STEREOTYPICAL DEPICTION OF THAI WOMEN IN HOLLYWOOD FILMS
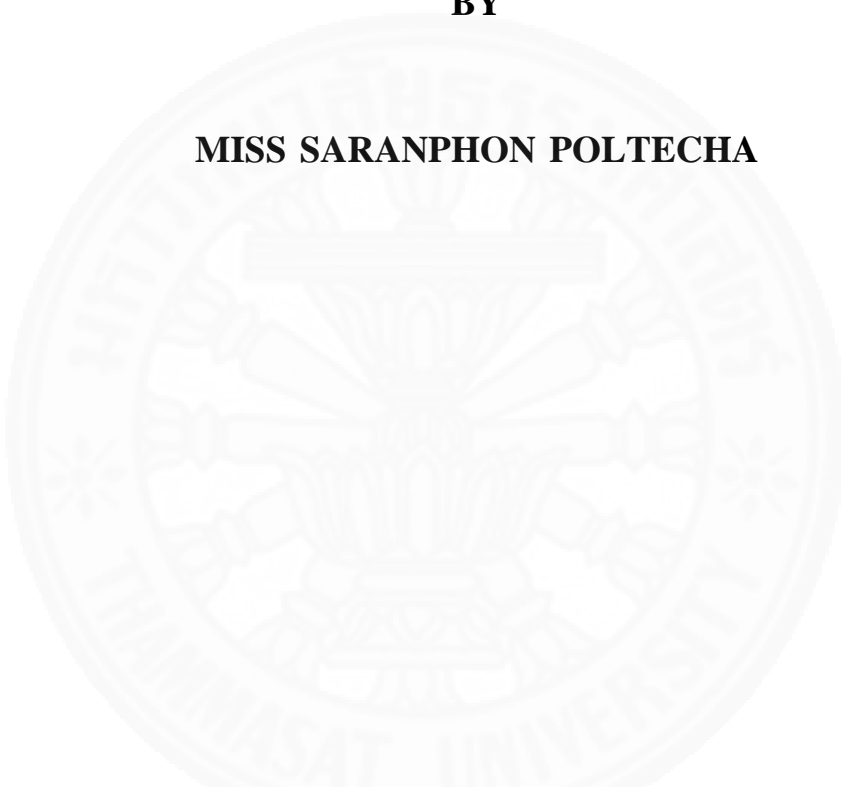
BY

MISS SARANPHON POLTECHA

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS
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ENTITLED

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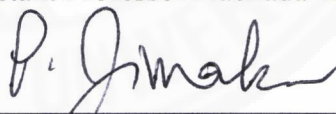
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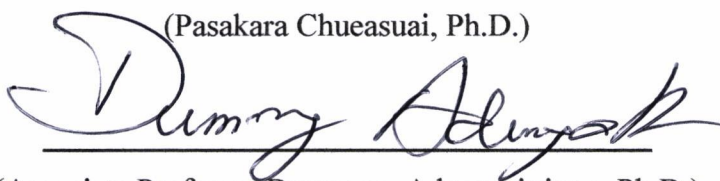(Assistant Professor Nuchada Dumrongsiri, Ph.D.)

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ABSTRACT

In this globalized era media play a significant role in our society. Western media, especially, reach a number of global audiences and exert a powerful force in creating and reinforcing public perception and stereotypes. This study analyzes one of the most prominent media — films and their stereotypical depiction of Thai women in Hollywood films.

ʹFilmʹ is considered one of the most powerful media genres that influences perceptions leading to stereotypes. Hollywood, especially, is a media channel that reaches a number of audiences around the world and has the power of creating audience perception and reinforcing stereotypes. Thailand has been portrayed through western media with images of go-go bars, massage parlors and street prostitutes especially in Hollywood films, for example, the scene of Bangkok nightlife in *The Hangover Part 2* (2011) and *Only God Forgives* (2013). Thai women are perpetually portrayed as prostitutes and the international media reinforce racial and ethnic stereotypes accordingly. Thailand has been known as a sex tourism destination because of its openly available sex services, resulting in generalization of all Thai women as part of the prostitution business.

The study hopes to reveal the depiction of Thai women in the selected Hollywood films concerned with sexualized roles, i.e., prostitutes, bar girls, and go-go girls. The result shows that the stereotypes include LBFM (Little Brown Fucking Machine), Geisha, Pity Chicken, Lotus Blossom, 3rd World Lady, Baby Dragon, Flowing Lotus and Ladyboy. This study opens a dialogue about the long-standing stereotypical attitude towards women from the Far East, especially Thailand.

Keywords: Film, Media, Sex tourism, Stereotype, Thai women, Hollywood films

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization the media plays a crucial role in our society. It inevitably has become a part of our daily lives. It is a major source of information and it has a variety of forms, such as advertising, movies, and newspapers. Also, the powerful impact of the internet and social media helps spread information very quickly in the digital age.

The media can present us with views of human beings, events, and cultural life. It can also shape the audience′s mind and thoughts to believe a certain view, especially the audiences who have never experienced a different culture from their own. Then, the media play an important role in forming an image of other cultures.

For instance, film is one of the most influential types of media. Films can portray and give visualization of lifelike and emotional scenes to convince the audience that what they see is real, or at least similar to reality. This is one way in which audiences begin to perceive a certain image of other cultures. With media portrayal, it is easy to stereotype and make judgments about cultures from outside.

Not only films, but also other types of media can affect a number of audience perceptions. Western media, in particular, can affect audiences since it is considered the most powerful media channel that can reach global audiences. It then becomes a crucial tool in forming public perception accordingly. People develop views of other cultures through western media which can profoundly affect those who have never had a real experience with the other group.

To illustrate, Thailand has been portrayed through western media as a destination of sex tourism, cheap sex and prostitution with scenes of go-go bars, nightclubs, and prostitutes. These portrayals help reinforce western perception towards Thai women as sex objects, prostitutes and bar girls willing to please western males in order to get money. Moreover, these also lead to discrimination issues; for example, the discrimination towards a Thai bride who is normally perceived as a bar girl, a prostitute from Pattaya or a mail-order bride. The cliché about Thai women who want to marry western men in order to have better living conditions is also a common one. This cliché can be easily seen in many documentary films about Thai women, such as *The good woman of Bangkok* (1991) and *Bangkok girl* (2005) which also reinforces the stereotypes.

Thailand is also portrayed as exotic, of a beautiful nature, and Thai women are portrayed as feminine, good wives, and caring partners to fit the description of typical Asian women. Thus, both portrayals are opposite sides of the same coin. In reality, these stereotypes do not reflect all Thai women′s lives. However, they do affect Thai women who want to disassociate themselves from these perspectives.

Thailand has been known among western countries as a paradise of sex tourism for a long time (Nuttavuthisit, 2006) and sex-related businesses in Thailand have existed since the ancient time, like in many societies. But the difference is that it is

responsible for a good fraction of the country′s GDP and it was during the Vietnam War that Thailand became one of the known countries for prostitution that brings revenue to the country (Boonchalaksi & Guest, 1994). Later the general sex tourism industry developed, which could be one of the reasons why western media picked this side of Thailand to portray in film and in other types of media.

There were previous studies, for example Shang′s (2015) which studied the portrayal of Thailand in Hollywood films. Also, Boonchutima′s (2009) which studied the image of Thailand as a sex tourism destination portrayed in British media. There are no studies which specifically focus on the stereotypical depiction of Thai women in Hollywood films. The current study intends to fill in the gap and to explore the stereotype categories of Thai women which are portrayed through Hollywood films. Thus, this development leads to the study of the portrayal of Thai women through Hollywood films to investigate stereotypes of Thai women Hollywood depicted in movies. Selected Hollywood films will be analyzed.

1.1 SCOPE OF STUDY

Since Hollywood films have been successfully broadcasted in other countries around the world, the global audience has generated a high demand for Hollywood films and the income from other countries has increased significantly since WWII (Davis et al., 2015). Also, Hollywood has influenced global audience perception due to the various cultural contents revealed through Hollywood films (Krämer, 2011). So, with the powerful influence of the Hollywood industry, it is an essential source for this study to see how the biggest movie company in the world depicts Thai women to portray to global audiences.

This study focuses on the representation of Thai women in Hollywood films: stereotypical images of Thai women in the films. It explores the processes of depicting who the women are and what they do, and thus what kind of images of exotic oriental women have been formulated in these Hollywood films. The films which will be used for this study are *Bridget Jones' Diary:The Edge of Reason (*2004*), Bangkok Dangerous (*2008*), The Hangover part 2 (*2011*), Only God Forgives (*2013*), and No Escape (*2015*).* The films are all during the past 20 years only. Since, the research aims to explore the stereotype categories of Thai women in Hollywood films, the films have to be set in Thailand and played by Thai women or played as Thai women to explore the depiction and the representation of Thai women in Hollywood films.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to investigate stereotypes of Thai women in Hollywood films, the researcher uses the framework loosely based on the description of a synthesis of Asian women stereotypes proposed by various scholars (Cho, 1997; Marchetti, 1993; Ono & Pham, 2009; Shah, 2003). They are, for example, Dragon Lady, Suzie Wong, Lotus Blossom and Geisha as the starting point.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

What are stereotypical categories used to portray Thai women in Hollywood films?

1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.4.1 Globalization

Harris (1993) defines globalization as ″a set of processes that bring people and places together″ (p.757) while, Hveem (1998) sees globalization as ″the spread of global production, the construction of a global marketplace, and the convergence of national economic policies throughout the world″ (as cited in Marks et al., 2006, p.616). Steger (2009) refers to globalization as ″the expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world-space″ (p.15).

1.4.2 Media Influence

From previous studies, the researchers concluded that media have a powerful influence on the progress of attitudes and beliefs about the real world (Shelton et al., 2009). Also, people can learn from media they consume without any intention because it is an automatic procedure.

It is claimed that the message from media affects audience′s perception of the real world (Gerbner et al., 2002). It does not mean that audiences can learn from messages directly shown in media, but how media communicate. Storytelling, plot, and symbolism, for example, can be other sources from which the audience can learn and interpret (Gerbner et al., 2002). Moreover, ″Media have been shown to have the potential to promote or to call into question stereotypical views of social groups, including those defined by race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity″ (Mastro, 2015; Tukachinsky, Mastro, & Yarchi, 2015 as cited in Scharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2015, p. 171).

1.4.3 Films

Film is a type of media which has the power to reinforce audience perception (Dimnik & Felton, 2006). It helps form public perception towards what they see from films, i.e. ″social, cultural, political and economic issues″ for example (Dutt, 2014, p.2). Also, Hollywood films are a powerful media channel that portrays racial and ethnic stereotypes to audiences all over the world. With the power of globalization, film is one of the most powerful sources of cultural information that is transmitted to global audiences, and people from different groups/ cultures perceive each other from what they see through films (Ross, 2003, as cited in Wu, 2010).

According to Alcolea‐Bangas (2008), the visual image presented in film has an effect on audience emotional responses which emphasizes that this type of media can influence viewers′ emotions and thoughts. As stated by Berger (1992), ″Like

fish, we ″swim″ in a sea of images, and these images help shape our perceptions of the world and of ourselves″ (p.101).

1.4.4 Stereotype

According to Lippmann, stereotypes are ″pictures in our heads that we use to apprehend the world around us″ (as cited in Seiter, 1986, p.16). As defined by Branston and Stanford (2006), stereotyping is a process of categorization that in most cases implies a negative evaluation of the group that is being analyzed (as cited in Viruega, n.d., p.3). Most intercultural experts consider stereotypes essential since we have a limited capacity in remembering data. Stereotypes make the procedure easier by categorization. However, stereotypes can be inaccurate, ethnocentric and can be broken (Dimnik & Felton, 2006, p.152).

1.4.5 Sex Tourism

Sex Tourism is defined as ″tourism where the main purpose or motivation is to consummate commercial sexual relations″ (Hall, 2014, p.144). Besides, a tourist who aims to travel to other countries to buy sex services from local sex workers is considered a sex tourist (Enloe, 1989). Sex tourism is ″anchored in networks that provide services such as prostitutes, tourist guides, show organizers or massage parlors, and that serve not only foreign tourists but local customers as well″ (Quintanilla, 1997 as cited in Kuma, 2014, p.2).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since the study aims to explore the stereotype categories of Thai women in Hollywood films**,** this chapter gives an extensive background which will be useful for the data analysis in the next chapter. For example, how do global media, such as Hollywood films, affect global audiences′ view of the world? Also, an explanation of feminist film theory (Male gaze) which is directly related to the portrayal of women in Hollywood films will be presented. Moreover, other essential point ′stereotypes′ will be described. Furthermore, there will be the stereotypical portrayal of Asian women in Hollywood films which the researcher uses as a starting point for this study. The sex trade industry in SEA countries is another useful aspect to look at to gain in-depth information of how the reputation of Thailand as a sex tourism destination is associated with the stereotypes of Thailand and Thai women portrayed in Hollywood films.

2.1 Globalization

In our modern age, the power of media has drastically influenced people′s everyday life and has become an important factor that has contributed to the expansion of globalization. With the saturation of media, the world is globally connected unavoidably (Kellner & Share, 2005).

Due to globalization in the present-day, the media influence then becomes an interesting issue since it has affected people′s everyday life and also affects people′s perception. Media has power to form people′s views of the world and has a great impact on people′s perception (Lipmann, 1992). When people receive images or messages through mass media, they will interpret them in their own way and believe in what they see or hear. Moreover, the frequency of seeing or receiving images and messages, also directly affects their belief and their perception (Lipmann, 1992). The global media, such as CNN and 20th Century Fox, have transmitted western images to almost 75% of the audience all over the world. This shows the impact of western media channels in shaping audience perception (Mander, 1996).

However, if the audience have a chance to have contact with people from different cultures or social groups directly, it can help change their perception toward other groups. This change is caused by the influence of media portrayal (Mastro & Tropp, 2004). Furthermore, if the audiences have media literacy and critical thinking skills then they would be able to avoid stereotypes that have been caused by media portrayal as well (Kellner & Share, 2005).

Audiences′ perception toward other groups, such as race and gender, are shaped from images, symbols and conversations that they have seen through media. So, media is one of the essential tools that can present images of the real world (Brooks & Hébert,

2006). Furthermore, media also influence audience perception about each race (Park et al, 2006).

Morawitz and Mastro (2008) show that media has an influence on people′s worldview. It also has an impact on the audiences′ beliefs due to what they perceive through media (Xing et al., 2009). Also, the frequency of receiving messages through media also affects the audience perception of reality (Shrum, 1995). Media is not only for sending messages to the audiences but also a channel for human communication, especially communication between different groups; i.e. ″cultural groups or ethnic groups″ (Chen, 2012, p.3).

2.2 Films

Films and television are the most influential types of media that reinforce stereotyping due to many factors. Audiences have a deeper impression left in their minds after consuming these types of media than other types of media (Dimnik & Felton, 2006). These types of media can use only a few specific characters, images or symbols to help the audience recognize and differentiate each different group; i.e. occupation group, religious group, ethnic group and others that have been portrayed in a previous film. Also, films are a fruitful source for studying culture (Mallinger & Rossy, 2003).

If the audiences never have experience with what they see through film, they tend to perceive what they have seen in media as real (Baker, 1996, as cited in Wu, 2010). Films normally involve creating and reinforcing stereotypes (Ross, 2003, as cited in Wu, 2010). For example, the audience of *Rush Hour 2* creates a racial stereotype toward Asians after watching the film (Park, Gabbadon, and Chernin, 2006). Some participants in this study stated that the stereotype that they perceived through the movie has some sense of reality. The stereotypes represented in this movie are, for example, that Asians are short and Asians are good at martial arts.

In films, a producer normally categorizes types of people or groups by creating a specific type of character to make it easy for the audiences to differentiate each type or group. For example, men are portrayed as masculine, while women are portrayed as passive and emotional. Especially, ′Asian women′ which this paper will focus on, have been portrayed as sex objects who easily fall in love with white males as submissive, docile and good partners.

2.3 Hollywood Films

Hollywood is the influential media channel that has been broadcast in many parts of the world and has become a powerful media since the 20th century due to globalization. It is not surprising at all that Hollywood is the source of many racial stereotypes (Feng, n.d.). Hollywood is a tool that the U.S. uses to promote the idea of ″cultural imperialism″ to other cultures (Xing, 2003, as cited in Feng, n.d., p.7).

The racial and ethnic stereotypes have long been presented through Hollywood films, i.e. Black, Asian, Muslim, Native American Indian, etc. Those perpetuated stereotypes affect the audience perception towards other races (Park, Gabbadon, & Chernin, 2006). However, Hollywood does not depict only the negative stereotype of other races, there are positive sides that have been depicted. For example, in the movie *Rush Hour*, the Asian protagonist presents the image of an Asian male hero (Lee, 2016).

Thailand is one of the popular locations for filming Hollywood films, i.e. *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (2004), *The Beach* (2000), *The Hangover Part 2* (2011) and *The Impossible* (2012). These films shot in Thailand surely portrayed the image of the country and people of the country from western perspectives. So, it is interesting to see how they depict Thai women to a global audience which is what this study will focus on.

2.4 Male Gaze

The concept of ʹMale Gazeʹ is another important aspect to apply in analyzing films (Mulvey, 1975). ʹMale Gazeʹ is the famous feminist film theory that focuses on how males look upon women from their erotic perspective, including the shooting techniques, camera angle and audience point of view. Mulvey adds that the three distinct ʹlooksʹ created to apply in film include: look of the camera, look of the audience and look of character. He also points out cinematic techniques such as camera angle as one of the important factors that helps create sexualized images. For example, intentionally zooming in on womenʹs breast area or slowly panning onto womenʹs whole body are techniques. The female character needs to be portrayed as an object to be looked at by male audiences. For example, as illustrated in *The World of Suzie Wong*, Suzie wears her Cheongsam creating a sexually seductive, exotic look which arouses male sexual desire. Another example is in *Only God Forgives* where Julian looks on, gazing, in the bedroom. On the other hand, men are portrayed as looking at the woman (Shields, 1990). The theory was created for westernersʹ views of women as objects that could serve menʹs needs (Zoonen, 1994, as cited in Viruega, n.d.).

Figure 2.1 Suzie Wong comes to Lomaxʹs room from *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960)

Asian women are usually portrayed to serve white male or so-called ″white male gaze″ and the idea of Oriental women has an influence on this portrayal (Kwan, 1998, p.100). The image of Oriental women who can fulfill white male fantasy is portrayed to serve white male audiences naturally. Moreover, the idea of the power of the west and the east is at play. Asian women as sex objects and under western male′s control is also the plot that is made to serve white male audiences to fulfill their inherited satisfaction.

Nowadays, this theory and these techniques are still being applied in many films and on television, in magazines, etc. (Shields, 1990).

2.5 Stereotypes in Media

As a result of media globalization, people from different cultures or cultural groups perceive each other from their certain point of view that then leads to stereotyping or prejudice accordingly. Allport (1979) defined ″stereotypes as an exaggerated belief associated with a category″ (p.191). Also, it is believed that stereotyping is the cognitive process for categorization and creating perception (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981).

Normally, stereotyping is a tool which people use for making assumptions or judging others or cultural groups which they do not belong to in order to differentiate themselves from other groups (Hamilton & Trolier, 1986). Then the term ′us′ and ′them′, are used in the stereotyping process. Generally, ′us′ is being used as a position of power or higher position than ′them′.

Stereotyping is the process of categorization in which the judger from one group judges or makes assumptions about another group that normally come out in a negative way (Branston & Stanford, 2006). However, the stereotype is not always negative. For example, Asians are good at math and at martial arts. Nevertheless, It does not matter whether the stereotype is positive or negative because it affects those who do not want to be generalized by others. Stereotyping is a part of a generalization process--the generalization of other groups that one does not belong to or is in the position of the outsider. Furthermore, the first-hand experience in a stereotyped group is not considered necessary since media becomes more influential in creating perceptions toward other social groups (Seiter, 1986). Also, stereotyping is one of the essential tools of storytelling to understand each character. As stated by Weiland (2010), ″When we present a character, we can use a stereotype to make an audience think they understand him/her″ (para. 3).

Stereotyping helps us by grouping data and it is memorized in our brains. However, ″stereotypes can easily become inaccurate, ethnocentric, and dysfunctional″ (Dimnik & Felton, 2006, p.152).

There is no difference between each racial group under a big umbrella called ′Asian′. Even though there are many different ethnicities in Asia, i.e., Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese, in many western mainstream media, no matter what

nationality they are, ʹAsian is Asianʹ (Mok, 1998); to illustrate, Thai sometimes are considered to be the same as Taiwanese or Chinese.

2.6 Orientalism

Westerners (both Europeans and Americans) classified themselves as ʹWesternʹ, but the Middle East and Far East are classified as ʹOrientalʹ which is categorized as ʹOtherʹ or ʹNon-Westernʹ; this is a tool to indicate that the West has more power than non-western (Said, 1978).

