

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Through the lens of Post-Structuralism, a stable meaning is not “out there” waiting for the interpretation. Laotian Cultural Identity, therefore, is constructed through discursive formation. In other words, the meaning is legitimated through the one who has the power. In the text that values socialist ideology, all deviant behaviors will not be approved. Likewise, the text that values modernity and scientificity all produces the sense of abnormality to the phenomenon which is not complied with their rules. The Laotian Cultural Identity, thus, keeps sliding depending on how the text is read. This paper argues that positivistic paradigm plays important role in consolidating the totality or the coherence of the text. Meanwhile, when the one side is lifted, the other side would be suppressed. Besides, an establishment of binary oppositions is the fundamental method to construct the meaning.

Binary oppositions allow readers to constitute the smallest unit of meaning. However, readers might not have the consensus value in particular unit. In human science paradigm, subjectivity which is the main method of acquiring knowledge also allows readers to explore the utmost possibility of creating meaning. Post-structuralist readers can turn around the meaning depending on their position. This paper, without falling into the authentic stereotyping, argues that the Laotian Cultural Identity in the New-Thinking Era as reflected in three authors’ short stories does not share the collective Identity. In each text, the Laotian Cultural Identity in the New-Thinking Era is constructed through power of selection, suppression as well as modification.

This paper claims that In “Phaeng Mae” and “Mok Tao”, Socialist ideology plays no role in constructing Laotian Cultural Identity. The center of Laotian Cultural Identity in these two texts is the lost tradition. Within this linear structure, these two texts do not include political regime as a part of Laotian Cultural Identity. Likewise, in “Lao Tevada” and “Kem Kad Nak”, political regime is not criticized but the center is shifted for tradition to modernity. Identity in Outhine’s texts is likely to be the conservative Lao Identity as the nostalgic feeling of the Pre-Communism Era is

constructed as a discursive strategy to consolidate the Laotian Cultural Identity. In Outhine's texts the sense of generosity and value of morality resurface. This paper argues that Identity in Saisuwan's texts is in transition from "Old Backward Identity" to become "New Modern Identity" as the discourse of modern reform is suggestively constructed. His discursive strategy is mainly about the establishment of the scientificity as a standard. This paper asserts that Bountanong's texts contain various kind of conflicting Identity. In "Kadook American", the text discusses the strength and peace-loving aspect of Lao people. In "Kong Mai", the text shows government's incompetence to provide good welfare to its citizen and the negative influence from other countries. In "Poy Nok", it is a transition of "Old Bad Identity" which people are abused from traditional community and capitalism to "New Social Identity" and "New Modern Identity". In "Nak Tod", the fair society is replaced by the totalitarian military. Saisuwan's texts and Bountanong's texts are both skeptical towards the government's frame of administration. In all texts, the country is not yet unified in practical ways. There is disparity between social and financial status, city and country people.

According to Judith Butler, there is no identity unless it is performed. Meanwhile, Identity performance reveals a trace of pain caused by war and political conflict, a trace of the clash of the attitudes. There is also a trace the dichotomy of "old" and "new" identity which is the barrier to consolidate and rebuild collective sense of Laoness in the New-Thinking Era. Therefore, this paper suggests that to deconstruct how Laotian Identity is formed is not simply to reverse the dichotomy as the reversal is just another kind of prioritization.

To sum up, this paper argues that Laotian Identity in the New-Thinking Era is socially constructed. The limit of this study, first of all, is that the selected works are written through male writers' voices. Therefore, the researcher would like to suggest the possibility of conducting future researches on women writers who might have different responses to an immediate aftermath of the New-Thinking Era. Moreover, the comparative studies between literatures of Laos and other communist countries or former communist countries such as Eastern European countries can be useful options.