

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion and Recommendation

Julia O'Connell Davidson has previously discussed how prostitution brings male clients to take an imaginary legitimized power over the female sex workers, leading to a hegemonic relationship, where the customers take a superior stand in relation to sex workers. The degree of inequality is emphasized by racial differences and the level of the women's destructive characters in, for example, drugs use, economic inadequacies, physical assault, etc. (3, 142-145)

From my point of view, such unequal power relation also exists in literary circle, particularly in the selected English contemporary novels presenting female sex workers of Thailand. It seems that male writers hold a feeling of superiority over the Thai female sex workers. Their general tone avoids commitments and a long term successful partnerships with Thai women in the bar business. In this discrimination, there are two aspects: the image based on Said's Orientalism and the negative image of Thailand's prostitution in relation to that perspective.

First, the characters are regarded as Orientalized images related to Said's *Orientalism* (1987), in the concept of "exotic others." This image categorizes Asian characters in a definite quality of Western woman characters namely tan skin color, long dark hair, small bodies, beautiful teeth and provincialism.

Second, there are also other negative qualities of Thai females in sex oriented tourism, namely their consumerist values and vulnerability. The writers accuse consumerism as leading to their deceitfulness and their taking financial advantage of foreign bar customers. Meanwhile, the vulnerable quality is portrayed in three aspects: 1) a high degree of desperation, an absence of a sense of self-reliance and a

failure to recognize true self-value, which potentiality leads to returning to the sex trade, drugs use, and self-mutilation. 2) limited educational background, problems in communication and some mistreatment by Western clients 3) sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Such portrayal can be explained through the negative impact of an imbalanced development in Thailand, which leaves the majority of the population in poverty and emphasizes materialistic values, where money and property possession are regarded as individual pride and self-esteem. Thus, consumerism motivates several young ladies to gradually enter the sex trade in order to finance their poor families' materialist consumption.

The undesirable characters originate in Thailand's long established patriarchy. Male domination in families leads to gender inequality, which allows male family members to live in superior comfortable conditions and take advantage of female members educationally, economically and through domestic violence and sexual abuse. Subsequently, the women are made to become docile and naturally accept an inferior position to Thai men, while they lose their independence and confidence and let men take control of their lives.

The image of Thai female sex workers as portrayed in other English sources, such as foreign media (especially the Internet) can be further examined to raise consciousness of the prejudice toward the voiceless people of Thailand. The problems caused by gender inequality in Thailand as a result of patriarchal power needs to be addressed in Thailand's public discussion by raising awareness and to seek urgent solutions to sexual exploitation and domestic violence against Thai women. While Thailand's poverty problem seems hopeless to fix in the short run, the self-sufficiency theory should be put into use to decrease the consumerist values in Thailand's neediest demographics.