Cheung (1993) concludes that Asian women are perceived by westerners as ʺdocile, submissive and obedientʺ and have less power than westerners like in their own country (as cited in Viruega, n.d., p. 5). The idea is also involved with the representation of the countries: the East represents ʹfemininityʹ which is connected to the ʺquietnessʺ and the West represents masculinity and the conqueror (Cheung, 1993, as cited in Viruega, n.d. p.5). Moreover, Asian women are perceived by westerners as objects and victims they can ʺdominate and conquerʺ (Prasso, 2005, p.1). Western males can conquer Asian women as sex objects like Asian countries are conquered by the West (Woan, 2008).

For the portrayal of Asian women in mainstream western media, Asian women images are created for western white males to fulfill their fantasy sexual desire and this has long been revealed through many western media, especially Hollywood films (Kwan, 1998, as cited in Viruega, n.d.). Also, the characteristic of the Oriental woman is ʺmeek, shy, passive, childlike and innocentʺ (Kwan, 1998, p.100). He also claims that Asian women in sexualized roles and their character as sex objects for western consumption is considered socially acceptable, in contrast with white women.

The idea of Asian women is exotic and sexually seductive and was created and influenced during colonization periods when Asian women were available as sex slaves for western males to release their sexual desire (Farley & Seo, 2006). However, since ʹOrientalismʹ is an idea that was created by the west, it endorses a false and limited perspective of Asian women (Yang, 2011)

Furthermore, accent is also one of the aspects that is used to indicate and emphasize the differences between the west and others. The Asian accent in English is another thing that represents Asians as sexy and seductive. That is mentioned by Uchida (1998). During and after WWII GIs were based close to or in Japan and they heard radio shows hosted by Japanese women. The soldiers could hear the foreign accent of English from Japanese girls and the western perception of Oriental women is related to the speech of Japanese women that GIs heard from the radio (as cited in Chang, 2006).

2.7 Asian women

ʹAsianʹ is a big umbrella that comprises many countries in Asia. People from different continents might perceive that most countries in Asia are the same or at least have something in common. For example, Taiwan and Thailand are the same, Vietnam

and Thailand are the same, and Chinese and Thai looks are similar and believed close to the same.

Also, during the time of WWII and the Vietnam War Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam hosted GI bases and rest and relaxation (R&R) places became prominent. This caused western perceptions to change toward Asian countries and also toward Asian people. To illustrate, Vietnam had prostitutes available to serve GIs, while Thailand and the Philippines had prostitutes available to serve GIs, too. These historical events led to the portrayal in many Hollywood films of Asian women as prostitutes and war brides, especially in war films. (The details will be explained in the next chapter.)

According to Mok (1998), all nationalities in Asia are under a big Asian umbrella. Thus, each nationality is normally depicted through a generalized Asian stereotype perspective.

2.8 The Portrayal of Asian Women in Hollywood Films (Historical Timeline)

The images of white as superior and non-white as inferior are repeatedly portrayed through western media (Hall, 1990). So, the western media portrayal was created to serve western point of view and their satisfaction. The stereotype of Asian women has its root in western Orientalism that is repetitively revealed through western media (Ono & Pham, 2009). To the West, Asian women are perpetually perceived as ″others″ who never are seen as a part of their group (Choe, n.d.). Also, they are always an object to fulfill fantasy, and this is supported by a racial hierarchy of whites over others.

It has been said that Asian women stereotyping started during the western colonization period. At that time, many Asian countries belonged to western countries (Chan, 1988). As a result, Asian women were perceived as goods, war victims or as objects to serve western males. Moreover, during the Vietnam War, the western perception toward Asian women as prostitutes was reinforced by GIs′ experience with Asian prostitutes (Chan, 1988), some of whom had intimate relationships with or even married GIs.

As mentioned by Kwan (1998), ″The figure of the Oriental woman, and her relationship with the white male who becomes her lover is a theme repeatedly mined by Hollywood studios″ (p.100). From her study, three movies are used for this observation, i.e., *The World of Suzie Wong, Madame Butterfly,* and *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert.*

Uchida (1998) said Asian women′s portrayal in Hollywood film can be divided into two main types: first, as ″Dragon Lady″ who is ″diabolical, seductive, and immoral″ which has an origin in *Daughter of the Dragon* and second, as ″Lotus Blossom″ who is a ″docile, passive, non-threatening and obedient woman″ which originates in *Madame Butterfly*. These two main categories were created from the development of Chinese and Japanese Oriental concepts (as cited in Chang, 2006, p.9).

Asian women stereotypes in Hollywood show how the US contributed images of their culture and other cultures through film. Asian women are normally revealed in the images of prostitutes and sexual objects for white males (Hamamoto, 1994). For example, *The World of Suzie Wong* portrays Nancy Kwan as a sexy, seductive Asian prostitute who can seduce white males at their first glance. This movie clearly shows stereotyping towards Asian women which is created to serve white male audiences (Kwan, 1998). From Suzie′s seductive skill and her sexual appearance, white males easily fall for her. Later on, they are in love with each other and Suzie reveals her love to the white male explicitly. This story reinforces the idea that a western male easily can have a romantic relationship with a beautiful Asian woman which fulfills his romance fantasy. Asian women are normally depicted in US mainstream media in a stereotypical way that evolves to a negative stereotype in several aspects (Yang, 2011).

The US audiences who have never contacted Asian women tend to perceive Asians from what they have seen in media (Holtzman, 2000 & Zhang, 2010, as cited in Jones 2011). Also, in western perception, they perceive ′Asian′ as the same with a broad stereotype (O′Brien, 2006). For example, the stereotype of Vietnamese women as prostitutes also relates to other Asians. Also, Geisha types could be linked to Chinese or Korean women.

Furthermore, the factors of Asian women stereotypes are related to the political situation and social events at that time, such as wars which affected Asian women stereotypes in each historical period.

The portrayal of Asian women is based on the relationship with white men (US soldiers) and we can consider *Madame Butterfly* which is originated from a Puccini opera in 1904.

During WWII: Asian actresses had more chances to play on screen but were still being portrayed as prostitutes or Geisha. The theme of Oriental women in love with white men is portrayed (Uchida, 1998). At that time Japanese women were well known among western military as being attractive, docile, non-threatening, and graceful, and as having sexual ingenuity (Spickard, 1989, as cited in Dougherty, 2014, p.9).

After WWII: The US law allowed the US servicemen to bring Japanese women home (as war brides) and the stereotype of Japanese women was further reinforced by that. Japanese women are perceived as caring wives and good at pleasing white males (Uchida, 1998, as cited in Jones, 2011). However, a Japanese women stereotype emerged even before the war as shown in the Warren and Dixon (1928) ″Back in Nagasaki″ song.

From the lyrics we can consider, the phrase ″And the women wicky-wacky woo. The way they can entertain would hurry a hurricane″ emphasizes western perception toward Japanese women as entertainers just to please men and they are good at it. Also, ″The kissy huggy nice″ is the baby talk. Furthermore, ″By Jingo! It′s worth the price″ implies prostitution. Thus, this is some evidence to show that the stereotyping of Japanese women emerged before WWII.

During the Vietnam War: The role of Vietnamese women started on screen in the 70s-80s. The most famous Hollywood film is *The Deer Hunter (*1987). Also, the musical *Miss Saigon* (1989) claimed similarity to *Madame Butterfly* in the Vietnam version (Uchida, 1998, as cited in Jones, 2011).

2.9 Types of Asian women portrayed in Hollywood films

There are four main types of Asian women stereotypes which were developed due to social changes and the political situation. They are: ″Dragon Lady, Lotus Blossom, Geisha, and Suzie Wong″ (Cho, 1997; Marchetti 1993; Mok, 1998; & Suzuki, 1989; as cited in Jones, 2011, p.17). However, their types overlap in some aspects. For example, Lotus Blossom, Geisha and Suzie Wong types are ″hyper sexualized″ and ″identified by their relationship with white males″ (Jones, 2011, p.13). But the Dragon Lady′s relationship with white males is not a significant thing. However, all of these types are related to sexualized roles of Asian women.

The four main types are explained below.

2.9.1 Dragon Lady

″Sexually seductive, merciless, killer, untrustworthy, using dark force″

(Ono & Pham, 2009; Prasso, 2006, as cited in Jones, p.18)

Asian women have been represented as the Dragon Lady stereotype. The character is mean, wicked and tricky with the ability to use sexual seductiveness and dark force to get what she wants. This is a ″feminized version of Yellow Peril″ (Ono & Pham, 2009, p.66). The prototype of this role was developed from Anna May Wong in *The Thief of Baghdad* (Fairbanks & Walsh, 1924) and *Daughter of the Dragon* (Ono & Pham, 2009). However, Chong (2016) argued that Anna May Wong is a representative of the Lotus Blossom stereotype because of her sexualized roles. But researcher would argue that she is the primitive role that represents the Dragon Lady stereotype due to the evidence from previous research and researcher′s own observation. In *The Thief of Baghdad* Anna May Wong is portrayed as ″dangerous, mysterious and seductive″ and in *Daughter of the Dragon* she is portrayed as a heartless killer with exotic Asian look which is a Dragon Lady stereotype (Chang, 2006, p.12). The example of the representation of ′Dragon Lady′ type in the present-day is Lucy Liu as ′O-Ren-Ishi′ in *Kill Bill* (Jones, 2011). Lucy Liu in *Kill Bill* represents an emotionless, merciless woman who has power over men. Her role is to revenge without mercy. Anna May Wong and Lucy Liu are considered as the prototypes of the Dragon Lady Stereotype in Hollywood films. The representation as Dragon Lady is frequently portrayed through films. As mentioned by Wong (2012), ″The representation on screen makes the image of Dragon Lady an unforgettable part of western consciousness″ (p.85).

2.9.2 Lotus Blossom

″Self-sacrificing, sexually docile, fragile, sexual doll, submissive, good caring wife, sexual plaything″

(Cho, 1997; Mok, 1997; Ono & Pham, 2009; Shah, 2003, as cited in Jones 2011, p.6)

The Lotus Blossom stereotype is ″sexually submissive″, ″subservient″ and self-sacrificing (Shah, 2003, Ono & Pham, 2009, as cited in Jones 2011, p.20) In contrast with the Dragon Lady who poses a danger to men, the Lotus Blossom is inoffensive (Ono & Pham, 2009). However, the portrayal still involves sexualized images of Oriental women. The Lotus Blossom stereotype reveals Asian women as sexual dolls for men to release sexual desire and fulfill their masculinity. They are ″sexual playthings″ and ″willing to please men″, especially white men (Mok, 1997, as cited in Jones, 2011, p.20).

2.9.3 Geisha

″Sexual doll, subservient, specially trained to please men″

(Cho, 1997; Mok, 1997; Ono & Pham, 2009; Shah, 2003; Tajima, 1989, as cited in Jones 2011, p.6)

Geisha traditionally were entertainers who performed arts, for example, singing and dancing to entertain audiences without sex being included (Foreman, 2005, as cited in Akita, 2009). Geisha were respected women with dignity, intelligence and admirable traits among Japanese due to their skills and behaviors. In contrast with the West, Geisha were elite, and in some cases, respected prostitutes (Foreman, 2006; Norrison, 2002, as cited in Akita, 2009). The concept is rather similar to the courtesan of the west, the upper-class prostitute who serves a wealthy customer′s needs.

During WWII the portrayal of Geisha on Hollywood screens emerged. Mok (1997) claimed that the stereotype of Asian women as Geisha is involved with the Lotus Blossom stereotype but the difference is that Geisha is specially trained to please men. He also claimed that the image of Asian women as Geisha was reinforced after the US soldiers went back to their homeland. The movie which portrays Asian women as Geisha is *Memoirs of Geisha* (Jones, 2011).

Geisha is the category that represents ″subservient″, ″sexualized doll″ and is good at pleasing men which is considered similar to the Lotus Blossom stereotype (Balaji & Worawongs, 2010; Kwan, 1998; Mok, 1998; Nakayama, 1994; and Shah, 2003; as cited in Jones, 2011, p.20). However, the image or perception toward Geisha is not entirely involved with the Lotus Blossom type. As mentioned in *The History of Geisha in Japanese Culture* (2016), due to the historical event after WWII, a number of US GIs stationed in Japan had a chance to interact with Japanese women who claimed themselves as Geisha but rarely were traditional Geisha. As a result of anti-prostitution laws, many prostitutes dressed like Geisha and called themselves Geisha and that leads to misconception and misunderstanding of Geisha. The conception changed, from art performer to prostitute. Thus, the western perception towards Geisha is mostly concerned with sexual activities. Those who were not Geisha dressed like Geisha and called themselves Geisha but actually worked as prostitutes. The US GIs usually called them ″Geesha Girls″. This situation reinforces the idea of Geisha as prostitute.

2.9.4 Suzie Wong

″Submissive sex toy for white male, hyper-sexualized, romantic partner with white
male″

(Balaji & Worawongs, 2010; Cho, 1997; Uchida, 1998, as cited in Jones, 2011, p.6)

One of the most famous and controversial Hollywood films that reinforces Asian women stereotype is *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960). The movie helps reinforce the Asian women stereotype as prostitutes who wants to become a white male′s partner. This is to ensure economic stability with the ability to please them, which later becomes another type of Asian women stereotype as ′Suzie Wong′ (Jones, 2011).

This film reveals the life of a Chinese woman who lives in Hong Kong, named Suzie Wong. She is the famous prostitute in town who fell in love with a white male, Robert Lomax (played by William Holden), a painter from America, who also fell in love with her. The movie portrays Suzie as seductive, mysterious and sexy.

Suzie Wong is one of the famous characters in Hollywood films that portrays the image of Asian women as a sexy prostitute who has relationships with white men. The stereotype of Suzie Wong has developed from the Asian women stereotype in *Madame Butterfly (*Shang, 2015). The type can range from a naïve woman who honestly loves her white male to a sexy prostitute who can sacrifice anything with her affection.

The Lotus Blossom and Geisha stereotypes are involved with the Suzie Wong stereotype, with the characteristics of a ″sexualized doll″, ″submissive″ and eager to please men (Balaji & Worawongs, 2010; Cho, 1997; and Uchida, 1998, as cited in Jones, 2011, p.6). From this, it can be seen that the stereotype of Asian women has its root in the idea of Orientalism. All of these characters are created to fulfill and serve white male audiences with sexualized roles. The term ′Suzie Wong′ refers to a sexy seductive Asian prostitute who is good at sexual skills to please white males and finally becomes ″a romantic partner for a white man″ (Jones, 2011, p.22), which is one of the plots that fantasized white males.

2.10 Studies of portrayals of Thailand and Thai women in Hollywood films and western perception towards Thailand and Thai women

According to Shang′s (2015) study, Thailand in Hollywood films is normally portrayed as an adventurous, beautiful and chaotic place. Hollywood presents Thai people as poor, smart and friendly, and as having strange occupations, i.e. drug dealers and thieves. The movies that he used in the study are; *The Beach*, *Bangkok Dangerous*, *Rambo* and *The Hangover 2*. However, he did not clearly specify each main Thai character in each film, which leads to inadequate evidence.

The conclusion of this study is too broad and too generalized. For example in *The Hangover 2*, the Thai female protagonist′s family is of middle-class status. So, when he claims that Thai people are represented as poor that is invalid. If he identified

by each character, the result would be more reliable. Also, even though there is a portrayal of Thai people′s occupations, such as go-go girls and tattoo artists, they are not considered as strange occupations as he claimed. Furthermore, ′Kong′, the Thai male protagonist as a thief in *Bangkok Dangerous* is not considered to have a strange occupation either. However, I agree with his findings that the image of a ladyboy is emphasized in Hollywood films as can be seen in *The Hangover 2* and *Bridget Jones′ Diary: The Edge of Reason* for example. Also, the findings note that Thai female characters are frequently portrayed as prostitutes.

Nattavuthisit′s (2007) study, ″Branding Thailand: Correcting the Negative Image of Sex Tourism″, shows the way Thailand is perceived. The findings from an in-depth interview and survey show western perceptions towards Thailand as a location of the sex trade industry. Although many respondents have never been to Thailand, they have heard and seen this through western media and it influences their perception. However, the image of Thailand as a place of beautiful beaches and exotic cuisine is also mentioned. From his study, it can be assumed that media affect audience perception. Brooks and Hébert (2006), state that media has influence in shaping audience perception. However, the title of this study itself clearly shows the researchers′ underlying assumption that western media presents Thailand as a destination of sex tourism and it affects images of the country which need to be changed (re-branding/promote alternative image of Thailand). Also, the perception needs ′correcting′ false representations to actual facts. Thus, it can be assumed that this study only focuses on the portrayal of the negative side of Thailand.

Boonchutima (2009) studied, ″Resistance to Change: Thailand′s Images as a Sex Tourism Destination″, by observing the representation of Thailand in British media. He asserts that Thailand is frequently portrayed in western media as a destination for sex tourists. As a consequence, the image of the country is gradually associated with the image of sex tourism (Boonchutima, 2009). He also concludes that, due to the portrayal being created by the west, it is a portrayal created to satisfy western audiences. This evolved with the idea of Orientalism. Also, Thailand has less power to promote alternative images to western eyes due to media imperialism. So, the image of Thailand′s association with the sex trade is repetitively portrayed. However, the portrayal of the country in western media is not the only the cause of the image of Thailand as a destination of sex tourism; local media also is one of crucial factors that reinforces the image of the country. To illustrate, TAT and Thai airlines, use the image of welcoming and beautiful Thai women to show Thailand hospitality.

From his study, he states that the difficulty of changing the image of Thailand is due to the power of western media but he did not mention that the reality in Thai society is also one of the main factors that reinforces the image of Thailand as a country of prostitution. As claimed by Cherman (2006), that portrayal from media has some sense of reality and the reality reinforces stereotypes, too.

2.11 Prostitution and sex tourism industry in Thailand

In order to look through the prostitution in Thailand, resulting in Thai women being stereotyped as prostitutes, the prostitution business in SEA countries is also one of the points the researcher needs to discuss.

2.11.1 Gender Repression and Female Objectification

Women are in inferior positions and men are in superior positions and this has been reinforced by the male dominant society (Mclaughlin, 2009). This norm has its roots in how men treat women as objects, especially as their object for sexual desire (Dolan, 1998). To illustrate, the women that are perceived as objects can be seen from sex show or performing naked dances in Go-Go bars. It shows how men look at a female's body as an object to fulfill their sexual imagination (Manderson, 1992).

Even though the sex show is universal, there are some differences between sex shows in the west and Thailand. The sex business in the west is conducted in terms of business. Customers come and pay money for entertainment to fulfill their needs. As asserted by Davidson and Taylor (1996), ʺThai prostitutes distinguish them from sex workers in other countries, who are perceived as cold and commercializedʺ (as cited in Nattavuthisit, 2007, p.28). In contrast, in Thailand customers can get more than that. The bar girls can offer a customer more than a performance, such as a strip show, ping pong show or pole dance. Customers can invite bar girls to go out and have intimate relationships, sexual intercourse, for example. Moreover, the bar girls could become the customer's girlfriend for either a short term or long term relationship. It is called a girlfriend experience.

It is the chosen role and natural role of Thai bar girls to treat white males as attractive, charming and handsome, and as someone they are willing to please since it easily leads to sales. Thus, it helps western men to feel a fantasy (as Oriental fantasy). Western males can have a sense of their power and their self-value that they hardly find in their homeland. Also, the money they pay for the girl is in order to make them feel less guilty and not to feel too commercial but to help the girl's poor family. It is like the white hero who helps a poor girl from a third world country. The western males face difficulty in revealing their masculinity in western country with western women, but in Thailand, the feminine women can fulfill their ʺsense of masculinityʺ and ʺself-valueʺ (Davidson, 1998, p. 259).

This is related to the feeling of men's masculinity when they have ability to control or force women to have sexual intercourse (Hobbs, 2011). In this context, he emphasized that not only western males but Asian men also expect women to be silent and passive so that they can keep them in control. Women have long been oppressed in patriarchal societies due to the expected role of gender in each culture or society that normally treats men as ʺsuperior to womenʺ (Yulianti, 2012, p.1).

2.11.2 History of Prostitution in South East Asian countries

During the 19th century Gold Rush period, Chinese men immigrated to America to work as low-cost and low-skill laborers. At the same time, Chinese women immigrants immigrated to work as prostitutes. As mentioned in media 4 humanity blog

˝Prostitution thus became popular as a career choice, and the Chinese sex trade and trafficking became a prominent business˝ (para.3). The area that Chinese migrants lived in at that time is now called ´China Town´ which is located in San Francisco (Media4Humanity, 2014).

Figure 2.2 Picture of Chinese Prostitute in China Town, San Francisco. Adapted from M. (2014, July 02). The History of Human Trafficking in San Francisco's Chinatown. Retrieved August 06, 2017

During WWII, there were a number of Asian prostitutes that were sent to the military brothel to serve the Japanese military. At that time, they were called ˝Comfort girl˝ which refers to sex slave. They worked at military brothels to serve Japanese military. Most of them were Korean but there were other nationalities, such as Chinese and women from other South East Asia countries. It is claimed that underage women were also forced to work as a sex slaves, and that comfort women were forced to have sex with many men each day, and were tortured harshly by the military troops. The pictures below show comfort girls during that time, including a pregnant woman (Media4Humanity, 2014).

