></p>	<b>WFDG 11</b>



## Appendix 8

### Readers' Submissions: Thai writers (RST)

Content: What We Think Are Mistakes Western Men Make with Thai Women (WWTM)	Paragraph No.
<p>Reading Stick's Sunday weekly and I think I'd weigh in what I think about the same topic, so my piece is like an addendum to his. Call me unoriginal. 😊</p>	WWTM 1
<p><b>You think if we don't work in bars then we're designated Good girls</b>            Some people say that they respect bargirls more than regular girls because at least bargirls are honest about what they're up to. I can see why they say that. I have an evil habit of observing and eavesdropping conversations of Thai-farang couples. Most of the time I find the Western guy is the one who does the talking. If someone with limited English, and you have absolutely nothing in common with, wants to date or have a relationship with you, what is the reason or motivation behind that? Would it be her genuine interest in knowing, learning and understanding about you through her limited English? Or is it something extraneous—decent meals they can't afford, better lifestyle, gifts, free trips to other countries, money, passport, etc? The list goes on but it must be something.</p>	WWTM 2
<p>Someone I knew told me about a girl who told him on the first date that she has lost her cell phone and asked if he could get her one. A girl told another friend on the first date after a few chats on TLL that she was between jobs and needed to pay 9,500 baht rent for that month and wanted to borrow the money from him. Needless to say those were the only dates the girl got. I'm sure there will be someone out there who believes them. These girls sound like rookies. The more experienced the girls in the field wouldn't do that on the first date. They'd wait. They can be more subtle and patient in getting what they want.</p>	WWTM 3
<p>And juggling guys to bargain for the best offer? Yes, some of us want it all, just like your bargirls. But sometimes it's not always about intentionally keeping you around. Even though we may have already decided who has the best to offer, we don't have the nerves to break it off with you. We'd hate to break your heart. We need to retake Confrontation101. We all flunk it. And on the hind side, breaking your heart is also scratching our plan B. We'd hate to do that. Burning bridges can never be a good thing. Oh well, we'll just leave it as it is and see how things go. There sure are genuine girls out there but you need to use your brain up there, not down there, to single her out. Girls with agendas are out there, be it in Thailand of Farangland. Just be careful.</p>	WWTM 4
<p><b>Not aware of how many choices we have and want to believe you're the only guy</b>            Have you seen pictures of girls on dating site profiles taken by a web cam with the girls on a seat so big you can't see past it? Those pictures are taken in internet cafés which are in every corner of Thailand now. The access can be as cheap as 20 baht an hour. Thanks to the cheap high speed internet that we can have easy access to the internet 24/7, and chat and meet up with men from all over the world, not only in Bangkok. If we are easy to get coffee with you, what makes you think we'd be any harder to meet with others? I had to laugh when a girl I knew from a Thai-farang dating / community website was shuffling her guys and the moment of truth came when two of the guys turned out to be friends and they talked.</p>	WWTM 5
<p>As much as youa guys have an enormous pool of girls when you are in Thailand, we Thai girls also have that enormous pool of foreigners in Thailand. As much as we're readily available for you, you foreigners are equally readily available for us. Figure that. Mr. JTG teased me that in comparison to 'standard' Thai girl looks, I'm short, wide and</p>	WWTM 6

old. Even then I get checked out and approached by foreigners in restaurants, malls, hospitals, and got personal messages from strangers on social networking websites. I turned them all down because I'm not available. The hit-on rate would be even more if your girl is a tall skinny young thing. The question is, how good is your girl at resisting the temptation?

Do you think she's interested in you because she really knows and understands you, or just because you treat her well or have something to offer? If you are not that connected with her and the latter of the question is true, what if someone treats her as well as, or even better than you do, or has more to offer comes along? Would she consider the offer? If she still opens her door to people, for instance, has her profile on dating web sites and gets upset when you mention it, how sure you can be that you are the only guy? If she has strange behaviour like hiding her phone, turning off the phone when in the shower, or taking a phone call and walks away claiming that it's loud where you are when it's not, or wouldn't check her email in your presence, etc, how can you be so sure you're the only guy?

WWTM 7

Believe me. We have choices. Don't completely fall for us when we haven't proved that we're done playing the field, or that we're at least staying focused on a relationship with you. Test the consistency of our stories would be a good idea. Make us earn your trust.