Figure 2.3 Comfort Girls during WWII (1). Adapted from L. (n.d.). WWII Women: Some History Photos of WWII Women Slavery and Humility. Retrieved August 6, 2017

Figure 2.4 Comfort Girl during WWII (2). Adapted from Bo, X. (2015, July 24). Dark lens: Chinese comfort women during WWII. Retrieved August 06, 2017

Figure 2.5 Comfort Girl during WWII (2). Adapted from Bo, X. (2015, July 24). Dark lens: Chinese comfort women during WWII. Retrieved August 06, 2017

Figure 2.6 The US sailors gather to comfort station to buy sex service from comfort girls. Adapted from U.S. troops used Japanese brothels after WWII. (2007, April 27). Retrieved August 06, 2017

During the Vietnam War, the US made an agreement with 10 countries, of which 8 out of 10 are in Asia. All of those countries agreed to provide a place for the GIs to come to relax during the period of the war. It is called R&R which stands for many things: such as, ″Rest & Recreation, Rest & Relaxation, Recreation or Recuperation or even Rest & Recovery!″ (Chalkos, 2013, p.1). The Asian countries that used to be R&R places for the US GIs are Thailand, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea and Japan. Bangkok, Thailand, was claimed to be the most popular place for GIs to come to relax during their five day break because prostitutes in Thailand were very cheap and there were plenty of young girls that they could easily afford (Chalkos, 2013).

As mentioned in The Telegraph:

> GIs were flown for five days to the city of their choice. Bangkok, then a reasonably quiet backwater of Southeast Asia, was where battle-fatigued troops went wild with drink, drugs and girls, spawning Thailand's reputation as a hot-house for prostitution and exotic sex (Davies, 2005, para.2).

As a consequence of the R&R agreement with the US, the sex service industry flourished in Thailand at that time as well as in other countries in Southeast Asia. Also, sex tourism was being promoted due to the economic growth caused by sex tourism and the large amount of revenue that this business brought to the country (Roby & Tanner, 2009).

2.11.3 Prostitution in Thailand

> Prostitution, while illegal, is not a disguised activity in Thailand. It has become an economic activity with high levels of investment and is directly connected to tour companies, hotels, clubs, mail-order brides, etc. Thai prostitutes are also available internationally, with Thailand being an essential link in the international supply of women. The bodies of Thai women have become one of the bases of growth of the Thai economy (Boonchalaksi & Guest, 1994, p.1).

There has been a sex trade industry in Thailand since the Ayutthaya period of 1350-1767. At that time, prostitution was legal and taxed by the government. In the reign of King Rama I, there was an influx of Chinese immigrants to Thailand and many Chinese women came to work as prostitutes. The brothels were located in the Sumpeng area in China Town. Thai women who worked as prostitutes around that area also had Chinese names (Mattarikanond, 1983).

During that period, Thailand applied a slavery system. The female slave was one of the choices for the brothel owner to recruit to work as a prostitute in their place. However, in 1905, the slavery system was abolished. Then the sex workers′ way of work was changed. Some prostitutes became freelancers, street hookers, and some were sold to Mamasan (the owner of a brothel who manages prostitutes for clients and controls their sex-trade business) by their parents and the sex business continued to expand (Manderson, 1992).

In 1966, the Entertainment Places Act was passed which act required the owner of an entertainment place such as bar or massage parlor to register with the government. At that time prostitution was illegal. The act was intended to decrease prostitution by identifying those who run the brothel business for criminally liability. Also, it required prostitutes to attend rehabilitation for a year at a reform house (Levan, 1994). However, even though the anti-sex trafficking law seems to prevent prostitution

and reduce problems in the country, the law does not play its role effectively since prostitution keeps growing continuously (Mah, 2011).

In 1980, the government made an attempt to organize brothels by enforcing the Contagious Diseases Prevention Act. The law required the brothel to hang the Green Lantern as a symbol in front of the brothel door and the owner to pay tax to the government. Also, any brothel that opened needed to register with the government in order to run business legally.

Nowadays, prostitution in Thailand is still illegal. However,

> It is so deeply ingrained into the culture that it is widely tolerated, and prostitution is widely available in every town and city in Thailand unencumbered by police enforcement (Kuo et al., 2008, p.494).

With the prosperity of the sex trade business in Thailand, the country became the most famous destination of sex tourism. Ryan and Hall (2001) state that, "one aspect of worldwide tourism is the phenomenon of ʹsex tourismʹ or travel for the purpose of sexual activity with sex workers" (as cited in Hobbs et al., 2011, p.80). ʹThailandʹ became one of the most famous destinations of sex tourism. Also, "Thailandʹs sex industry has become a tourist attraction in itself, with red light districts being recommended on several tourist guide websites" (Kusy, 1991, as cited in Nuttavuthisit, 2006, p.24). While Thailand is represented as sexuality, Thai women are represented as prostitutes accordingly (Cook & Jackson, 1999). Almost 70% of foreign male tourists intend to associate with local sex workers when they come to Thailand (Davidson, 2009). Western men travel to Thailand to experience sex tourism to fulfill their masculinity because they face the difficulty of revealing masculinity with western women in their homeland (Johnson, 2007). The reputation of Asian women is to be good at pleasing men, good at fantasy sexual activities, and to be submissive sex dolls. Thus, men expect to experience it to enforce their masculinity.

Moreover, as we can see from many websites, there are many countries in which ʹRed Light Districtsʹ are famous attractions, and Thailand is one of them (Franklin, 2003). According to Tepanon (2006), "while it obviously brings in huge revenues to a destination, sex tourism also degrades a countryʹs reputation and impacts its culture at the same time" (p.2). However, the provided sex service in Thailand generates a large amount of money and it supports Thailandʹs economy.

Thailand also provides various types of sex workers for sex tourists and foreign men i.e. mail-order bride, girlfriend experience and ladyboys. Chang (2006) concludes that "The mail-order bride industry is a result of the preference for Oriental Women" (P.19). Thus, western males who prefer submissive Oriental women can order and purchase an Asian bride. Also, due to the movement of feminism in western countries, white men turned to search for their bride via mail-order bride agents. This is because of the perception towards Asian women as sexually alluring, good, "subservient" and "undemanding" in contrast with white women. Moreover, "Asian

fetish syndrome″ is one of the factors that has driven the mail-order bride business to become popular (Woan, 2008, p.294).

There are a number of websites offering Thai brides for westerners. For example; Rosebrides.com, MyThaiBride.com, Thai-professional.com and Thailovelines.com. ″Exotic Love at Your Fingertips,″ is a slogan of a Western Thai intermarriage website. It evidently shows western perception toward Thai women and how easy it is to get ′Exotic Love′. ″Those mail-order bride websites portray images of Thai women as ″more desirable″ and ″easily available″ marriage partners″ (Angeles & Sunanta, 2007, p.7).

The headline from website http://www.rosebrides.com/ states that:

> If you are seeking a woman with beautiful, exotic looks and a lovely disposition, a single Thai lady is the way to go. Thai women love to laugh and tend to be quite happy. They are demure and sweet in public, perhaps a bit shy, but when alone with their partner they are open and sexually accommodating (para.2).

This is a persuasive message for a westerner who is seeking this kind of relationship with Thai women. Also, Thai women are portrayed as good wives and partners with ability to please and fulfill their man′s sexual desire or masculinity.

″Asian women are represented as faithful wives, self-sacrificing mothers, and sensuous lovers. Also, they are submissive, caring, and family centered″ (Chen & Takeuchi, 2011, p.876). These characteristics are used to attract western customers to start a relationship with Thai women via online dating sites or mail order-bride sites.

′Girlfriend experience′, or normally called ′GFE′, is one of the well-known services that Thailand offers to foreign male tourists. The girlfriend experience is the service of buying a girl not only for sex but also for a relationship that might be short-term (or long-term) while the tourists stay in Thailand during their trip. This kind of relationship is mainly related to money the customer has to pay; the cost normally includes sex, shopping, and eating together, for example. The characteristic of Thai women as willing to please men, being able to fulfill their fantasy sexual activities, and making them think they are attractive to Thai women, all help fulfill their Oriental fantasy. Also, with the amount of money they pay, the men feel it is not too commercial since there is a feeling that they help and support the girl′s poor family.

″Ladyboy″ or ″Katoey″ (in Thai) also one of the reputations about Thailand, which in western media normally relates to sex tourism or sexual activities, i.e., bar girls, cabaret shows and prostitutes. With a large number of transgendered in Thailand, ″the country has gained a reputation as a community of transgender in the past few decades″ (Davis & Quinley, 2016, p.16). There are a huge number of transgender sex workers in Thailand and they have become a tourist attraction with their availability in many red-light district areas in Thailand, especially Pattaya,

Bangkok and Phuket. Moreover, Pattaya is also one of the most famous places among foreigners in term of ladyboy sex workers who are available along the beach and walking street (Gallagher, 2005).

2.11.4 The association of Thailand and sex tourism during Vietnam War

Thailand was first associated with sex tourism in 1960s − 1970s, during the Vietnam War when Thailand and the USA had an agreement wherein Thailand became one of the R&R countries. Thailand became a place for U.S. soldiers to come and buy sex services that were widely available. (Truong (1990) & Miller (1995)).

With high demand for sex services in Thailand, mostly in Pattaya, the brothel owners tried to grow their sex trade industry to serve the soldiers′ need and to generate as much income as they could. With the poverty problem in some parts of Thailand, the number of sex workers increased due to the great amount of income. Li (1995) mentioned, ″An income from prostitution is generally twenty-five times greater than an income from any other work in rural areas″ (p.509), thus making the sex trade industry in Thailand flourish.

The image of Thailand as a destination of sex tourism has not disappeared since then. There are many campaigns in Europe to advertise Thailand as a sex tourism destination; for example, ″Thailand Express Sex Tour″ interprets Bangkok as place of prostitutes (Hantrakul, 1988, p.24). Moreover, Thailand sex tourism was promoted in western countries for tourists to travel to Thailand for a fantasy sexual experience with exotic Thai women they can easily afford.

2.11.5 LBFM

The word ″LBFM″ stands for ′Little Brown Fucking Machine′. The phrase was used by the US army to refer to Vietnamese, Filipina and Thai prostitutes during the Vietnam War. During that time, the US soldiers normally call a Filipina woman a ″Little Brown Fucking Machine powered by rice″ (Chang, 2012, p.631).

LBFM is a term that originally referred to Filipina women. However, it has become commonly used for Thai and other Asian women in South East Asia. It is claimed that from the Philippines - American war to the colonization period, Filipina women were treated as sex machines or ′LBFM: Little Brown Fucking Machine′ that can accept anything weird that US soldiers did to them, especially sexual activities (Woan, 2008).

As described, LBFM is a term that related to Asian sex workers and US soldiers. The word clearly shows how US soldiers treated Asian women. The war caused the US GIs to stay in Vietnam, the Philippines, and also in Thailand as their Rest & Recreation place. So, the sex business in South East Asia is well−known among western countries, especially the United States. Also, sex was available at a price they could easily afford as the US soldier can afford ″a girl for the price of a burger″ (Woan, 2008, p.283).

From these well-known representations of Asian women as LBFM, we can see there are a number of Hollywood films that portray the images of Asian women

as the LBFM type. Especially we see it in movies about the Vietnam War; for example, *Full Metal Jacket* and *Hamburger Hill*.

2.11.6 Male-dominated society

Thai society has the system for men and women in which women are expected to be in lower status than men (Lim, 1998). This is the form of patriarchal society that is applied in many countries in Asia such as Thailand, Burma and Laos (Mah, 2011). From this, women are expected to be valued for their reproductive and sexual ability. Thus, this system reinforces prostitution in Thailand due to the demand of sexual activity from men and support by prostitution supplied by women. Furthermore, this norm allows men to have sex with more than one woman without moral concern.

2.12 Study of Western tourist perception towards Thailand

Rushing and Contreras (2007) conclude that the main factors that affect western male customers′ decision to buy sex services in Thailand is that they are inexpensive, Thai prostitutes are very easy, and Thai prostitutes can fulfill their sexual desire in a fantasy way. Also, the western customers (participants) in this study expressed that they felt that Thai prostitutes can fulfill their sense of masculinity (Rushing & Contreras, 2007). Also, in Thailand it is easy to have fantasy sex, i.e., having sex with different girls every day, having sex with more than one woman at the same time or even more than one couple. All of these are more difficult to find in their homeland. Thus, they choose Thailand as a place to fulfill their sense of masculinity and sexual fantasies at a price that they can easily afford.

From Sanders′ (2010) study, the result from interviewing with western women tourists clearly shows their perception towards Thailand. The respondents were western women tourists in four main tourist areas: Patpong, Bangkok; Walking Street, Pattaya; Boyztown, Pattaya and Bangla Road, Phuket. There were 131 participants who participated in the interviews. The result reveals the percentage of people who agree with the idea that there is ′a lot of prostitution in Thailand′ compared with a very few who disagree. The percentage of people who agree is 56% while the percentage of people who disagree is only 2%.

However, in her study, the participants were chosen for the interview from red light district areas in Thailand. So, their perception towards Thailand as a place of prostitutes and sex tourism tends to be the result. If she chose participants from various places, not only from red light areas, the findings would be more reliable. Also, the result might come out in a different way.

The fact is that Thailand provides sex services in many parts of the country. Also, the reputation of Thailand as a destination of sex tourism and Thai women as a prostitute repeatedly is portrayed through western media: films and news for example. This leads the researcher to conduct research about the representation of Thai women in Hollywood films. Also, there are very few studies that mainly focus on the

representation of Thai women in Hollywood films. A number of studies such as: Jones (2011), Chang (2006) and Wang (2012) are mainly focused on the portrayal of Chinese women in Hollywood films and TV series and also the portrayal of Japanese women. Also, Shang (2015) and Boonchutima (2009) mainly focus on the image of Thailand rather than the image of Thai women. This leads to my current study. Selected Hollywood films will be analyzed to answer the research questions. Furthermore, to gain rich information for the study, the social situation will be used as one of the aspects to see the relation between media portrayals and social reality. Also, the evidence of the sex tourism business in Thailand reinforces the representation of Thailand and Thai women in Hollywood films and will be discussed. Moreover, this current study will provide the typical depiction of Thai women that repetitively is portrayed in Hollywood films.

This study focuses on the stereotypical depiction of Thai women in Hollywood films and the relation of the existing of sex trade business in Thailand together with another social reality which influences the images portrayed in Hollywood films. Thus, the background of each point explained in this chapter will be used in the data analysis and the discussion part in the next chapter in order to gain a solid basis for this research paper.
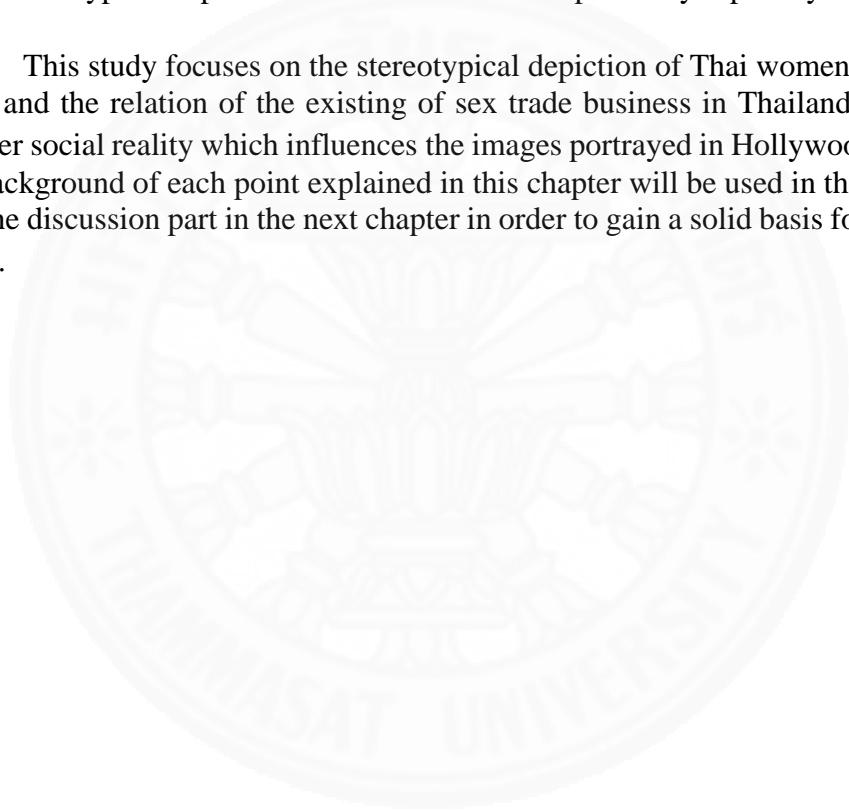
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The topic of this study focuses on the depiction of Thai women through Hollywood films and stereotypes that have been reinforced by Hollywood portrayals. Selected Hollywood films were used in the analysis. Also, another factor that reinforces stereotypes, such as actual facts in Thai society, was discussed.

3.1 The criteria of choosing materials

The materials that were used are Hollywood films since they are an influential media channel that has audiences in many parts of the world. Also, they have the power to form public perception towards Thailand and Thai women. The films chosen were those featured in mainstream movie industry in the past 20 years.

Also, in order to answer the research question, the researcher needs to observe how Thailand and Thai women are depicted and portrayed in Hollywood films.

3.1.1 Movies set in Thailand

The movies that are set in Thailand provide important material for observing what Hollywood movies depict about Thailand and Thai women and for looking closely at what aspects they depict. Setting is very important because the scenery or people′s lives revealed in the movies can represent the country in terms of social, culture, and nature of people. Films have convincing power and influence the audience to form perceptions from what they see (Lipmann, 1992).

3.1.2 Movies with characters played by Thai women, or played as Thai women, who interact with protagonist or antagonist

This study aims to investigate how Thai women are depicted and portrayed in Hollywood movies. Also, I consider what types of Asian women they represent. Thus, the movies played by Thai women, or played as Thai women, are substantial material for this study.

In the study, the Thai female character that has interaction with the main character (protagonist/ antagonist) was analyzed since the main character is the one who leads the story. So, whatever happens to them is normally highlighted and those characters will be the representation of Thai women accordingly.

3.1.3 Movies with characters played by Thai women, or played as Thai women, who have a relationship with the protagonist or antagonist

The selected movie must have at least one Thai female character with a relationship with the protagonist or antagonist. It does not depend on how long the character shows up or how many conversations she has. Rather, it focuses on context, action, body language, situation, setting, etc., which affects the protagonist/ antagonist and is one of the factors to drive the story. The characters need to convey some messages to the audiences. This is normally a part of their significant roles.

The relationship can be presented in various forms, i.e., husband and wife, friend or customer, or service provider. These characters who influence and have some relationship with protagonist/antagonist are considered as a useful source for the analysis.

3.2 The selected Hollywood films that were used in this study are:

- *Bridget Jones' Diary : The Edge of Reason* (2004)
- *Bangkok Dangerous* (2008)
- *The Hangover part 2* (2011)
- *Only God Forgives* (2013)
- *No Escape* (2015)

All of the selected movies matched the selection criteria. All movies are set in Thailand and have Thai female characters in the films. Furthermore, they were all produced during the past 20 years. The characters in each film also represent Thai women, both female characters played by Thai women or played as Thai women. So, these five selected Hollywood films were analyzed.

3.3 Method of analysis

The method of analysis used in this study is semiotic analysis. The interpretation from what we see from the images presented in films was used in analyzing data. This study focuses only on Thai women characters, but such characters rarely have a chance to play as a lead role in Hollywood films. So, the verbal conversation from those characters is difficult to see. As it is said, when there is no talk from characters, the non-verbal communication is an essential element to use for coding messages that the character wants to convey (Ortega, 2011).

The use of semiotic analysis involves, for example, interpreting messages from signage or circumstances displayed in the film, character's appearance and behavior, for example; facial expression, gazing, and body gesture (Hurwitz, 1993). Moreover, the relationship with other characters is also another important aspect to look into. Since Thai women characters are normally not being highlighted, finding some clues or messages from other characters, especially the protagonist or antagonist, is also effective.

Since non-verbal communication is significant in decoding messages from characters in film, semiotic analysis was used to explore stereotype categories of Thai women that are being portrayed in the five selected Hollywood films.

Based on what has been reviewed above. There would be five aspects for the character analysis to see what stereotypical type they are portraying.

Context:

The context is important for viewers to understand the situation of what is happening with the character. The circumstance portrayed is important in that we can use it together with character's actions or conversation to get the message and get

enough data to find out what stereotype category that character represents. However, the context itself can convey a message of who the character is without any verbal communication from that character. For example, in the scene of a western male sex tourist walking into a brothel at night, it can be assumed that the women inside brothel are prostitutes.

Relationship with protagonist and antagonist:

To gain data from character's analysis, the relationship between the Thai female character and protagonist/ antagonist also needs to be observed. The relationship can help in coding messages that the movie wants to convey to the audience, a message which could lead to the assumption or conclusion of what type those female characters belong to. For example, the male protagonist has a role as middle-aged pedophile and he has interaction of giving money to the young Thai girl. The message we might get from the portrayal of their interaction is that the male character is a customer and the young Thai girl is an underage sex worker.

Behavior displayed and non-verbal communication:

Since film generally uses non-verbal communication to convey the message to the audience, it is important to see how a character behaves and decode the messages implied (or explicitly shown) from those actions. For example, if a female character takes her clothes off in front of a male character, the message could be that she is willing to have sexual activity or aiming to seduce the male character.

Appearance:

The audience can notice what type each character is from their look. The visual portrayal can convey a message to viewers from the character's appearance, for example, how the character dresses, makeup, tattoo, etc. The appearance can affect audience perception toward those characters. For example, if a Thai female character sitting on the footpath at night dresses improperly and wears extreme makeup, she might be a street prostitute. However, it also depends on the context.

Self & other reference:

The reference is another important aspect that can be used to get the message of who the character is. The viewer can gain information of one character from other character's reference. For example, one Thai female character does not have any words or any conversation with anyone. The audience can still trace or get the message of who the character is from other characters who mention her.

Thus, all of these aspects are important and useful for the character analysis to see what stereotype categories the Thai female characters in each Hollywood films belong to.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

This chapter consists of the data presentation derived from the semiotics analysis from each character from five selected movies. The plot summary of each movie will be explained. The characters′ analysis according to the research methodology will be discussed. Furthermore, it will discuss the findings of the study; what category of stereotype of Thai female characters in each film, and how the films depict their image to portray. Also, the social reality compared to the portrayal in films will be discussed.

From the observation of movies from selected Hollywood films, the movie analysis of the type of Thai women that are depicted by Hollywood films is explained below.

4.1 Data Presentation

4.1.1 *Bridget Jones' Diary*: *The Edge of Reason* (2004)

Bridget Jones' Diary: The Edge of Reason is a Hollywood movie that was filmed in Thailand and was released in 2004. *Bridget Jones' Diary* is a famous romantic comedy film series, starring popular Hollywood stars Renée Zellweger as Jones, Colin Firth as Darcy, and Hugh Grant as Cleaver. The movie is a love story about Jones, a British girl. Her character is an insecure woman, obsessing over her relationship with Darcy. Jones communicates to the audience by telling the story from her diary, and a voice over is also used in the film. The first half of the movie is set in England and the second half of the movie is set in Thailand.

It is a story about a journalist, Cleaver, who Jones has to come to Thailand for a TV story with, and with whom she also has an intimate relationship. At the beginning of their trip to Thailand, there is a scene on the airplane in which the western man next to Jones said to her ″Wonderful people, the Thais. Particularly the young ladies, if you know what I mean, eh?″ The first thing that is mentioned here about Thailand is the women. The perception of western males towards Thai women is revealed here. Also, his question expecting Jones to know what he is talking about means the reputation of Thai women might be well-known among their group.

The next scene is when Jones and Cleaver first arrive in Thailand and record a news scoop. Jones is the one who presents Thailand as a place for those who want to take spiritual succor and karmic rest and her scoop takes place at the temple with her Thai traditional costume. On the other hand, Cleaver presents Thailand as a place for western men to experience Thai ladies. He said ″The moment I arrive here, I almost feel an irresistible pull to this, the ′Temple of Tranquility′″ which is the name of a massage parlor located in Soi Cowboy, the famous red light district in Bangkok.

In the movie, there are five characters who have interaction with protagonists. The characters′ analysis is shown in the table with an explanation as follows.

Table 4.1

Semiotic analysis of Thai women characters in Bridget Jones' Diary: The Edge of Reason: Massage parlor girl

Character: Massage parlor girl	
Type	**Geisha:** Her character is presented as a masseuse who is specially trained to please male customers. Her sexy outfit is well-prepared to seduce men and fulfil their sexual satisfaction. Her role is to massage male customers, which Cleaver refers to as the body-to-body massage. Thus, from character analysis, together with the protagonist references, her character is similar to Geisha type since she is trained to please men and also has the same concept of occupation and roles. To illustrate, she is a masseuse who is not only giving massage service to male customers but also a special massage in which sexual intercourse is involved. This is comparable to a Geisha who is known as an art performer trained to entertain male customers but who also has another role as a prostitute.

Context	Cleaver walks into the massage parlor named "Temple of Tranquility". He takes off his clothes and has only towel tied on his hip. The massage parlor girl walks straight to him and welcomes him to the massage parlor where plenty of sexy masseuses are massaging western male tourists.
Relationship with the protagonist & antagonist	Masseuse and customer
Behavior displayed & non-verbal communication	Her greeting gesture (Wai) is to introduce a new setting to Cleaver and also welcome him to experience how they please male customers. Her role is significant due to what Cleaver stated at the beginning of the news scoop. She is the one who gives a clear message to the audiences what it is that actually brings a huge number of western male tourists to Thailand.
Appearance	She wears a sexy uniform; bra, mini skirt, and cowboy hat. Her appearance can fulfil male customer sexual needs as it reveals her body and shape with a fancy uniform.
Self & other reference	Cleaver refers to the masseuse as something western male tourists cannot resist experiencing. This emphasizes that, the masseuse′s great service of pleasing them, especially the body-to-body massage, draws a huge number of western male tourists to Thailand. So, this reference

highlighted the massage parlor girl′s role as someone who can fulfill male tourists′ sexual desire with her great service and her eagerness to please men.

The first Thai female character shows up in the scene when Cleaver walked into the massage parlor. The point of view of the cameraman shows while he is walking through the walking street among crowded western male tourists and Thai bar girls until he arrives in front of the massage parlor. He points to the massage parlor signage to present it as the place that western men should come to experience. He goes inside and mentions something about East meets west which can be easily explained by what the audience is going to see. The scene shows a topless Cleaver with towel tied on his hip opening the curtain like opening up the new world. Then the massage parlor girl (the first Thai female character) walks straight to him.

She clearly reveals her role as masseuse, while sitting together with her outfit-- bra and mini-skirt with a cowboy hat as a uniform like the other girls. They are all massaging western male customers. She walks to Clever and greets him with a *wai* and says "*Sawasdee ka*", to which Cleaver replies *"Sawasdee krub"*. The message conveyed is that this Thai girl gives a warm welcome to the western male and is ready to please him like the other masseuses do with western male customers as shown in the background. (see below)

Figure 4.1 Cleaver introduces a massage parlor in Bangkok, Thailand from *Bridget Jones' Diary: The Edge of Reason* (2004)

Even though her action is only greeting the male protagonist, she plays a significant role by introducing a new setting (massage parlor in Bangkok, Thailand) to Cleaver in his first visit. What Cleaver has talked about since the beginning (while he is walking along the street) serves as an introduction to the parlor that he claims is something western men cannot resist to experience. The girl is the one who welcomes him to that setting. Her behavior clearly reveals her role as service provider while Cleaver reveals his role as customer. Thus, their relationship is quite clear from this scene.

In this scene, the body-to-body massage is introduced as a symbol of East meets west. The image of many young massage parlor girls, massaging and satisfying western male customers, highlights how massage parlor girls can provide satisfaction. The image of Thailand as a destination for western males to find sexual pleasure is emphasized here. Comparing Cleaver′s story and Jones′s story, we see they are totally different and that implies something. In the scene where Jones is at the temple with Thai traditional dress, no one in the temple dresses like her. Moreover, there are no western tourists in that place, just nuns, monks, and some local people. Even she claims that the temple has drawn a number of western visitors for centuries. In contrast, in Cleaver′s story, he dressed like other western males in the massage parlor. Also, there are many western male tourists presented while he is walking through the street. Thus, both of their stories give the message to the audience that what really brings a huge number of western male tourists to Thailand is the famous red light area where plenty of sexy Thai girls are ready and willing to please western men. And the massage parlor girl is the one who leads Cleaver to experience how they draw many western male tourists to the place.

Jones presents the Thai temple as a place of peace and a place for tourists who need to rest their mind and find peace with Buddhism. In contrast, Cleaver presents the ′Temple of Tranquility′, the massage parlor, as a place to rest by getting body-to-body massage with sexy Thai girls which emphasizes what the guy on the airplane mentioned about wonderful Thai young ladies. The stereotype that was mentioned before is revealed in this scene with Cleaver′s explanation to assure that the stereotype is based on a true story. Also, it emphasizes that the massage parlor is the place for western males.

From the observation, these masseuses are similar to the Geisha type in that they are specially trained to please as well as to be subservient (Balaji & Worawongs, 2010; Kwan, 1998; Nakayama, 1994; Mok, 1998; Shah, 2003 as cited in Jones 2011, p.20). Also, from character analysis, together with the image portrayed in this scene and Cleaver′s claim, it can be assured that western male tourists are drawn by the service that massage parlor girls provide.

Also, the concept of a masseuse is mysterious like a Geisha. To illustrate, they call themselves masseuses but do they work as something else or have another role other than massaging? That is still not clearly revealed. The image of customers wearing only towels is also unclear about why they dress like that. The scene shows only the way masseuses massage but not the real body-to-body massage. The body-to-body massage that Cleaver mentions actually means something more than just massaging as shown in the film. The customer and masseuse can have sexual activities; i.e. sexual intercourse for example. However, the way they dress might give the audience a clue. The question arises from seeing the customers′ costumes: ″Do they prepare for body−to−body massages?″.

Furthermore, the uniform is another similarity to a Geisha who has to be well-dressed before the performance to make sure that her appearance will fulfil

audience satisfaction. The masseuses wear their sexy uniform to arouse western male customers. Thus, it can be concluded that this character is represented as a Geisha type.

Table 4.2

Semiotic analysis of Thai women characters in Bridget Jones' Diary: The Edge of Reason: Call girl

Character: Call girl	
Type	**LBFM:** Her role as prostitute is clearly revealed through herself and other references; her behavior and appearance convince the audience to believe that she is a prostitute. The scene that she appears in highlights her sexual availability and willingness to have sex with the male customer who ordered her services. Her character presents herself as sex machine, available just for having sex without any other emotion or other kind of relationship with any character.
Context	Cleaver ordered a prostitute to come to his hotel room while he is with Jones. The prostitute arrives at his room, knocks on the door and presents herself as a prostitute (call girl) which makes Jones angry.
Relationship with the protagonist & antagonist	• Relationship with Cleaver: Sex worker and customer (sex tourist) • Relationship with Jones: Stranger who creates conflict between Jones and Cleaver

Behavior displayed & non-verbal communication	• Her behavior shown in this scene is willingness to please man and sexual availability according to her role as a prostitute. • She knocks on the door and says that ″you ordered me at 10.30″ conveying the message that she is a call girl, a type of prostitute who comes right to the door at the appointed time according to customer′s order. • She exposes her body (takes her bathrobe off) to Cleaver and Jones trying to explain the objective of coming to Cleaver's room. She tries to explain that she comes just for Cleaver to have sex with. • She keeps saying ″You ordered me″ without any emotion, just to emphasize the objective of coming to see Cleaver which highlights her role as a sex machine. • The way she behaves reveals her recklessness in ruining Cleaver and Jones′ relationship which reveals her as having a lack of sympathy and being emotionless.
Appearance	She wears tiny black lace lingerie with sexy black stockings which makes her well-prepared for sexual activities with Cleaver.

Self & other reference	• Since she keeps saying "You ordered me", it emphasizes her role as a call-girl prostitute. • When Jones gets angry with Cleaver, she told him to "fuck her, not me" conveying the message that the call girl is a sex object available for males to have sex with. Also in this scene, the call girl smiles at them implying she is willing to have sexual intercourse with Cleaver regardless of Jones' anger (emotion). • While Jones is talking to her friend explaining why she got angry with Cleaver, she refers to the call girl as a "sexual therapy thing". • Near the end of the movie she is mentioned by Cleaver who says, "I spent the night with a gorgeous Thai girl, who in fact turned out to be a gorgeous Thai boy". This conversation reveals her character as a ladyboy. However, this point is not highlighted in the movie.

The second female character, the call girl, appears in the scene at the hotel when Cleaver ordered her to come to his room. The picture of prostitute delivery right in front of the door is shown. She clearly portrays her role as a prostitute and her relationship with Cleaver is in the form of customer and sex worker. Her outfit is well prepared for sex service, with the tiny black lace lingerie and the sexy black stockings. The image that is clearly portrayed here is the difference between her and Jones, an unattractive white over-sized woman who is less attractive than a Thai prostitute. The prostitute's character is sexy and alluring but lacks emotion. The way she talks is more like a robot. As she keeps saying "you made order for 10.30", "You ordered me" for example, which emphasizes her role as a prostitute who is only available for sex service. From what she keeps saying, it presents the call girl way of work.

Even Jones is rude to her after she finds out that Cleaver ordered her for sex activity. When Jones says to Cleaver "You should go and fuck yourself, or her, not me", the call girl did not reply but kept smiling at Cleaver. Furthermore, she says to Cleaver that you ordered my friend last night and gave her a big tip. This conversation shows that she does not care about their argument nor does she care about Cleaver and Jones. She is focusing on her job instead. This situation shows her lack of emotion and sympathy for others. From these her role as sex worker is strongly emphasized.

Thus, from the analysis from her appearance, job and the conversations with the protagonists together with how she deals with the situation, we can see she represents her character as a 'sex machine', without any emotions, able to have sex

according to customer orders. So, her type portrayed here is similar to the term LBFM which stands for "little brown fucking machine". The term that was used to refer to Asian prostitutes--especially Vietnamese, Thai and Philippine women--who were used by the US GIs during the Vietnam War. Also, it is used in pornographic and porn sites referring to Asian prostitutes who normally have a small body and have brown skin like this call girl.

However, at the end of the movie, Cleaver says to Darcy (Jones's boyfriend), "I spent the night with a gorgeous Thai girl, who in fact turned out to be a gorgeous Thai boy". So, from this part, her type as a ladyboy is presented. But actually, her character displayed does not represent as ladyboy but rather LBFM instead. Her appearance, voice and gesture do not present or imply that she is a ladyboy until she is mentioned at the end of the movie. So, the ladyboy type is not highlighted in this movie.

Figure 4.2 Thai call-girl comes to service Cleaver in hotel room from *Bridget Jones' Diary: The Edge of Reason* (2004)

Table 4.3

Semiotic analysis of Thai women characters in Bridget Jones' Diary: The Edge of Reason: Woman in prison (1) Phrao

Character: Woman in prison (1) Phrao	
Type	**3rd World Lady:** Her character represents an uneducated poor Thai woman. The image of people from a third world country is clearly presented. The class differences between Jones and her are clearly portrayed through many scenes in which she appears, especially the actions when she sees

	Jones' bra reveals her poor conditions compared to Jones. Also, at the end of the movie when Jones donates her stuff, she is crazily happy when she got the things. These are all evidence emphasizing her type as a woman from an underdeveloped country.
Context	Jones was arrested for drug possession and she was sent to a womens′ prison in Thailand. Phrao is the first prison inmate who comes to welcome her to the prison.
Relationship with the protagonist & antagonist	Relationship with Jones: Stranger who later becomes friend
Behavior displayed & non-verbal communication	• Her behavior presents her character as a poor woman as mentioned earlier about her action when she saw Jones′ bra and when she got Jones′ stuff. • From the observation, her talent of dancing, singing English songs and language she uses to communicate with Jones it can be assumed that she was a bar girl who had a chance to communicate with western customers until she can communicate in English fairly fluently. • As shown in the movie, her character is not complicated since she is sincere and straightforward. She first introduces herself to Jones by saying ″My name Phrao, you my friend″. This shows her friendly characteristic. • Also, in another scene when she saw Jones is crying she is very worried about Jones which shows how caring this character is.

Appearance	A tan skin woman who wears natural makeup and has a bit messy hair, she wears a printed tank top with printed mini skirt which do not really match.
Self & other reference	She introduces myself, ″My name Phrao, you my friend″. It expresses her personality as a nice and friendly prison inmate to Jones.

Other female characters appear near the end of the movie. The scene that shows Jones being arrested due to drug possession shows she has to live in jail in Thailand. There are a number of Thai women who live there. From the investigation, Thai women in prison can speak English confidently even though they have a mild Thai accent. They pronounce Bridget′s name as ′Breeshit′ and speak broken English. From this, it can be assumed that they used to work in a bar where they had a chance to communicate frequently with a number of Farang men. Also, in the scene where Jones encourages all girls to sing Madonna′s song, ′Like a Virgin′ and dance together, all of them can sing that song like they are getting used to it. However, one word is distorted from the original song, from ″Like a virgin, touched for the very first time″ to ″Like a virgin, fucked for the very first time″. From this scene, it can be assumed that this song might be a famous song among them that normally plays in Go-Go bars and they normally sing like that (the distorted version). Also, the scene of how they dance, (especially, the main three characters as shown in the picture below) shows their profession of dancing with their alluring gesture and how they touch their bodies. It is convincing that they might really have worked as go-go girls in a bar.

Figure 4.3 Jones and Thai women rehearse Madonna′s song, ′Like a Virgin′ from *Bridget Jones' Diary: The Edge of Reason* (2004)

In this scene, the first Thai female character who appears and first interacts with Jones is Phrao. She saw Jones sitting alone and then she approached her and introduced herself. She said ″You my friend″. This introduction shows her as a friendly person. While they are talking, Phrao sees Jones′s bra and she said out loud ″Superbra!″ with her extremely exciting facial expression. She acts like she crazily wants it. It is like something that she cannot afford. From the observation, Jones′s action and facial expression seem to doubt and do not understand why Phrao acts like that when she first saw her bra. The conversation and interaction between them shows class differences. While western woman can afford a superbra and do not perceive it as something special, Thai women react in a different way.

Phrao is the character who welcome Jones to the female prison setting, a place where women all look the same. They have similar behavior: the way they talk, the way they behave, how they dress reveals they are all in the same class. For example, the way they react when Jones comes to give her stuff away. On her last day, Jones brought a lot of stuff to give to her prison inmates, i.e., bras, books and chocolates. In this scene, the picture of the donation from developed country people to 3rd world country people is clearly portrayed.

Figure 4.4 Phrao′s actions when she saw Jones′s bra from *Bridget Jones' Diary: The Edge of Reason* (2004)

Figure 4.5 Jones with her ″leaving presents″ for inmates from *Bridget Jones' Diary: The Edge of Reason* (2004)

So, the Phrao character, and the reason she appears, is to represent the women from undeveloped countries and introduce another class of Thai women to the protagonist and also to the audience. Thus, she portrays a type of ″3rd world lady″ who just presents how poor they are even if things seem affordable for ordinary people.

Table 4.4

Semiotic analysis of Thai women characters in Bridget Jones' Diary: The Edge of Reason : Woman in prison (2)

Character: Woman in prison (2)	
Type	**Pity Chicken:** Her character as an innocent woman who is being forced and treated badly by a male presents her type as pity chicken. The woman who cannot fight for her own destiny, also, has to accept any consequence from her boyfriends′ action. To illustrate, she is forced to work as a street hooker and later gets caught by a policeman and has to live in jail without any help from her boyfriend. This is different from Jones, whose boyfriend finally comes to rescue her.

Context	While Jones is telling her love story explaining how bad her boyfriend treats her, this character said her boyfriend is worse than that and starts explaining how she was oppressed by her boyfriend.
Relationship with the protagonist & antagonist	Relationship with Jones: Prison inmate
Behavior displayed & non-verbal communication	Her character is presented as a sincere and friendly prison inmate who loves to share her life story with her friend. Also, she reveals how easily she trusts someone. Even when Jones is telling a lie, she still believes in what Jones said. Her face explicitly shows how she feels sorry for Jones when Jones tell a made-up story of how Darcy (her boyfriend) treats her. From her actions, it can be assumed that she easily trusts other people, like she trusts that her boyfriend really loves her since he is nice to her at the beginning of their relationship.
Appearance	She has an attractive beautiful face with a little bit of makeup. She wears a tight blouse with mini skirt.

Self & other reference	Her self-referencing reveals how pitiable she is. Also, how she easily trusts someone. Her love life story that she tells Jones presents her position as being under her boyfriend′s control. She has a miserable life due to her boyfriend′s actions.

Table 4.5

Semiotic analysis of Thai women characters in Bridget Jones' Diary: The Edge of Reason: Woman in prison (3)

Character: Woman in prison (3)	
Type	**Pity Chicken:** She is being forced by her husband to work 24 hours a day and take heroin due to his orders until she get caught and has to live her life in jail. She believes in everything her boyfriend said because she believes that he loves her (because he said so).
Context	While Jones is telling her love story about how bad her boyfriend treats her, this character also shares her miserable love life with Jones and her prison inmates
Relationship with the protagonist & antagonist	Relationship with Jones: Prison inmate

Behavior displayed & non-verbal communication	Her facial expression when she tells the story of her miserable love life makes it very clear how sad she is. This emphasizes the bad life situation she has faced due to her boyfriend′s actions. Also, she believes someone easily like she believes in Jones′ made-up story and believes that her boyfriend loves her because he said he did. Due to her easily trusting people, she has to live in jail and accept her life situation without any help from her boyfriend.
Appearance	She has a pale face, white skin and small eyes. She wears a tank top with mini skirt.
Self & other reference	Her self-referencing shows how pitiable she is. Her story is quite similar to another woman who is being treated badly by her boyfriend. She explains how she was treated by her boyfriend and that makes Jones, as well as audiences, feel pity for her.