WWTM 8

**You let us stretch those boundaries**

Girls are like three year old kids. We test if we can respect you by stretching the boundaries, especially early in the relationship. This might be a universal gender issue. We are possessive, jealous, spending recklessly your money, screaming, sulking, crying, throwing things at you, etc. If you let us do it one time, we learn we can do it. If you let us keep doing it, we learn we don't need to respect you and we have the upper hand. You need to be consistent on what is allowed and what is not in our relationship. All those manipulative tools are what we've used and worked with Thai men. Teach us that they don't work in a relationship with you. Show us leadership. Don't let us lose respect for you and start bossing you around or bad mouth about you with our Thai friends in your face. *<This is oh so true. The average foreigner in Thailand is so soft that I am surprised he can get a hard on. I am disgusted at how weak THE MAJORITY of farang men in Thailand are and many even have the audacity to criticise those who are strong. (BKKSU wrote an excellent piece which touched on this a few months back) – Stick>*

WWTM 9

**You believe we have the same definition of Love you do**

A lot of Thai people use the word "love" very lightly. To Thai people love is just a degree a bit stronger than "like" but doesn't necessarily have that same profound meaning as in the West. Most of us never heard of biblical definition of love. Love to a lot of us is about what we get out of a relationship with you, and not so much about what we give. We're still confused it with infatuation, possessiveness, lust, etc, so don't always assume that our love is your kind of love.

WWTM 10

I'm not sure how much Thai girls know about working at a relationship the way Western men who are after a meaningful relationship want to see. With Thai couples, there would sure be an adjustment period and I'm sure with no language barrier, a Thai couple can sort out the relationship problems and work on their compatibility. However, I'm not quite sure about a mixed couple. Being not confrontational can keep Thai people from talking about what goes wrong in a relationship. We can get all upset about things and then when we get over and done, we'd talk to you like nothing has happened. We'd act loving and be your best girlfriend again. Isn't that wonderful?

WWTM 11

I remember going out on a road trip with Mr. JTG in a rural area. He pointed out shacks with garbage underneath and said it showed how Thai people deal with problems. You

WWTM 12

sweep trash underneath the house and the trash is not “there” anymore. In fact it still is, but just not on the surface. You just no longer see it in your shack.

We’re not a big fan of getting to the bottom of the story, to the root of the problem, trying to understand it and straighten it out from there. It’s painful. We hate analysis. We don’t believe our past makes us who we are today. If we don’t like it, we forget about it in no time as if it has never happened. We don’t believe in talking about problems and trying to understand and fix it so that we can put it behind us. This Western way of dealing with things is nonexistent to us. It’s not in our mentality. We’d never talk about it. If something goes wrong in a relationship, we wouldn’t try to find out why and talk it out. It might offend you, it might hurt us, or maybe we aren’t even aware there’s a problem, or maybe we are but we don’t care. We’d just skip the talking and working part. We’d just put it behind us. “That’s OK.” Easier this way.

Despite level of education and sophistication, the idea of bringing into a relationship is not very common to a lot of us. Being with someone is all about what we get out of it—money, better lifestyle, enjoyment, security in various ways, etc. It’s hardly about what we could, should and would give, how we can enable our partner and make ourselves better for him each day. To make someone like us understand that it takes two to tango in a relationship can be difficult even for someone with excellent English because of a lack of understanding the concept. A friend of mine had a problem with his girlfriend. When he was so busy with work and trying to quit smoking, instead of her being understanding and supportive, she was being demanding for time and attention. It was all about her. She’s an educated Thai girl with two master’s degrees and speaks very good English. She got all nasty and they finally broke up. At 28 years old she was not mature enough to bring something into their relationship and make it enabling. Imagine how much more difficult it would be with someone who speaks and understands only basic English.

WWTM  
13

#### **You give us too much leeway for being Thai**

I think this is the biggest mistake you make. You try to understand us with your Western mentality, and when you don’t, you think, “This must be a Thai thing.” It’s NOT. Take the money issue for instance. It is our Asian culture that a man is the provider of the family and woman the responder, but NOT to the extreme that you need to start supporting her financially from the moment she gets the girlfriend title. Supporting her whole family is out of the question. It’s NOT in the Thai culture that I know. It’s a national scam. Thai people have a saying that goes something like, girls marry “out”, boys marry “in.” When a daughter is married to her husband, she moves out and will be taking care of her husband, and husband’s parents. But when a son is married, the parents get the in-law to take care of them. The dowry is what you pay the parents to ‘release’ the girl from them. You acknowledge the good deed the parents have done raising your woman, and from the marriage onwards, you’ll be in charge taking care of her only, not her family.