Other Thai female characters appear after that: in one scene Jones explains how bad Darcy, her boyfriend, treats her. There is one Thai girl who says that her boyfriend is worse than that. He hurts her and forces her to work on the street. Even though she omits the explanation of her work, it can be assumed that she works as a prostitute selling her body on the street side as a so-called ′street hooker′. Also, another girl (the fourth character) said that her boyfriend forces her to work 24 hours a day and take heroin. From this conversation, it is revealed Thailand is a male dominant society of gender repression and inequality where women are placed in lower status and under men′s control.

From this scene, there are two characters that are mainly highlighted. From the conversation (their self-references) analysis, both of them are under male control and they were caught due to the consequences of their boyfriends′ actions. Also, they have faced a miserable life but they have to get through it on their own. Actually, it is pretty similar to Suzie Wong from *The World of Suzie Wong* who has faced her miserable life since she was young. She was sent to work as a prostitute in a brothel in Hong Kong by her uncle who raped her. Suzie is also being forced by male characters. But finally, she has someone who helps her to get through that situation. Also, Suzie Wong types normally have to be a partner of a white male which is different from these two characters.

Also, from the conversation between Jones and both of them, they seem to believe everything that Jones says even if it′s a lie. Their faces show how they really worried about Jones being treated badly by her boyfriend which is a made-up story. But obviously, they really feel sorry for her. Also, in the scene where Jones tries to teach them how to sing a Madonna song, they listen to her and believe her without any arguments. From this, it can be seen why they were treated badly by their boyfriends.

From their actions towards Jones, it can be concluded that they easily trust everyone. Furthermore, the conversation while they are talking about their bad boyfriends includes the first character saying that, ″my boyfriend, he seems really nice. Then he starts to hit me to make me work on street″. This conversation reveals that she might have judged him from his looks and appearance without knowing him enough. She is easily fooled by him.

Also, the second character said ″my boyfriend, he says he loves me but he do no work and make me work 24 hours a day then he make me take heroin drug″. This conversation also emphasizes how innocent she is because he says he loves her and she believes it. Thus, the evidence shown in the conversations reveals their character as innocent women who easily trust someone but they have to be able to handle the consequences of that misplaced trust.

Thus, from the data provided which is mostly from self-referencing, their type is Pity Chicken: the type of innocent woman that is placed under male′s control and enforcement and forces a woman to face her suffering life and to get through it on her own.

In conclusion, from this film, four stereotype categories were found. The character of ′Massage parlor girl′ portrays ′Geisha′ type according to her roles which was revealed as a masseuse who is specially trained to satisfied western male tourists. The ′Call girl′, another character represents a type of prostitute who brings herself right to the door of customer′s room. The image of a female body available for male customers to have sex with clearly presents the ′LBFM′ type. For ′Phrao′ the prison inmate, this character presents herself as a friendly Thai girl together with the class difference between Jones and her. Her stereotype category falls into the ′3rd World Lady′ since she only appears to convey the message of the class difference to the audience without showing any other aspects of her. Another two characters of prison inmates shared a similar love life story. They both are being oppressed by their boyfriend until they get caught as a consequence of their boyfriends′ action. Thus, these two characters represent the ′Pity Chicken′ type, a type of woman who is placed under male′s control, but has to face her miserable life on her own and cannot fight back.

From the findings, the researcher found new types apart from the four types of Asian women stereotypes (Geisha, Suzie Wong, Lotus Blossom and Dragon Lady). However, there is one character who matches the old type (Geisha). The new types are ′LBFM′, ′3rd World Lady′ and ′Pity Chicken′. From observation, the character who presents the LBFM type is interesting; the character has no other conversation than to talk about her available sex service and the gesture of taking off her clothes which

clearly presents her role as a fucking machine. The finding of the 3rd World Lady and Pity Chicken type can link to Thailand social reality. To illustrate, the poverty problem, the male dominant society and gender repression are highlighted by those characters. So, this film reveals many aspects about Thai women and Thailand to the global audience eyes. Although only some parts of reality are depicted, at least it has some sense of social reality in Thailand, especially the prostitution business.

4.1.2 *Bangkok Dangerous* (2008)

Bangkok Dangerous was filmed in Bangkok, Thailand, starring a famous Hollywood actor Nicholas Cage as Joe an international contract assassin. This movie was originally from a Thai movie version but it was remade by Hollywood. The movie presents Bangkok as a place that is ″corrupt, dirty and dense″ as mentioned by Joe at the beginning of the story. The movie begins with the nightlife scene in Bangkok. The place is one of the famous red light districts in Asia--ʹSoi Cowboyʹ in Bangkok. The ladies wearing little pieces of clothing greeting foreigners who walk along the street portray the image of Bangkok as a city of sex tourism.

This film also has a Thai male protagonist, Chakrit Yamnam playing as Kong. He appears in the very beginning of the story while he is offering prostitutes to western tourists in Soi Cowboy. He later becomes Joeʹs subordinate. There are two main Thai female characters whose analysis is shown in the table with an explanation as follows.

Table 4.6

Semiotic analysis of Thai women characters in Bangkok Dangerous: Go‑go girl (Aom)

Character: Go-go girl (Aom)	
Type	**Baby Dragon:** Her characteristic as tricky, sexy alluring, and using her sexy appearance to get what she wants from men is similar to a Dragon Lady type. However, near the end of the movie, her character is changed. She seems to have less power, cannot fight with the mafia gang and cannot use her appearance to trick men. She is in their control which is not the characteristic of a Dragon Lady who is a heartless killer and will not surrender for anyone. Thus, her role is Baby Dragon who is wicked, tricky and backstabbing but not as cruel, strong and tough as the Dragon Lady type.

Context	• Kong goes to a go-go bar to find a mafia messenger who is a go-go girl named Aom • She was being held as a hostage
Relationship with the protagonist & antagonist	• Relationship development with Kong: o Co-worker o Go-go girl who Kong has a crush on o Unclear whether she really loves Kong or wants valued stuff from him
Behavior displayed & non-verbal communication	• She allures male customers with seductive gesture. She knows that her beauty can seduce men and get what she wants. It clearly shows in the scene when she gets expensive earrings from Kong; she then changes her behavior and Kong seems to start to get her attention. • Her changing behavior shows her characteristic as tricky. • In the scene in which she talks to Kong for the first time, her standing position shows her power over men. While Kong is sitting Aom is standing and the image portrayed reveals the sense of woman power. • Her decision near the end of the movie shows her characteristic as a tricky woman and a backstabber since she chose to call Kong to come to be killed by the mafia • Her character is changed after she was caught and beaten by the mafia. She has no more confidence or power over men. She becomes a desperate woman who has no power and cannot fight with anyone.
Appearance	She is an attractive woman with her sexy dress and heavy makeup. She always wears skimpy clothes in every scene she appears in.

Self & other reference	-

Table 4.7

Semiotic analysis of Thai women characters in Bangkok Dangerous: Pharmacist (Fon)

Character: Pharmacist (Fon)	
Type	**Flowing Lotus:** Her characteristic is good at pleasing, caring, and being a good partner which are significant characteristics of Lotus Blossom stereotype, especially in the early stage of her relationship with Joe. However, when she finds out that Joe is an assassin she freaks out and the Lotus Blossom stereotype finally break down. The Lotus Blossom type has to be self-sacrificing, no matter what happens, and always forgiving in her love but Fon is not. She chooses to run away and never come back to him again. Thus, her character rather goes into the Flowing Lotus type.
Context	• When Joe goes to the pharmacy to find a drug to heal his wound, he meets Fon (the pharmacist) and seems to have a crush on her at first sight. • They go for dinner and develop relationship after that. • Fon finds out Joe is an assassin, and she runs away and never comes back.
Relationship with the protagonist & antagonist	• Relationship development with Joe: o Pharmacist and customer (patient) o Friend o Couple (partner) who later broke up

Behavior displayed & non-verbal communication	• Her caring characteristic is shown during her first meeting with Joe. When he comes to the pharmacy and she sees his wound, her caring eyes and worried facial expression are clearly portrayed. • Later on, when they develop their relationship, her characteristic as caring and good at pleasing is more highlighted. For example, in the scene where they have dinner, Fon always serves him; i.e. pours water for him, gives him food. • Her decision near the end of the movie shows her characteristic as a fragile woman who cannot bear something that is too much for her. She chooses to run away to avoid the problem. • Her facial expression is quite clear in every scene she appears in since she is mute. Her non-verbal communication is the only way that the audience can read the message from this character. To illustrate, she expresses her caring through her eyes when she touches Joe's wound. Also, her shocked facial expression when she hears gunshots from Joe and she cries since she cannot accept it.
Appearance	She has a beautiful face with natural looking makeup. She always dresses properly in every scene in which she appears.
Self & other reference	-

In the movie, there are two Thai female characters. The first one is "Aom" who plays a go-go girl in a bar. She first appears when Kong is ordered by Joe to get the secret document from her. Kong seems to have a crush on her at first sight. With her sexy appearance and costume and her alluring gestures, it is not a surprise for Kong to have a crush on her. With the image portrayed in the scene in go-go bar, she is the most outstanding woman on the stage among a number of go-go girls.

From her character displayed in the first few scenes, she seems tricky and dangerous and uses her sex appeal to control men to get what she wants. Due to her role as a sexy bar girl and her second job as a mafia messenger, her character is similar to a Dragon Lady type. She uses her sexy appearance to allure men. To illustrate, there is one scene where she is alluring a male customer in front of Kong without any concern if it going to hurt Kong's feelings or not. Next time when Kong comes to meet her, he brought 20,000 THB worth of earrings to surprise her. Thus, her behavior changed. She hugs him and the next time they meet, she gives him her phone number. From the portrayal of their interaction and relationship development it is convincing that she changes her behavior due to material goods that Kong gives her. Thus, her character is revealed to be a greedy person. Also, the alluring looks that she uses to control men is similar to a Dragon Lady character like Anna May Wong in *Daughter of the Dragon* who uses her beauty to seduce men to get what she wants.

Figure 4.6 Aom, Go-Go girl from *Bangkok Dangerous* (2008)

However, there are some different points which are related to ʹHeroineʹ ʹMercilessʹ and ʹHeartless Killerʹ characteristics. It shows in the scene near the end of the movie where she was caught by the mafia gang as a hostage. She was forced to call Kong to come to the safe house to be killed. She is in a severe stage after being beaten by the mafia and she decided to call Kong. Thus, her action shows that she does not sacrifice which is different from the Lotus Blossom type and she does not have heroine characteristics as a Dragon Lady. If her character is a Dragon Lady, the mafia will be definitely killed by her.

Figure 4.7 Aom is beaten by mafioso from *Bangkok Dangerous* (2008)

Thus, from the character analysis, she is just the woman who needs money for a living and just wants to survive. She seems to have some kind of relationship with Kong but it is unclear. Her love relationship towards Kong is not highlighted. It is reinforced again at the end of the movie that their relationship is not necessary to be told in the movie. This scene is at the safe house after Joe comes to rescue Kong and he can get out from that place. Aom just disappeared and the movie does not give any clues of where she is or if she is dead. Thus, the type she belongs to is Baby Dragon due to her weakness that is presented in the scene that shows she cannot fight the mafia. Also, together with her trickery and backstabbing behavior it shows her character to be a Baby Dragon type.

The second female character is a pharmacist named Fon. She first appears when Joe goes to find drugs to heal his wound at a pharmacy. Their first scene shows Joe′s first impression with Fon. Her beautiful face and sweet smile is revealed. Especially when she touches Joe′s wound, he seems to feel something in her. Even when he finds out that she is mute, he does not act surprised or like she is different, but instead, he is eager to know her more. One day Joe asks her to have dinner with him and she accepts it. After that their relationship develops; from their relationship as customer and pharmacist they become a couple.

From the observation, her character represents a good partner of the male protagonist, her sweetness and caring is revealed through many scenes in the movie whenever she is with Joe. To illustrate, the scene where she tries to heal Joe′s wound, serve foods and pour tea for him, clearly portrays her caring and attempts at pleasing a man.

At first her character is quite similar to the Lotus Blossom type due to her characteristics and behavior displayed. To illustrate, the characteristic is of a good, caring partner--submissive and docile. However, near the end of the movie when she found out that Joe is an assassin, she runs away from him. So, the Lotus Blossom

stereotype is broken here. So, it can be concluded that Fon represents Flowing Lotus type because the Lotus Blossom main characteristic of self-sacrifice and infinite forgiveness is not part of this character.

Remarkably, the Fon character is a new dimension of Thai women depiction in Hollywood film. Normally, Thai women are portrayed as bar girls or prostitutes if they play a lead role. Fon presents a Flowing Lotus type without sexualized images even though she has a relationship with a white male protagonist. Furthermore, Joe, as a western male, is not portrayed in the sense of sexual abuse or in a sexually related relationship that normally presents when a white male protagonist and Asian woman are interacting. As shown in, for example, *Only God Forgives*, *No Escape* and *Bridget Jones Diary: The Edge of Reason.* Thus, his representation is different from western male protagonist portrayal in other mainstream films that break the stereotype of western male as an abuser of Asian women.

From the analysis, this film shows that the stereotype of Thai women characters is quite similar to the stereotypes of Asian women: ʹDragon Ladyʹ and ʹLotus Blossomʹ. However, they are finally broken down. For example, Aom seems to be similar to the ʹDragon Ladyʹ stereotype but when she faces strong men she has less power so that she is not eager to fight with them. That point makes the Dragon Lady stereotype break down. This is similar to Fon, who seems to match the ʹLotus Blossomʹ stereotype. But her running away and never coming back to her partner shows the Lotus Blossom stereotype breaks down.

Another interesting point is the way Fon communicates her characteristic to the audience by non-verbal communication. Even though she is mute she gives a clear message from her facial expressions, behaviors, and gestures. Thus, from this, it is clear that the non-verbal message the researcher gets from her is very useful for the analysis. The caring facial expression, sadness or fearfulness through her eyes, the actions of pouring water and giving foods to male protagonist, etc. are all essential for the character analysis.

This film depicts the two characters in a very different way. One as a sexually seductive bar girl who use her sexy appearance to seduce men, but the other is portrayed as a conservative Thai woman who meets the ideal Oriental woman concept (docile, submissive and obedient). Thus, the two sides of Thai women are portrayed.

4.1.3 *The Hangover part 2* (2011)

The Hangover part 2 was filmed in Thailand and released in 2011. It is the story about Stu (male protagonist) getting married to his Thai girlfriend Lauren. He and his friends travel to Thailand for the wedding but after a bachelor party, they woke up in some creepy apartment in Bangkok and found out that Stuʹs soon-to-be brother-in-law Teddy is missing. So, they need to find out what happened on that night.

The movie mainly focuses on the relationships between friends: Phil, Alan and Dough who call themselves the ʹwolf packʹ. The movie reveals the crazy things they have done and how they get through the situations. *The Hangover part 1* took place in Las Vegas and part 2 is set in Bangkok. The representation of the wolf

pack presents the western male as self‑centered with many of their silly and childish actions. By the way, this is an element for the flavor of the comedy movie.

This movie has become controversial about racial stereotypes in many aspects. As mentioned by C.N. (2011):

> The film′s depiction of Thailand transforms the ″Land of Smiles″ into a bizarre realm of brute violence, grim depravity and unfettered libido, populated entirely by broad racial stereotypes: thuggish gangsters, wizened monks, lascivious ladyboys (para.3).

Also, as mentioned in Phil and Mr. Chao′s (Stu′s friends) conversation ″Bangkok is a city of squalor″ Bangkok is mentioned throughout the story. For example, ″You know, it′s Bangkok″, ″Bangkok has him now″, ″Pretty weird place″. Another representation of Bangkok that is emphasized in the movie is ′Ladyboy′ or ′Ka‑Toey′ in Thai referred to by Stu as a ″girl with a dick″.

In the movie, there are two main characters who represent Thai women: Kimmy (go‑go girl) and Lauren (Stu′s Thai wife). The characters′ analysis is shown below.

Table 4.8

Semiotic analysis of Thai women characters in Hangover 2: Ladyboy (Kimmy)

Character: Ladyboy (Kimmy)	
Type	**Ladyboy:** Her character clearly presents a Ladyboy type, a type of women that is a reputation of Thailand. She comes to present that Bangkok is the land of ladyboys as it is called ″a city of angels″. To the protagonists (Stu and his friends), her appearance is quite similar to a real woman which they cannot notice even when they have a long conversation with her. Also, the character conveys many messages about ladyboys to the audience, i.e. how she has sexual intercourse with males, her naked scene which shows her penis to the audience and when she mentions her sperms for example.

Context	Stu and his friends go to a go-go bar to find some witnesses who can give them a clue of why Lauren′s brother (Teddy) is missing. Kimmy is a go-go girl who saw what happened on the night that Teddy d. So, they have a chat in the changing room for a while.
Relationship with the protagonist & antagonist	• Relationship with Stu: o Go-go girl (ladyboy sex worker) and customer • Relationship with Stu′s friends: o witness
Behavior displayed & non-verbal communication	• Her behavior reveals her character as a friendly person who is nice to talk with. • The way she speaks reveals her skill at speaking English from which it can be assumed that she frequently talks with western male customers. • The way she tells the story of how Stu said he fell in love with her, asked her to marry him, said that he had fun when having sex with her and followed her like a puppy dog shows how proud and self-confident she is. • The gesture where she takes the bathrobe off is a non-verbal communication conveying the message that she actually is a ladyboy and if she does not show it, no one will ever know that she is not a real woman.
Appearance	She wears heavy makeup with fake eyelashes and a wig. She wears a bathrobe and finally takes it off. Her entire body is shown to the audiences explicitly.

Self & other reference	• She is mentioned by Stu as a girl with a dick and a man with boobies as a description of a ladyboy he had sex with. • Alan asks Kimmy ″Is it a magic show?″, which shows how he thinks towards her. It delivers a message that she really looks like a real woman so that all of them cannot notice.

Table 4.9

Semiotic analysis of Thai women characters in Hangover 2﹕Thai wife (Lauren)

Character: Thai wife (Lauren)	
Type	**Lotus Blossom:** Her character always shows her extreme love towards her husband. Even though her father does not like her husband she does not care. She still loves him no matter what other people say. She presents herself as a good, caring and bearable wife who can accept anything. No matter if it is good or bad, she will always love her husband. Her unlimited forgiveness and eternal love for her husband, emphasizes that she is similar to the Lotus Blossom stereotype

Context	• Stu comes to Thailand to marry her.
	• Her father makes a joke to the guests in the party before the wedding day by saying that Stu has no test, Stu is a rice pudding or ″Joke″ in Thai, also the dentist is not acknowledged as a doctor in Thailand, etc. Which are all the sarcasm to his soon to be son-in-law.
	• Stu and his friends go to Bangkok and leave her brother (Teddy) somewhere which makes Lauren angry but she finally forgive him.
Relationship with the protagonist & antagonist	• Relationship with Stu: a couple
Behavior displayed & non-verbal communication	• Her gesture that is being highlighted is the way she always expresses her love to her husband explicitly, i.e. runs very fast and jumps to hug Stu and kisses him in many scenes.
	• She always forgives her husband.
	• She loves her husband the most, rather than her dad.
Appearance	She is gorgeous with her exotic Asian look. Her dress makes her look a bit sexy with her shape and tan skin.
Self & other reference	-

The first character is Kimmy, a go-go girl. She appears in the scene when Stu and friends go to a go-go bar named Siam Sams to find out what happened on the night before they woke up in the hotel in Bangkok in order to find a clue of how Lauren′s brother (Teddy) went missing. Stu and his friends go to the changing room and have a conversation with her. Her costume clearly presents her role as go-go girl together with the scene which takes place at a go-go bar--both the pole dancing stage

and backstage (changing room). The continuous Q&A conversation in this scene highlights this character. The picture of three male protagonists talking to her reveals how important this character is. Her relationship with other protagonists is as a witness who can give a clue of how Teddy′s gone missing.

They ask if she remembers what happened that night and she says she remembers. However, she did not say much about Teddy. Instead, she talks about Stu. She says that ″This guy was following me around like a little puppy dog all night. Saying he′d fallen in love with me″. Also, ″He asked me to marry him″. The actions from Stu and friend are not that surprising since they know what happened is due to the reason that they got drunk like they normally do. The ladyboy proudly continues telling the story, ″We just had some fun in the Chardonnay room. I danced for him, he tickled me, we had sex. Stu said he loves it, you were saying how special it was″. Their reactions toward the story are just normal and what she tells them just makes them laugh.

However, there is a climax in this conversation when the ladyboy talks about her load. After hearing that, Stu suddenly replies, ″I think your English is off, you are talking about my sperm″. Then she replies, ″My sperm″ and exposes her penis in front of everyone. She also says ′There is a reason it′s called Bangcock and not Bangcunt, which literally means Bangkok is a city of ladyboys. Their actions toward what happened in front of them is that they are shocked. Throughout their long conversation, none of them notice that she is not a real woman.

Figure 4.8 Thai ladyboy exposes his penis to Stu and his friends from *Hangover 2* (2011)

From the analysis, the character of the ladyboy only appears for introducing Thai ladyboys. She comes to present that Bangkok is the land of ladyboy (as a reputation of the country). From the conversation, there is no clue of finding Teddy. The whole conversation only is to convey messages to the audience that even three guys who have been through many experiences and talking with her for a long period do not notice that she is not a real woman.

Also, this scene seems to imply the message to the viewer to be aware that it is difficult to differentiate them from the real women. So, be careful, you might get laid with the ladyboy, especially when you are drunk. From this, it could be compared with what is mentioned in One Night in Bangkok song that explains about Bangkok as a city of ladyboy and the audiences should be aware that the beautiful woman you see might not be a real woman. As is seen in lyrics, "You'll find a god in every golden cloister and if you're lucky then the god's a she".

From the image portrayed, her appearance is quite similar to a real woman but if you look closely, it is not difficult to notice that she is not. For example, she wears a wig instead of real hair and her large body. However, it is possible for someone to not notice, due to the reputation of Thai ladyboys that many of them are beautiful and look similar to real women. Some people hardly differentiate ladyboy with a woman. Thus, from what they emphasize in the movie, it can be seen that even when they have a conversation and listen to her voice, look closely at her gestures and body, they could not notice she is a ladyboy until she shows her penis: the only thing that represents her true sex. Furthermore, one of Stu's friends, Alan still says that "I am confused, is it a magic show?" This emphasized how unbelievable it is.

Moreover, from what she explains in this conversation about the procedure of how she and Stu had sex. Her explanation seems to introduce how man and ladyboy sex works. She says, we climax at the same time, "I shoot my load into you, you shoot your load on the floor". From this, it introduces a sexual intercourse procedure to the audiences. Moreover, Stu's character also gives more clarification to the audiences by referring to the ladyboy as a "man with boobies" and a "girl with a dick". So, from all of the conversation, self-references and other references it extremely highlights the description of everything about ladyboys.

Apart from the images of ladyboys that are presented, there is the character of Stu's Thai girlfriend, Lauren (the second character who represents Thai women). Her first appearance in the movie is when Stu and his friends arrived in Thailand. She runs quickly to hug and kiss Stu. Her first scene shows her extreme affection toward Stu. Their interaction shows an intimate relationship between a western male and a Thai woman. The character of Lauren expresses her love in almost every scene she appears. Her character reveals the image of a beautiful, exotic Thai woman. Her gestures and behavior look elegant, and together with her soft tone of voice reveal her social status as upper class and well-educated which is totally different from Phrao "the 3rd world lady" in *Bridget Jones Diary: The Edge of Reason*. Her representation in the movie is as a good and bearable girlfriend--passive, obedient and extremely loving of her husband. Her father does not like her boyfriend due to many reasons but she tries so hard to convince him to believe that Stu can be her good husband.

Moreover, even though she is humiliated by Alan in his speech the night before her wedding when he says, "This is not Stu's first wedding", he married to a

prostitute in Las Vegas two years ago, she does not react badly or argue with him but smiles as if what Alan said was just a joke.

Also, she tries to protect him from his friends when they blame and tease him. For example, in the scene after the speech session dinner, after Stu was teased by her father by comparing him with Khao (rice) as it has no test. His friend teases him, "Oh! Rice pudding, what are you doing?" then she said "be nice, he is very sensitive tonight". From her action, she seems to care too much about Stu. Again, this scene emphasizes how much she really falls for Stu.

However, there is one situation on her wedding day. She got angry since Stu and his friends brought her brother with them and she could not contact any of them after the bachelor party until the wedding is going to occur in a few hours. When she finally is able to contact Stu, Stu said they are in Bangkok and he will solve everything and go to see her at the wedding soon. Even though she got angry at that moment, she still trusts him and lets the wedding continue. When he arrived at the wedding, she ran quickly and hugged him like the first day they met each other.

Figure 4.9 Lauren expresses her love towards Stu from *Hangover 2* (2011)

Thus, her kindness, forgiveness and her tremendous love towards Stu are connected to the characteristics of a Lotus Blossom. She forgives her husband and, even after he brought her brother to an outrageous situation and got a ridiculous tattoo on his face, she ended up marrying him.

Her behavior reveals that she loves her husband more than her father which is similar to Cho-Cho San in *Madame Butterfly* the origin of Lotus Blossom type. She loves her husband so much and does not believe anyone but her husband. To illustrate, Lauren argues with her dad and believes her husband is good. The plot is quite similar to Cho-Cho San who loves her husband so much and changes religion (to worship Jesus), and does not listen to her parents and ancestors who come to blame her in her dream. So, it can be concluded that Lauren represents Lotus Blossom stereotype of Thai women.

From the analysis, the findings show two different types of Thai women. The Ladyboy type is very interesting due to the strong image of Ladyboy she presents. She has a more significant role in this movie than Lauren (Stuʹs Thai wife). Even though Stuʹs wife is supposed to be considered a lead role because she has a relationship with protagonist, the ladyboy character ʹKimmyʹ is more outstanding. From the researcherʹs point of view, the clarification of who she is and what she did with protagonist are clearly revealed through the film so that her role becomes highlighted. To illustrate, she explains who she really is by showing her penis to the audience and explaining how Stu had sex with her. So, the Ladyboy type is clearly revealed to viewers.

However, Lauren also presents a clear image of her characteristic. The strong image of the ideal Oriental woman, the Lotus Blossom stereotype who always loves her husband no matter what happens. Interestingly, her character presents the image of a Thai woman from a middle-class family which rarely is found in other Hollywood films. The image of a daughter of the middle-class family is new to Hollywood. So, it will be quite interesting to see how Hollywood will depict different sides of Thai women in films in the future.

4.1.4 *Only God Forgives* (2013)

This movie stars famous Hollywood actor Ryan Gosling as Julian (male protagonist) and famous Thai superstar Ying Ratha (YaYa Ying) as Mai (female protagonist), and is directed by Nicolas Winding Refn. It was filmed in Bangkok, Thailand and was released in 2013.

The movie is an art movie with cinematography techniques that use vivid colors, including shadow and lighting techniques which imply hidden messages to the viewers. To illustrate, in the scene in which Julianʹs brother Billy pays a bribe to fix the boxing match the lighting is on every characterʹs face but his. A shadow covers all of his face, which gives the sense of being an offender and the power of the dark side. Another example of a scene that clearly shows lighting and shadow usage is the one in which shadow covers the masculine boxer statue except for its penis on which the light falls. Due to the main theme of the movie being about masculinity as a source of violence, this scene highlights the symbol of masculinity to the audience. Furthermore, hands are used as symbols of ʹcapabilityʹ (Christiansen, 2014, p.33) which is presented throughout the story. The director has a brilliant way of presenting his art direction. However, this movie contains plenty of violent scenes.

The director states that he is interested in a fetish of violence so he made this film with plenty of bloody scenes to fulfill his desire. Also, the way he presents Julian as a quiet character is due to his intention to make this character an inert son of his mother. Moreover, he needs silence to become another language in this film but uses eye contact and body language to communicate instead.

Figure 4.10 Lighting shines on the statue′s penis from *Only God Forgives* (2013)

There are two Thai female characters in this film. The characters′ analysis is shown in the table with an explanation as follows.

Table 4.10

Semiotic analysis of Thai women characters in Only God Forgives: Underage prostitute

Character: Underage prostitute	
Type	**LBFM:** Her character is an underage girl sex worker who is available for male customers to have sex with. She becomes a victim of a pedophile western male customer who treats her a sex object who can fulfil his fantasy sexual desire. The way he treats her emphasizes her role as LBFM since she is being treated as a sex machine at first and later killed by her customer after he finished the sexual activity. The body that is only for males to have sex with, falls into LBFM type.
Context	Billy (Julian′s brother) walks along the street to find an underage girl to have sex with. There are many hookers but the underage prostitute is the one he chooses.

Relationship with the protagonist & antagonist	Relationship with Billy: sex worker and customer
Behavior displayed & non-verbal communication	She is sitting on a chair on a street side waiting for the customer to come and pay her for sex. When Billy comes and look at her, she stares at him and also smiles for him, which clearly shows her role as a prostitute who is willing to fulfil a male customer's sexual fantasy.
Appearance	She is a young girl with long hair, dressed in a tank top and shorts and without makeup.
Self & other reference	When Billy says "I want to fuck a 14 year-old", it shows his character as a pedophile. From this, the underage girl is referred to as a sex machine who is only worth having sex with. Thus, Billy's reference to her emphasizes her role a sex machine.

Table 4.11

Semiotic analysis of Thai women characters in Only God Forgives: Prostitute (Mai)

Character: Prostitute (Mai)	
Type	**Geisha:** Her character represents a Geisha type since there is the same concept of how she omits her other role as prostitute but calls herself an entertainer instead. Also, her

	alluring gesture and sexual performance seem to be well-trained. Her role in this movie is only to be available to please men. There is no other role apart from the sexualized image presented. She just provides a sexual performance for Julian to satisfy him and go out with him according to his command like his subservient. Thus, her role is similar to a Geisha type.
Context	• Julian normally comes to see Mai's sexual performance in a karaoke bar, private room i.e., masturbation, standing behind the curtain alluring him and trying to put his hands into her vagina for example. • She is also invited to go to have dinner with Julian's mom and has to act like his girlfriend which actually she is not.
Relationship with the protagonist & antagonist	Relationship with Julian: sex worker and customer (GFE)
Behavior displayed & non-verbal communication	She is sexy alluring and good at fulfilling male sexual desire as can be seen in many scenes Julian is satisfied by her with her flirting gesture and seductive sexual performance. From her performance it can be assumed that she is trained how to allure male customer. Her well-prepared costume and makeup are intended to seduce men. She does not only entertain Julian but also other male customers who come to see her. So, this is quite similar to a Geisha type since she is an entertainer who performs art to fulfill men's desire and also provides sex service for them. Also, the way she omits her other role (prostitute) is the same as a Geisha.

Appearance	She is a good-looking woman who is attractive to men. She always wears a tight dress to reveal her sexy body. Her face is always covered with extreme makeup to make sure it can draw men′s attention since her job is an entertainer (prostitute/ show girl)
Self & other reference	• Her self-referencing as an entertainer shows her intention to conceal her other role of prostitute which is similar to the myth of Geisha as it is still controversial what they actually are. • She is mentioned by Julian′s mother as a cum dumpster and a cock entertainer which extremely highlights her role as prostitute.

     The first character is the underage street hooker. She is the first one who is being highlighted because she is the cause of the whole story. Billy, Julian′s brother, who is quite different from Julian, is considered unsafe due to his extremely violent behavior. One night he walks into the brothel and asked the pimp if there are any underage girls. From this conversation, it shows his character as a pedophile who wants to fulfil his sexual need by using a young child. He said ″I want to fuck a fourteen-year-old girl″ but the pimp denies his request which upsets Billy. He beats the pimp and also the prostitutes in the mirror room. This scene shows his aggressiveness and the way he treats those women as objects to release his emotion.

     Right after this scene he walks along the street and aims to find an underage girl to have sex with. The picture of street hookers is presented. Billy looks at those women, trying to make a decision who he wants. First, he looks at the adult woman but she did not get his attention, she tries to stare at him but he turns to the underage girl. The girl also smiles at him and he also stares at her from head to toe. This is the first female character who interacts with Billy and has a relationship with him in form of a customer and sex service provider.

     Her appearance is a young girl with long hair, dressed in a tank top and shorts and without make up, which is different from the adult hooker who sits next to her who put on extreme make up which makes her look old. This scene emphasizes Billy as a pedophile with his preference for a young woman rather than the older one. The girl presents the image of an underage prostitute available in Thailand. The image of a young girl selling sex beside the street at night is clearly presented.

     This scene shows the underage girl in a role of prostitute. Even though there is no sign or any conversation the scene conveys a message to the audience that

the girl is an underage prostitute and Billy is her pedophile customer since he decides that the girl will be able to fulfill his fantasy. The camera angle in this scene shows Billy′s power over the prostitutes. From the point of view, it makes the viewer feel his power and the danger also with the shadow on his face which seems like a bad omen. Also, with his red color shirt, it somehow hints of a bloody situation and danger.

Figure 4.11 Billy is looking at street hookers (1) *Only God Forgives* (2013)

Figure 4.12 Billy is looking at street hookers (2) *Only God Forgives* (2013)

After making a decision, he takes the underage girl to the hotel room where he rapes and finally kills her. The terrible bloody scene is presented. From the observation, even if she appears in the movie only few minutes, her role is very significant. The scene of her dead body is one of the climax situations in this movie and this is the cause of the whole story. She represents a young prostitute who is being treated badly by a western male customer. It leaves a harsh feeling and causes the audience to feel sorry for her. The story presents her value as nothing.

She is only an underage sex worker who does her job and provides sex service and is killed by a cruel western customer. Billy uses her body to satisfy his

sexual needs and the girl later becomes useless. This shows his violent emotion that is one of masculine men characteristics. The action shows that he rapes, reveals his masculinity, and the power over woman. This portrayal reflects the idea of Oriental women. As stated by Kwan (1998), ″The Oriental woman, for example, normative permits acting out such desires such as pedophilia and sexual aggression and sexual violence upon the body of Asians″ (p.101). Thus, from the analysis, this movie presents her type as ″LBFM″.

The second character, the female protagonist Mai, plays a prostitute who calls herself an ʹentertainerʹ. This can be linked to reality in Thai society where bar girls normally call themselves ʹwaitressesʹ instead of ʹprostitutesʹ; or ʹprostitutesʹ normally call themselves ʹmasseusesʹ. From her self-referencing, it shows her intention to conceal her real occupation which is quite similar to the myth of Geisha as it is still controversial what they actually are, i.e. are the girls who work in karaoke bar also prostitutes? Do the masseuses also do other things rather than massage, for example? Their roles are portrayed in various ways, i.e. karaoke girl, prostitute, or GFE (girlfriend experience).

The setting also emphasizes a variety of her roles. The setting she frequently appears in is a bedroom and karaoke bar that emphasizes her role as bar girl and prostitute. However, what she calls herself is correct since her role is to entertain her customers. From what can be seen in the movie, there are only male customers who come to see her performance. That includes, especially, Julian who always comes to fulfill his sexual imagination by watching her sexual performance, i.e. masturbation or even putting his hand into her vagina. His action of watching her--his facial expression--affirms that Mai can fulfill his sexual desire.

From the observation, she rarely talks to Julian even though they seem like a couple. Thus, at this point it is unclear about their relationship. It seems like Mai is only available for Julian to release his sexual desire and fulfil his sexual imagination through her sexual performance. Their relationship is more like customer and prostitute (paid girlfriend, GFE). In many scenes, Julian just comes to see her flirting, alluring, and to fulfill his sexual imagination and nothing else happens after that.
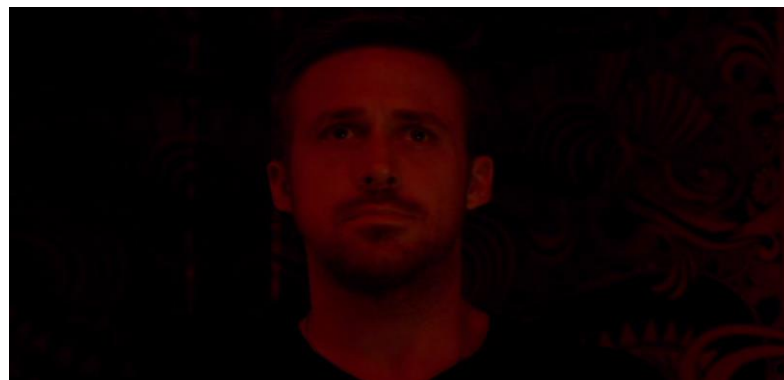
Figure 4.13 Julian gazes at Mai while she is masturbating in *Only God Forgives* (2013)

Thus, it can be concluded that Mai presents a type of Geisha since her job is to perform sexual activities, i.e. seductive dancing or even masturbating to please men, assuming that she was trained to please her customer like a Geisha does. Geishas′ main characteristics are being trained to please men, being good at pleasing men, and being a sexual doll. From the images portrayed, her way of performing is rather like an art performer which is different from go-go dancers or a normal sex show. She moves slowly trying to allure Julian to fulfil his sexual fantasies. Her gesture seems like an upper-class prostitute which is quite similar to the Geisha type (or even similar to the concept of courtesan girl). The slow movement aligns with mood and tone of the film that slowly continues. The Male Gaze is applied in the many scenes she appears. It is affirmed that she attracts male customers like the scene in which Sayuri from *Memoirs of Geisha* performs her art performance in front of male customers who all stare at her. The scene clearly shows that every male audience member cannot take their eyes from her.

The picture below shows the scene in which Mai is masturbating in front of Julian in the private room. This scene obviously shows how a Thai prostitute can fulfill western male sexual fantasies and emphasizes the images of her sexual availability. The images of Thai woman as good at pleasing white males, especially in a sexual way, is clearly portrayed in this scene. The ′white male gaze′ is also applied. Julian looks upon Mai′s body with sexual sensation and it satisfies him.

Figure 4.14 Mai masturbates in front of Julian *Only God Forgives* (2013)

Figure 4.15 Men gaze at Sayuriʹs performance in *Memoirs of Geisha* (2005)

In conclusion, from the depiction of Thai women and Bangkok, Thailand in this movie, it is all about prostitution, drugs and underground business but prostitution is the highlighted one. Even the main female protagonist also works as prostitute. Thus, it obviously shows that the type of Thai woman that is presented in this movie is a Geisha from Maiʹs character. Also, the LBFM type is represented by the prostitute who is raped and later killed by Billy.

The movie portrays a pretty strong stereotype toward Thai women. Each Thai female role is constantly revealed in their role as a prostitute. No development of the characters is shown to break the stereotype. Also, the movie ensures stereotype by the presentation of the relationship between two main characters (Julian and Billy) and those who help highlight their prostitute roles.

Also, the prostitutes were threatened badly by the main characters; being called a ʹcum-dumpsterʹ and asked ʹHow many cocks can you entertain?ʹ which is extremely cynical. They are being raped and killed, being beaten, for example. Such portrayal gives no value to those characters. From this, the actions might come from the idea that Asian women do not fight back. As claimed by Blum (2004) that stereotype can be able to create harm to the stereotyped group or person which may cause bad treatment to the members of that stereotyped group.

Furthermore, from the observation of the three main characters; Julian, Billy and Crystal, all have roles that interact with prostitutes and convince the audience that Thailand is a place of prostitution. Moreover, most of the scenes that represent Bangkok are scenes of brothels, Karaoke bars, and streets with hookers which portrays a one-sided image of the city. The depiction of the city and Thai women come out only in these aspects. There is no other side from the observation.

4.1.5 *No Escape* (2015)

This movie, directed by John Erick Dowdle, was shot in Thailand and was released in 2015. It is the story of a family from Texas that comes to South East Asia. The movie does not name the country but it is mentioned as a third world country. Jack (Owen Wilson), the male protagonist, works for an American water company and has come to work in this country for a while. So, he brings his wife and daughters with

him. The main story is about the political uprising in the city. The coup d′état occurs when the American water company Cardiff takes over the water business in that country and some groups of local people cannot accept that. Thus, Jack is one on the list that they want to kill.

Before the name of this movie was ″No Escape″, it was ″The Coup″, but due to the coup situation in Thailand at that time the name was changed to avoid any conflict with the Thai government. Many signs in Khmer language were printed upside down to avoid audience understanding that the situation occurred in Thailand. However, as observed, there are still many signs in Thai language shown in the movie i.e. on Hammond′s fellow′s car, a big sign of the hotel where Jack lives, and many shop signs in the market.

In the first half of the movie, the local people speak other languages which are not Thai. It is quite unclear because the scene they appear in is the scene of rioting and fighting between local mob, government officers and western people. So, in all of the scenes, they are shouting, screaming with many people shouting at the same time which makes it difficult to notice what language they use.

However, in the second half of the film all of local people characters speak in Thai. For example, in the scene in which the head of the riot tries to find Jack in the hotel, when he shouts out loud to his fellows to find every place his command is in Thai. Also, in another scene, there is one Thai old man who plays the house owner where Jack and his family are hiding. He speaks to Jack and his family in Thai. In the same scene, the local rioters come to find Jack in his house and they are all speak in Thai throughout the scene and until the end of the movie. Thus, it can be assumed that the story happened in Thailand and what is mentioned in the movie is about Thailand and Thai people.