WWTM  
14

These poor families are taking advantage of you. Don’t let them. It’d be nice of you to help them if you are genuinely inclined to, but the idea of expecting someone who marries into the family to feed the whole extended family is appalling. Don’t help us make it a new culture here. Everyone works. Period. Even though she’s working for peanuts but the idea of working is all about putting in efforts to earn something and learn to appreciate what you’ve earned. We all know that. Sleeping with someone and getting money from the guy is sheer prostitution, however subtle you make it look. (Don’t say sleeping with someone is a way to “earn” something too!) Don’t let your girlfriend fool you that men are expected to be responsible for the Thai girlfriend’s finances. If she’s a decent girl, she wouldn’t ask you to support her like that. If she has the nerve to ask you for your financial support, do it because you feel sorry for her being a bargirl or working

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for peanuts, or so that you feel like a white knight in shining armor saving her from her dirt poor life, but just DON'T do it because...ok...that must be a Thai thing.

Throwing tantrums is another thing. I agree with Stick that screaming and throwing things are very common in prime time soaps. Soap operas here with the best ratings are those with the loudest screaming characters. It's sad but a lot of girls have taken that same means to express themselves and get what they want. It may be true that more Thai girls are screaming and throwing things than Western girls, but don't let us get away with it just because we're Thai. If we can't contain our anger or deal with problems like a civilized person would, we're probably not fit to have a relationship. Imagine how we'd raise our kids we have with you?

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There must be a reason why the word "common sense" is coined. It's something not only culture-specifically common, but universally common. Believe me Thai people have common sense too, but it's a lot of time overshadowed by greed, selfishness, or a "*muk-ngai*" (literally "love convenience") mentality. Being *muk-ngai* is when you do things perfunctorily, half-assed, and irresponsibly just to get it over with and don't care about the quality of the outcome or consequences. The consequences are to be worried about later. This mentality explains the quality of products and services you receive day in day out in Thailand. Sweeping trash underneath the house mentioned above is an act of being *muk-ngai*.

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You called Sony Thai to order a replacement adapter. They said they'd order from Singapore for you. It'd take a week and they'd call you to let you know when they have it. You've been busy and lost track of time. Two weeks later you remembered and called them. They said it was in a week ago and you could go pick it up. They wouldn't bother calling you like they said they would because they know you'd eventually call. They conveniently ignore their promise and let the customer do the work. Then they asked you to complete a survey on the service quality. You gave them the lowest point and they went blank, couldn't make it what was wrong with not keeping their words. What's the big deal? It's only a 360 baht worth of an adapter.

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You took your new shiny car to your Honda Patumwan dealership to get it serviced. They did a bad job polishing your car. They left what looked like scuff marks all over the car from the chemicals they used to polish and didn't remove them completely. You called them and were transferred to staff after staff. You ended up telling the same story five times and asked for the manager who made it sound like, what's the big deal, just bring the car in and we'll redo it for you. They don't understand it's a waste of time and energy. They don't understand that if they had done a good job in the first place the customer would not have to take time off from work and an extra trip sitting in traffic to bring the car in, not to mention suffering another day without the car.

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What does this rant have to do with your relationship with a Thai girl? I'm trying to make a point that if we are doing something that looks totally like nonsense to you, don't put up with our crap or BS just because we're so "*muk-ngai*" that we try to justify every stupid things we do that it's a Thai thing, therefore it's OK. Don't let us hide behind our Thainess. You don't let your date bring another six people to join the first date because it's a Thai thing to have a chaperone. You don't let her ignore you for 20 minutes staying on the phone talking small talks in Thai at your dinner table because it's a Thai thing. You don't let yourself manipulated into sending her monthly allowance because it's a Thai thing. You don't let her get away with her BS or put up with her crap because it's a Thai thing. How many times does she give you that leeway because you are a Westerner? I'd say none. The world revolves around the Thainess, if you haven't realized that already.

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<p>Don't be afraid to take us to task when we do something universally stupid. Don't let us get away with it just because we're from a different culture. Don't take crap when it's the same crap you wouldn't take back home. Don't teach us that being Thai can help us get away with murder. Hope that helps.</p>	<p><b>WWTM 21</b></p>
<p><b>Stickman's thoughts:</b>  <i>Brilliant! There we have it, guys, right from a Thai woman's lips! This really is compulsory reading for every foreign guy getting involved with a Thai women. The sad thing is that if a foreign guy had written this he would probably be called a racist. But it's true, all of it. It really is.</i>  <i>It's time foreign guys started growing balls and not listening to some of the BS from some people and on some forums where the consensus is that if a Thai said something it must be right and as we are not Thai we can't possibly understand their culture. NONSENSE! It takes only a small amount of commonsense to see that often the wool is pulled over the spineless foreigner's eyes.</i>  <i>Wake up, white man! You bring plenty to the table. If you don't get common decency in return, call her on it and if she doesn't agree to mend her ways, leave!</i></p> <p>All rights reserved. © Stickman 1998-2016  <a href="mailto:stickmanbangkok@gmail.com">stickmanbangkok@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>WWTM 22</b></p>