At the beginning of the film at the airport, Jack and his family meets Hammond (Pierce Brosnan) who took the same flight with them and they have a short conversation together. When Hammond mentions the country, he says to Jack that he has come here about fifteen times and he loves the girls here because they are good at pleasing him. From this scene, Thai women are presented by western males as good at pleasing white males--good partners and attractive. From what he said, ″I like the girls here...″ it emphasizes the idea that Thai women are different from women in his homeland. White women are not considered as good at pleasing white men. Furthermore, his character as having an Asian fetish is also revealed. His perception is that Asian women are eager to please him and to fulfill him.

This scene shows that the first thing western males mention about Thailand is women, as women represent the country in western perception. From their conversation, the audience might perceive the ′women′ that he mentions as prostitutes. As also shown in *Bridget Jones Diary: The Edge of Reason*, there is a scene in which western guys talk to Jones about Thailand as a place of wonderful young ladies. Thus, the audience understands the reason that draws western male tourists to come to Thailand is women.

Figure 4.16 Asian women are mentioned as good at pleasing men from *No Escape* (2015)

Also, in the scene in the hotel nightclub Hammond says to Jack ″You′re gonna love it here″. Then there is a woman who walks by. Hammond says ″There′s just so much to do″, and he looks at the woman and points his finger at her. Also, at the end of the conversation he ends up by saying ″I think I′m gonna hit a strip joint″, after Jack asks something about his past which seems to make him feel stressed. This action emphasizes that there are many things to do to release stress, especially with Thai women.

These scenes reveal his thinking: the first time he mentioned Thai women at the airport as good at pleasing him and this time as an object that he can do something with and how the women can satisfy him. From the observation, the character that he portrays is a western male sex tourist with an Asian fetish syndrome. He sees Asian women as something that fulfils him and that becomes a reason why he comes to Thailand so many times as he mentioned at the beginning of the movie. Moreover, the relationship between him and Thai women is not revealed in the film. It delivers the messages that Thai women provide sexual availability for white males but they are not acknowledged as romantic partners. Thus, Thai women that are mentioned in the movie represent sex objects that fulfill white male sexual fantasy.

Figure 4.17 Asian woman is portrayed as sex object from *No Escape (2015)*

In the middle of the movie the rebellion occurs and a number of rebels attack the people who stand opposite them, especially foreigners. Jack and his family are also in that situation. However, during the fight they are helped by Hammond. He helps them to find a safe place to hide by bringing them to the brothel. Even though there is no sign or conversation that indicates the place is a brothel, the women inside reveal it as a brothel as many of them stand in front of their room like they are waiting for the customers. Also, a girl is in front of another room and as Hammond kisses her when they greet each other, a woman services a guy in another room. Furthermore, the picture of pregnant women is also presented. This scene reveals the sex trade business in the country and the availability of the women ready to provide sex services to customers. It reinforces the images of Thailand as a place of prostitution.

Furthermore, another point that can be observed is what the Hammond character portrays. The image of a middle-age white male who is so obsessed with eagerness to be pleased by Asian women. This is the same thing that can be easily seen in many red light district areas in Thailand. The image of white middle-age men with young Thai bar girls in tow is quite similar to the idea which is presented in the movie. It is said that white middle-age men find themselves gaining more self-value from being with Asian girls who treat them as attractive guys which is different from their country. Thus, it then becomes the reputation of Asian countries as a place where middle-age white men can easily find the ideal Asian partner who can fulfill their Oriental fantasy.

Figure 4.18 Asian prostitute in brothel from *No Escape (2015)*

In this movie, the Thai female character who falls into the criteria is only one character. The analysis is shown in the table with an explanation as follows.

Table 4.12

Semiotic analysis of Thai women characters in No Escape: Prostitute

Character: Prostitute	
Type	LBFM: Her character presents the LBFM type. The reason why Hammond has come to Thailand so many times is that he loves the girls here. They are eager to please and he can do so many activities with them. This character gives a clear picture to the audience of why and for what reason Hammond loves to come to Thailand. Her role as prostitute standing in front of the room clearly highlights her role as a sex object who is available for males to have sex with. And this is her only role that is being highlighted. So, her character clearly presents LBFM type.

Context	Hammond helps Jack and family to find a safe place to hide from the rioters. So, he brings them to the brothel, the place where they see a lot of prostitutes inside.
Relationship with the protagonist & antagonist	Relationship with Hammond: Sex worker and customer.
Behavior displayed & non-verbal communication	She is standing in front of her room waiting for customers like other girls in the brothel. However, her role is a bit different from other prostitutes. She has interaction with Hammond, who is one of the protagonists. He kisses her while the others are not kissed. This gives a clue that Hammond used to come here and might have bought sex service from her before.
Appearance	She is a small girl with short hair, wearing a dress. Her appearance is quite unclear due to the dim light in the brothel and she actually appears only a few seconds.
Self & other reference	Hammond said ″I love the girls here, they are eager to please″. This conversation with Jack at the beginning of the film is clearer to the audiences when they come to the brothel and met the prostitute. The reason why he comes is clearly revealed by this character and her interaction with Hammond. The reason is that he can fulfill his sexual desire by buying sex services from Thai prostitutes. Also, the ″eager to please″ that he mentioned means the girl is willing to have sex with him to fulfil his sexual satisfaction.

This character just actually stands in front of the room in a brothel but gives some messages to the audiences. She was kissed by Hammond and he compliments her about her smell. From the observation, the scene take place at a brothel where many young women are inside. Other girls have no interaction with protagonist but this woman does. Her interaction with Hammond gives the clue that Hammond used to come here many times before. Also, there is the clue from how he greets the brothel owner and how he leads the way for Jack and his family. If Hammond only greets the brothel owner, it is not 100% clear that he knows him as a friend, or has another kind of relationship. But when he interacts with the prostitute in that way, it shows his role as customer and hers as sex service provider.

Since the beginning of the story, Hammond always positioned himself as a middle-age man who loves Thai women and sees Thai women as sex objects to fulfill his needs. Thus this scene is evidence of something objective of what Hammond mentioned every time he talks about women. Thus, this character is represented as an LBFM type. The image portrayed, shows her role in the setting of the brothel. Hammond′s conversation with Jack that affirms he never clings onto relationships with women but just fulfills his desire in other ways reinforces that her one role that is being highlighted is as a sex machine.

This film strongly gives a clear stereotypical image of Thai women as a sex object who can fulfil the male sexual fantasy, Western males especially. The Thai female sexual availability is mentioned every time by the male protagonist when he refers to Thai women. Even though the prostitute character only appears for a short period of time, the image presented is pretty strong in conveying the message of who she is. The image of women′s′ bodies available for men to have sex with is highlighted. From analysis of this character, the context and setting is very important. The setting of the brothel itself clearly supports her role as a prostitute, also the fact that she is standing in front of the room gives a clue that she is ready to provide sex services. However, it would not be this clear if the male protagonist had not mentioned about Thai women since the beginning of the film. Thus, from what we can see her stereotypical role as a sex machine is clearly shown even though she says nothing.

From watching this film, the male protagonist tries to convey message to viewer that Thailand is a country of prostitution by referring Thai women′s ability to please men; the scene that the prostitute appears in also affirms what he said is true. Thus, the film depicts only the side of Thai women as prostitutes who are willing to fulfil the western male fantasy and are what brings western males to Thailand many times. There is no other aspect of Thai women that this movie portrays.

From the analysis of these five-selected film, new types were found: LBFM, 3rd World Lady, Pity Chicken, Baby Dragon, Flowing Lotus and Ladyboy. The result shows that most of the Thai women types are related to sexualized roles. Most of them present the image of Thai women as sex service providers. For example, the ′massage parlor girl′ and ′call girl′ from *Bridget Jones' Diary:The Edge of Reason, ′*go-go girl′ from *Bangkok Dangerous*, ′ladyboy′ from *The Hangover part 2*, ′prostitute′

from *Only God Forgives* and ˈprostituteˈ from *No Escape*. Thus, these stereotypical images emphasize the reputation of Thailand as a destination of sex tourism and of Thai women as prostitutes through global audience eyes.

4.2 Discussion

    4.2.1 Data Discussion

        The data obtained after analyzing Thai female characters in each selected Hollywood film are summarized below.

Table 4.13

Types of Thai women from each selected Hollywood films

Type	Films				
	Bridget Jones' Diary: The Edge of Reason	*Bangkok Dangerous*	*The Hangover part 2*	*Only God Forgives*	*No Escape*
Lotus Blossom			/		
Geisha	/			/	
LBFM	/			/	/
3rd World Lady	/				
Pity Chicken	//				
Baby Dragon		/			
Flowing Lotus		/			
Ladyboy			/		

The five selected Hollywood films have three criteria: 1. movies set in Thailand, 2. movies featuring Thai women or women portrayed as Thai who also interact with the protagonist or antagonist, and 3. movies featuring Thai women or women portrayed as Thai who have a relationship with the protagonist or antagonist, are used to analyze the type of Thai women presented. Interestingly, the finding shows that most of them are presented as ′LBFM′ type. You can see the result is three out of five movies. For ′Geisha′ and ′Pity Chicken′, the result is two out of five films. For ′Lotus Blossom′, ′3rd world lady′, ′Baby Dragon′, ′Flowing Lotus′ and ′Ladyboy′ shows only one.

From observing *Bridget Jones' Diary:The Edge of Reaso*n, there are five Thai female characters who plays significant roles in the movie. The first character is a masseuse in a massage parlor where Cleaver goes to record his news scoop and experiences the body-to-body massage which is claimed as something that draws a number of male tourists to Thailand. She wears revealing clothes (a cowboy uniform) which conveys the message to the audience of her intention to seduce men and fulfill their sexual fantasy. From the analysis, her character belongs to the Geisha type since she is trained how to massage (body-to-body massage) and how to please men. Also, her outfit which is well-prepared to seduce men, is also another point that affirms her intention to please men. Together with the image that is revealed in this scene, the picture of many Thai girls wearing the same uniform, massaging western male customers in the same way is further evidence to prove that they are all trained to please male customers.

The second character is a call girl, a type of prostitute who delivers her sex service right to customer's room. This character represents the LBFM type since her role is just to come to provide sex services for her customer and she does not have any other role apart from this. The conversation she has with Cleaver and Jones also emphasizes her role as a sex service provider. She does not care about anything else, she only focuses on her duty as a prostitute as she keeps saying "you ordered me" several times in this scene. So, from what portrayed in the scene she appeared, it is quite clear that she presents a LBFM type.

The other three Thai female characters appear in prison scenes. The first woman who appears in that setting (Phrao) presents the image of woman from a third world country. Her reaction towards seeing Jones′s super bra and her reaction in donation scene near the end of the movie shows how poor she is. Thus, she comes to present the poverty condition of women from third world countries.

The last two characters share the same concept of a love life story. They easily believe their boyfriends who intend to fool them. These two characters easily trust other people without thinking before has caused them trouble. One of them has been forced to work as a street hooker and another has been forced to take drugs until they were caught by the police. So, they have to face their miserable life, live with it and get through it on their own. There is no help or any responsibility from their

boyfriends. Thus, their type belongs to Pity Chicken, the woman who is being forced by males and later suffers according to the male′s action.

From *Bangkok Dangerous*, there are two Thai female characters who play lead roles in the movie. The first character is Aom, a go-go girl who also works as a mafia messenger. This character normally uses her sexy appearance to seduce men to get what she wants. Her characteristics as being tricky, sexy alluring and backstabbing are explicitly revealed. These characteristics are quite similar to the Dragon Lady type. However as observed, the stereotype is broken near the end of the movie when she is caught by the mafia. She is beaten by them and she finally surrenders to them which is not a characteristic of the Dragon Lady stereotype. Thus, her type rather falls into the Baby Dragon type as she still not tough enough to fight with men as the Dragon Lady does.

The second character is the pharmacist named Fon, whom Joe has had a crush on since their first meeting. Fon presents the image of conservative Thai women. From this observation, at first, her characteristic shown is similar to the Lotus Blossom type, the character portrayed as good at pleasing males, a caring partner and docile. However, near the end of the movie, she finds out that Joe is an assassin. So, she chooses to run away from him and never come back. So, the Lotus blossom type is broken here. Thus, her character which does not sacrifice for love and does not forgive her love represents a Flowing Lotus type, a type of woman who actually loves her partner but does not always forgive him if there is a mistake. The runaway action is similar to a flowing Lotus which flows somewhere and never comes back.

From *Hangover part 2*, there are two main Thai female characters. The first character, who is the most highlighted, d is the Ladyboy named Kimmy. This character becomes well known among global audiences in her role as a Ladyboy sex worker who has sex with Stu (male protagonist) while he is drunk. The controversy of this character is mentioned earlier in the data presentation part. She comes to represent another type of Thai woman which is the Ladyboy, another reputation of Thai women among foreigners.

She plays a significant role since she interacts with the Wolfpack (the four male protagonists) and has a long conversation with them. Also, during the conversation she explains how she and Stu had sex and also exposes her penis to the Wolfpack (also to the audiences which makes that scene the talk of the town. Thus the image of a Thai Ladyboy is extremely emphasized here. The character of Kimmy is mentioned on many websites proving that the character has become well-known due to the popularity of the film.

Furthermore, the movie has another Thai female protagonist, Lauren as Stu′s wife. Her appearance is elegant with her exotic Asian look. This character presents the image of a good and bearable wife who always loves and forgives her husband. She always loves her husband and expresses her affection to him no matter what happens. Even though her father does not like him, she always is on Stu side to make sure that he is fine with that. Every scene she appears in, she always shows how much she loves

her husband by running to hug him or kissing him to cheer him up for example. This is in spite of the fact that her husband put her brother in unsafe situations until he lost his finger. So, due to the unlimited forgiveness and her tremendous love towards her husband we can be assured that her characteristic is similar to the Lotus Blossom type.

From *Only God Forgives*, there are two Thai female characters who play significant roles. The first character is the underage prostitute (street hooker). She appears in the scene when Billy tries to find a 14-year old girl to have sex with. He tries to find one in the brothel but none of the prostitutes are under 14 years old. So, he walks out the brothel and tries to find one by himself. This character first appears in the scene where Billy walks along the street and finds her with other two adult street hookers. She is the one from whom he wants to buy sex services. Even though there is no conversation between, non-verbal communication is strongly revealed, with her seductive eye contact and how she dresses. These convey the message to the audience that her role is an underage street hooker who is ready to have sex with a pedophile western male. After having sex, she is killed by him and her body becomes useless. The strong image of a woman′s body for having sex and becoming useless after that is presented. Thus, her role presents a LBFM type which is presented as a sex machine for males to release their sexual desire.

Another Thai female protagonist who plays a lead role is Mai, the prostitute who seems to have some kind of relationship with Julian. However, as observed, her relationship towards Julian is a GFE (Girlfriend experience) in which there is no string attached. Julian only comes to see her perform sexual activities, such as masturbation and sexy alluring gestures to fulfil his sexual imagination. From the analysis, her character represents a Geisha type, since her roles are similar to a Geisha. She claims that she is an entertainer but actually she is a prostitute. This concept of omitting her roles as a prostitute is quite similar to Geisha who call themselves Geisha or art performers but actually have another role as prostitute. Furthermore, her performance which looks delicate and seems like art performance, her slowly moving gestures, how she dresses and wears makeup show that she is well-prepared or well-trained to please men. So from the analysis, the movie depicts Mai as a Geisha type.

In the film *No Escape*, there is only one Thai female character who plays a significant role. She is a prostitute in a brothel where the protagonists go to hide from the rioters. She appears for only a few seconds but gives a clear message to the audiences. Hammond, who is one of the protagonists, always mentions that Thai women are good at pleasing him and he can do so many things with them. He says that the reason he comes to Thailand so many times is because of the girls. With only his words, the message is still not explicitly revealed until the scene in the brothel near the end of the story. Hammond walks past her room in the brothel and greets her by kissing her and complimenting her smell. This scene conveys the message to the audience that he normally comes to buy sex services in that place. Not only the kissing scene, but how he walks through the brothel, and how he greets and talks to the brothel owner, show that he has come to buy sex services many times before. Thus, it is quite clear

that she is an LBFM type since the image reveals her character as a prostitute who is waiting for male customers to buy sex services from.

From these observations, most of the Thai female characters appear in a sexualized role, i.e., prostitute, bar girl, masseuse, or go-go girl which provides sex services for male protagonists. For example, the ʹcall girlʹ in *Bridget Jones Diary: The Edge of Reason*, Mai as prostitute and the ʹunderage prostituteʹ in *Only God Forgives,* Kimmy the ladyboy in *The Hangover Part 2*. This also includes the ʹprostitute in brothelʹ from *No Escape.*

From the investigation, it can be concluded that the representation of Thai women as prostitutes is due to the reputation of Thailand as sex tourism destination. As claimed by Cook and Jackson (1999), while Thailand is represented as sexuality Thai women are represented as prostitutes which has made Thailand a famous destination of sex tourism. This is also supported by Kelle (2015), who asserts that ʺThailand has gained a reputation as one of the worldʹs most infamous ʹsexscapesʹ for western maleʺ (p.3).

From this, it can be seen how western people perceive Thailand and Thai women. Thus, the most well-known reputation of Thai women is directly affected by the reputation of Thailand as a country of women trafficking. Moreover, sex workers are not only available in Thailand, Thailand also exports prostitutes internationally. As claimed by Boonchalaksi and Guest (1994):

> Thai prostitutes are also available internationally, with Thailand being an essential link in the international supply of women. The bodies of Thai women have become one of the bases of growth of the Thai economy (p.1).

Furthermore, Thailand also promotes itself as ʹParadise of sex tourismʹ predominantly via the TAT (Tourism Authority of Thailand). Thus, this reputation has an effect on the type of Thai women that are represented in Hollywood films which most of them present Thai women as prostitute.

Additionally, the producersʹ experience is also one of the factors that influences the creation of stereotypical characters in their movies. Refn in *Only God Forgives* and Dowdle in *No Escape* use their own experiences of coming to Thailand to build up the story and characters in their film. As can be seen, they depict the same aspect of Thailand and Thai women. The image of Thailand as the country of prostitution and Thai women as prostitutes who are good at pleasing white males are then used in their films. The actual fact that these things do happen in Thailand is one of the most influential factors of Thai women stereotypes portrayed in Hollywood films. Even though the director may add some elements or make it more exaggerated, the stereotypes portrayed are based on some part of reality.

The idea of Oriental women that places Asian womenʹs status in a lower position than women in the west and the sense of the Thai female body as sexually available to serve white men are depicted. This is presented in *Only God Forgives, Bridget Jones Diary: The Edge of Reason* and *No Escape* for example. These movies

emphasize the idea that Thai women are only be seen as sex objects to fulfill western male fantasies. The prostitute characters have only a few conversations and interaction with other main characters, and some of them do not even have any conversations. The movie does not reveal another aspect of their life—depicting them only as prostitutes. They just come to present their roles as Thai prostitutes and show how well they can fulfill white males as the movies clearly reveal.

Thailand has been known as a country of prostitution for a long time and western media choose to portray this point repetitively. Also, not only their existing knowledge but the evidence they can see in present-day reinforces the idea. Asian people have only a few chances to present themselves from their own perspective so most of the depiction normally comes from western perspectives. Thai women are always cast in stereotypical roles and most of them are prostitutes.

From the investigation of selected Hollywood films, the result is that the image of Thai women in Hollywood films has not changed from the past until now. The roles as prostitute, bar girl and go-go girl are still portrayed in Hollywood films. Also, the perception of Thailand as a destination of sex tourism is still portrayed in Hollywood films today.

From the researcher's observation, only in *Bangkok Dangerous* and *The Hangover Part 2* can we see that the portrayal of Thai female protagonists is different from the other selected Hollywood films. In the representations of Fon and Lauren, they both have relationships with white male protagonists but they are not treated in sexual abusive ways by their partner. Also, they are not presented as the typical sexually available prostitute type of Thai woman like in other films. However, these films still portray other female characters in sexualized roles, i.e. Aom, as go-go girl and Kimmy as go-go girl (ladyboy).

However, from the findings it is interesting to see the trend of how Hollywood depicts Thai women in film, to see the development and see how it changes over time.

In conclusion, media just reflects society and stereotypes just reveal the actual fact of each society. Thus, what we see in the film is normally a base of reality that we cannot deny. The social reality compared with the movie portrayal will be discussed in the following section.

4.2.2 The existence of the sex trade business in Thailand

With the portrayal of Thailand as a country of sex trade business and sex tourism in every selected film in this study, the existence of the sex trade industries in Thailand needs to be discussed. The researcher aims to explore Thailand social reality in terms of prostitution and how Hollywood portrays it in order to make the study more extensive.

4.2.2.1 Exotic shows in red light areas in Bangkok

Western tourists who come to visit Thailand mostly have experienced nightlife in famous red light district places, such as, Pattaya, Soi Cowboy, Phatphong and Phuket. What they have seen will be go-go bars surrounded with bar

girls greeting *farang* with seductive manners, prostitutes along the street asking men to buy their service or even a soapy massage in a massage parlor. For foreign tourists Thailand is known as the destination for sex tourism where they can have fantasy sex experiences for a cheap price. This could reinforce the stereotype of Thai women that Hollywood chooses to show on screen.

With the offering that male tourists can experience sex tourism in Thailand, the famous show like ʹPing Pong Showʹ is a well-known performance when referring to Thailand. This show is mentioned by Cleaver, the male protagonist in *Bridget Jones Diary:The Edge of Reason,* and there is a scene of the Ping Pong show in *The Hangover part 2.*

In the end scene of *The Hangover part 2,* when Teddy shows photos of what he and his friends had done in Bangkok one of the photos is a naked Thai girl pulling a bunch of artificial flowers out of her vagina. Also, there is a photo of a Thai girl pumping a ping pong ball out of her vagina (Ping Pong show) which is a well-known performance among male tourists. The scene portrays a clear picture of what really happens in Thailand, and how femailes perform exotic shows to entertain male tourists.

From the portrayal of Bangkok and Thai women in *The Hangover part 2*, the movie is controversial due to many negative images that are portrayed. Mr. Suraphon Svetserani (The Governor of TAT at that time) asserts that ʺNobody wants to see the negative side of their country, but we have to admit that it is trueʺ (Independent, 2011). Furthermore, he said that this movie would bring more tourists to Thailand due to the beautiful beaches in the movie.

The movie is very popular and it promotes Thailand in many aspects, especially tourism. So, *The Hangover part 2* becomes a model of a western tourist trip to Bangkok, Thailand. As a consequence, the Hangover tour is created to allow western tourists to experience life in Bangkok like the main characters in the movie. Below are the details of activities in Hangover tour shows from the Bangkok Hangover tour website.
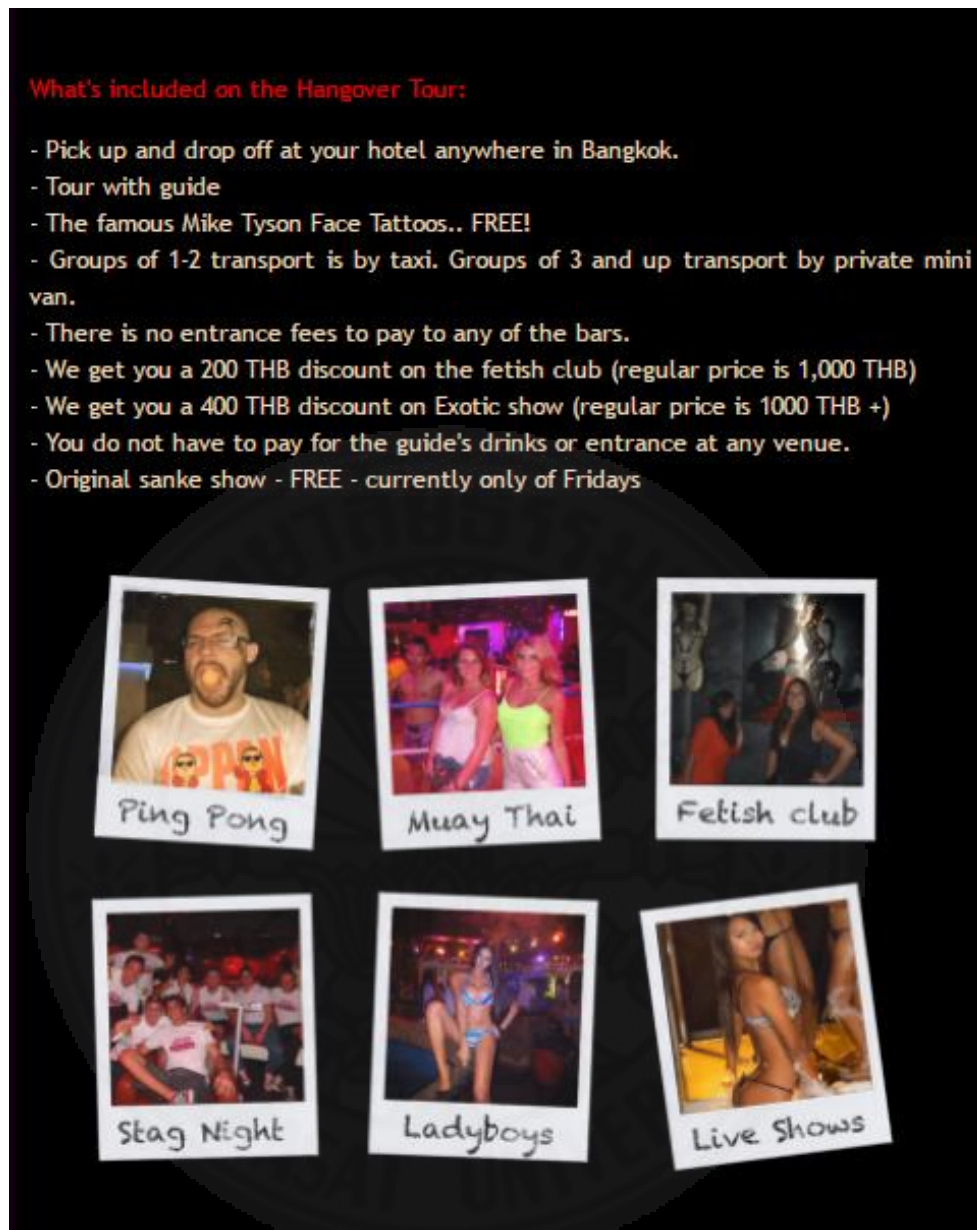
What's included on the Hangover Tour:

- Pick up and drop off at your hotel anywhere in Bangkok.
- Tour with guide
- The famous Mike Tyson Face Tattoos.. FREE!
- Groups of 1-2 transport is by taxi. Groups of 3 and up transport by private mini van.
- There is no entrance fees to pay to any of the bars.
- We get you a 200 THB discount on the fetish club (regular price is 1,000 THB)
- We get you a 400 THB discount on Exotic show (regular price is 1000 THB +)
- You do not have to pay for the guide's drinks or entrance at any venue.
- Original sanke show - FREE - currently only of Fridays

Ping Pong   Muay Thai   Fetish club

Stag Night   Ladyboys   Live Shows

Figure 4.57: Hangover Tour program. Adapted from ″Bangkok Hangover Tour″. Retrieved August 06, 2017

CNN also reported about ′The Hangover Tour′ in Bangkok, Thailand and the story of the Hangover tour then reached a wide audience. The content reveals how Thailand runs The Hangover Tour business and how it works with western tourists. This is from the insight that tourists want to experience something like the characters have experienced but they are afraid that it might not be safe for them. Thus, the Hangover Tour operated by a tour agent is their best choice. Also, it′s worth the price; for only 1,990 Thai baht, they can go inside the fetish club and join activities on the stage, go inside many bars in Soi cowboy and get free drinks, get Tyson′s tattoo and also have a guide who escorts them anywhere. From what is shown in this news, it delivers the message that The Hangover Tour is one of the things the audience should come to experience.

Moreover, the hotel also promotes the concept of the Hangover Tour as a result of the popularity of the movie. The Lebua Hotel, which is the place where the movie was filmed, offers a ′Hangover suite room′, with a view that is presented in the movie with the ′Hangovertinis′ complementary drink. From this, it can be seen that Thailand also promotes itself as a place for sex tourism through foreign tourists′ eyes.

4.2.2.2 Various types of sex worker

With plenty of types of sex workers provided, it undoubtedly draws sex tourists to Thailand. From the *Bridget Jones Diary: The Edge of Reason* observation, we see the scenes of street hookers and bar girls in prison, the scene of prostitutes in the hotel and the scene of masseuses in the massage parlor. Different types of Thai prostitutes are presented: ′Street Hooker′, ′Bar Girl′, ′Escort Girl′ and ′Massage Parlor Girl′. The street hooker type is a prostitute who finds her customers by walking or standing on the street side that normally is in the famous area. Such as Sanam Luang, Lumpini Park and Hua Lumphong for example. They can be called freelancers. The bar girl is a girl who works in bar and a customer can pay more to take her outside the bar for some activities such as having sex, based on their agreement. For the escort girl or call-girl, they normally work under an agency which customers can order via online websites. According to the scene in the hotel, that prostitute kept saying to Cleaver that ″You made order for 10.30″. It shows that her way of work is being ″ordered″ to come to meet a customer at the hotel. Another type is a massage parlor girl, as presented in Cleaver′s scoop. Massage girls provide body-to-body massage and, in reality, they offer more services than just massage. This is known as a happy-ending massage. Thus, the movie reveals various types of Thai prostitutes who are available for western males to come to experience.

From the observation in this movie, Thai women are portrayed as various types of prostitutes who deliver the message to audiences that, in Thailand, there are many types of sex workers to fulfill their sexual fantasy. Even though the whole film does not take place in Thailand, the images of prostitution are emphasized throughout the part of the story that takes place in Thailand.

Thus, this is another famous Hollywood movie that reveals Thailand as a sex paradise for western males. These portrayals are from the reality that Thailand provides various choices of sex workers for sex tourists. To illustrate, the researcher found information from www.thailand-a-gogo.com, the sex tour website. This website also categorizes sex workers into six groups: Thai prostitute, Go-Go girl, bar girl, Escort girl, Ladyboy, and Thai girlfriend, which emphasizes the image of Thailand as a paradise of sex-tourism due to the alternative choices of sex servants that the country provides. The various types of Thai sex workers provided here are similar to what is portrayed in this film.

4.2.2.3 Ladyboy

The Ladyboy has a huge reputation when talking about Thailand. As can be seen in *The Hangover Part 2*, the character of the ladyboy is extremely highlighted and this character becomes well-known among worldwide audiences. This

can be seen in many websites on social media. The reputation of Thailand about
ladyboys is widely talked about. On the phish.net website, someone asks for the
recommendation before he comes to Thailand and comments that mention ladyboys are
shown in this topic. The movie *The Hangover part 2* is also mentioned. This supports
the popularity of the movie, especially the scene of Stu and the ladyboy.

Going to Thailand Any recommendations?
″Try the Ladyboys...they're excellent″ (gospelhump , 2016).
″Watch Hangover 2 first, learn from Stu's mistakes″ (Whale_Tong_907, 2016).

   Furthermore, the researcher found one of the popular VDOs mentioned
about Thailand from YouTube ″12 Things not to do in Thailand″ which has been
viewed by almost 1.5 million people. The content contains 12 things not to do in
Thailand made by a non-Thai content creator. Even though this VDO did not mention
anything about ladyboys there are a number of comments that mention them. For
example:

″″Land of smiles" fuck off man!! It′s the land of ladyboys″ (RajaSinghBedi, 2016).
″13: Don't believe all girls are actually girls.″(MV N, 2016).
″And do not sleep with ladyboy″ (GlobalWatch, 2016).
″13 dont bring home a ladyboy″ (Aliy motors official, 2016).

   4.2.2.4 Underage prostitution

   Underage prostitutes are also one of the main factors that attracts
sex tourists to Thailand. This can be seen from the portrayal of the underage prostitute
character in *Only God Forgives*. The portrayal of Bangkok as a place of underage
prostitutes, according to the fact, is reported in an article from ABC news website:

> Thailand has a reputation for engaging in one of the largest child sex trade
> operations in Southeast Asia. A Thai organization called FACE, the
> coalition to Fight against Child Exploitation, claimed that 5,000 foreigners
> come to Thailand each year to have sex with children. The organization
> described the average sex tourist as a middle-aged white male from either
> Europe or North America who often goes online to find the ″best″ deals.
> One particular website promised nights of sex with two young Thai girls
> for the price of a tank of gas (Marquez, 2006, para.4).

   From the observation of the director′s interview, Refn said he
traveled to Bangkok a few times and it inspired him to make his film. He feels that he
is obsessed with the atmosphere of night time in Bangkok. So, he chose to portray the
nightlife scene in his film. Thus, in the movie, the brothels, karaoke bars and the image
of street hookers are depicted to portray the representation of Bangkok. From this it can
be seen that the movie was made from director′s imagination, including the reality that

he has seen and experienced in Thailand. The image of a street hooker portrayed in the film is pretty similar to what really happens.

4.2.2.5 Thailand sex trade industries and the government support

Thailand has a large number of migrant sex workers that mostly come from our neighboring countries, i.e. Myanmar, Lao, and Cambodia. However, not all sex workers are from Southeast Asia; some are from Russia for example. Thailand has become an international hub for the sex trade industry (Pongpaichit, 1998). Thai prostitutes who work outside the country are also another factor that reinforces the image of Thai women as prostitutes. Also, the huge number of sex workers emphasizes the image of Thailand as the country of prostitution.

Not only sex workers that can be found easily in many parts of red light districts in Thailand reinforce the image of Thailand as a country of sex trade; in other countries there are Thai prostitutes. As reported by Thai Embassy in Japan, 80% of Thai females who were sent back from Japan due to an illegal immigration procedure work as prostitutes. (Pongpaichit, 1998) Also, note that ″...in Germany which is the largest market for Thai prostitutes in Europe. According to unofficial figures from NGOs, two thousand out of six thousand prostitutes in Berlin are Thais″ (Pongpaichit, 1998).

The sex trade industry in Thailand is a core business that generates a large amount of income for the country. It could not come this far without government officers′ support. Behind the prosperous sex industry, there are mafias that have tight relationships with government officers, especially politicians or big name police officers. Also, the corruption in Thai society has not been eliminated; mafia, politicians, police, and high ranking government officers all participate.

There still is evidence of corruption in some of those groups. Recently, there was news that became the talk of the town: ′Cops linked to brothel with 121 prostitutes′. The news reported that the police from many units are involved: tourist police, immigration police, also metropolitan police and some government officers. The evidence found in this case is the notebook which shows the name of government officers who are involved with this case. Also, the amount of bribe is revealed. The amount of money that the brothel′s owner has to pay monthly is from ten thousand to almost eighty thousand baht.

Recently, Thai police dealt with the underage girl sex trade that were bought from Thai politician and it became big news in Thailand. The story reveals that there are three local politicians involved in underage sex trafficking and all of them were already arrested together with the mother of one underage sex worker, who was arrested due to the accusation that she supplies the under 18 girls to the brothel and also takes them to serve politicians directly. Also, another news story reported that a local politician from Nonthaburi went to Mae Hong Son for a study trip but bought sex services from the underage prostitute during the trip and was arrested after that.

From watching the movie *Bangkok Dangerous* we see the situation of politicians involved with prostitution; with the image of a politician buying sex services from prostitutes. He ordered the prostitute to have sexual intercourse at the

hotel. Also, another politician (mafia) character, brought two prostitutes to hang out with him.

The portrayal of politicians buying sex services from prostitutes reflects what really happens in Thai society. It emphasizes the image of prostitution in Thailand that is based on some sense of reality, apart from the sex tourism that mainly serves foreign tourists. The main income and target customers are also Thai men. In this movie, the politician plays his role as a representation of the group of Thai men that consume sex services from Thai prostitutes.

4.2.2.6 Thailand economy, poverty problem and male dominant society reinforce the prosperity of sex trade business

The economy of the country is also one of the reasons that reinforces the sex trade industry which leads to the reinforcement of Thai women stereotypes for Thailand as a destination of sex trade industry. Sex workers earn a far greater amount of income than workers in many other occupations. Many factors, such as poverty problems, education, family issues, a society of materialism, can be found in many parts of Thailand. Being a sex worker is one of the choices for women who need to gain money to live.

Also, social norms of a male dominant society since ancient time also support the prostitution. Thai women are expected to be passive, under men′s control, and that is also concerned with prostitution as women are treated as goods in Thai society.

The example about poverty which leads Thai women to become sex workers is *Only God Forgives,* the character of an underage prostitute. Apart from her role as sex worker, the movie also reveals the underage prostitute in another role. She has her role as a daughter of a local guy named ′Choi Yan Lee′. There is one scene in which Choi Yan Lee confesses to the cop that, with his poverty problem, he needs to let his daughters work as prostitutes. So, this presents another of her roles, as a grateful daughter who works due to family poverty issues, to support her family. From this, comes the cliché of prostitute life in a third world country. The girl from a poor family becomes a sex worker to get money to support her family.

Furthermore, the concept of male dominant society is shown in *Bridget Jones Diary: The Edge of Reason.* The two Thai women in prison who were forced to sell sex by their boyfriends clearly reveal their positions under male control. Their lives are designed by males.

From all of this evidence, it can be seen that the portrayal of Thai women characters in selected Hollywood films is linked to the reality of what really happens in Thailand. The media just reveals only parts of the social reality from their point of view and convey messages to the audiences. Also, with the repetitive portrayals of Thai women in Hollywood screen in stereotypical roles as prostitutes or bar girls, it seems to be difficult to change. Since western media always depicts these sides of Thai women to show through global audiences′ eyes, it becomes common knowledge among global audiences. Their perception towards Thai women after consuming media would be in the same way ″Thai women = prostitute″. Yang (2011) claimed that western media

normally presents other races from their own basis of knowledge about the other group. This can be explained in this context. He also states that the US media is a ʹmedia power controllerʹ which is normally controlled and produced by the west (Yang, 2011). Thus, as long as western media still have a controlling power over global audiences, and it still depicts Thai women as prostitutes according to social reality in Thailand, it would continue to depict Thai women in the same stereotypical roles.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings from this study show various types of Thai women stereotypes in Hollywood films. It is interesting that researcher found more types apart from the four types of Asian stereotypes proposed by various scholars (Geisha, Dragon Lady, Lotus Blossom and Suzie Wong). They are, LBFM, 3rd World Lady, Baby Dragon, Flowing Lotus, Pity Chicken and Ladyboy.

From observation, most of them share common stereotypical role of Asian women as sexualized objects, i.e. sexually seductive bar girl or sexually docile woman. From stereotype categories of ′Geisha′, ′Lotus Blossom′, ′LBFM′, ′Flowing Lotus′, ′Baby Dragon′ and ′Ladyboy′ that were found, their images are created to fulfil the white male fantasy. Some characters who are not portrayed as prostitutes still reveal the ability to please white males in their own way; for example, ′Fon′ from *Bangkok Dangerous* and ′Lauren′ from *The Hangover Part 2*. Thus, the idea of Oriental women strongly influences the depiction of Thai women in Hollywood films.

As the researcher found from this study, the depiction of Thai women from selected films has two sides: the sex worker who is eager to please white males or the conservative woman who is also eager to please white males (at least one type of these characteristics is portrayed in each film). Thus, no matter what their roles are, they are all good at pleasing men, especially western white men. From the findings, most of the characters from the five selected Hollywood films are good at pleasing white men. Thus, the idea that Thai women can fulfil the western male fantasy is emphasized in every selected film. This study shows how the idea of Oriental women who can fulfil the white male fantasy has influenced the portrayal of Thai women in Hollywood films.

From this, it can be concluded that, with the generalization stereotypes of Asian women as sexually available and prostitutes, Thai women which are positioned under the ′Asian women′ big umbrella then are also perceived as prostitutes. Apart from the Asian prostitute stereotype, the idea of Asian women as submissive and docile also influences the portrayal of Thai women in Hollywood films; for example, ′Fon′ from *Bangkok Dangerous* and ′Lauren′ from *Only God Forgives* who strongly present this characteristic of Asian women.

Another point which strongly influences the depiction of Thai women as prostitutes is the social reality in Thailand. The country provides a large amount of sex workers for both Thai men and foreign male tourists. They are also exported internationally so that the reputation becomes commonly known globally. The image portrayed through global media, especially films, together with the social reality, help to reinforce the stereotype of Thai women as prostitutes.

Another interesting point is that some Thai female characters′ life stories that are revealed through films also reflect the social reality. One example is the underage prostitute from *Only God Forgives* whose father says that he needs to let his daughter

works as a prostitute due to the family′s poverty problem. This story reveals the cliché of prostitution in Thailand; the girl sells sex for a living due to poverty condition. Also, the two Thai women in prison from *Bridget Jones Diary: The Edge of Reason* also convey the message of Thai society background. Their love life stories that were shared during their conversation with Jones show the concept of male dominant society in Thailand; the story of women who are oppressed by their partners and have to accept that and cannot fight back. This clearly shows Thai women as having inferior status to Thai men. Thus, apart from seeing the character′s stereotypical role itself, viewers can gain social and cultural context, social reality, etc. from the character′s life story.

For further research, the researcher would suggest scholars to explore the portrayal of Thai women in Hollywood films and see how it develops over time. Also, scholars might compare the portrayal of Thai women in Hollywood films with women from other Asian countries or even western women; Russian, Latin, or French for example. Also, scholars should observe the trend of social movement, such as feminism and see how it affect the portrayal of women in films. From the researcher′s point of view, the semiotic analysis works with the study of the racial stereotype portrayal in Hollywood films due to the role of other races, which in this study focuses only on Thai women who rarely have a chance to speak or play a lead role in Hollywood films. So, to analyze data from characters, including the interpretation of non-verbal communication is strongly effective for the study. The use of context, relationship with protagonist and antagonist, behavior displayed, appearance and self & other references are all essential for getting data.

For the limitation, this study mainly focuses on Hollywood depictions of Thai women in order to investigate what types of Thai women are portrayed in Hollywood films. But there are few Hollywood movies which fall into the selection criteria. So, the material that can be used to investigate is not much. If there were more material it would be very useful for this study.

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