

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

#### 4.1. Plot

Khan Kluay is the story of a curious, naughty, young elephant growing up independently deep in a forest. His insatiable curiosity about his missing father sets him on a journey of great adventure. The many obstacles and difficulties that he encounters make him strong and the lessons he learns turn him into a brave, proud elephant full of energy yet very gentle at heart.

Khan Kluay meets many memorable characters on his journey who help him solve his various problems and prepare him to be the greatest elephant of all time. As well as these characters from the animal kingdom, Khan Kluay learns to live with humans and to understand the relationship between man and elephant. Finally, this eventually leads to self-sacrifice as he goes to war as a warrior. His aim is to find his father, but Khan Kluay eventually realizes that something else is even more meaningful and that is friendship, courage and sacrifice.

Then, the sequel of Khan Kluay is released with the same theme as the first episode. *Khan Kluay II* is set after the victory of Ayudhya against the invasion of the powerful Burmese Empire when Khan Kluay is appointed as King Naresuan's royal elephant and serves the king in his many battles. But it isn't the end of the war yet when the Burmese Empire determinedly declares more battle. Before Ayudhya's troop could set the journey to the battlefield, some Burmese soldiers invade Ayudhya to capture people as their captives, they even kidnap Khan Kluay's wife and children, Chabakaew,

Ton-or and Korkaew. To save his family from danger, Khan Kluay escapes from Ayudhya to encounter his new adventure and battles in the land of the enemy. Finally, he can save his family, the king and Siam and return to the grand palace.

## **4.2 Analysis**

The analysis is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the characterization of both major and minor characters in the films; the second part is about the use of colors in the films, and the third part focuses on the use of songs in the films. Significantly, the examination of characterization as well as the use of colors and the use of songs reveals that the films convey cultural racism. Besides, it is found that the films' nationalist discourse seeks to construct Siam and its people as unique, different, and superior to neighboring countries, especially Burma. This kind of construction corresponds with Benedict Anderson's claim that nationalist narrative seeks to create the imagination that members of a nation belong to the same community and that people in other nations are different from them (15). Furthermore, the films create negative stereotypes of the Burmese, portraying them as "the Other", and this parallels De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak's critique of national habitus as involving the tendency to exclude, look down on, and label those perceived as outsiders or foreigners with negative characteristics (153).

### **4.2.1 Characterization**

Characterization plays an important part in conveying the main theme of the films. The audience gets to know a character through his/her words, thoughts, and actions. In this study, the characterization of humans and animals in the films will be analyzed to show how it helps express the films' important messages that stimulate nationalist sentiment and at the same time convey negative and even racist attitude towards Burma and its people.

#### 4.2.1.1 The Elephants

The main characters of *Khan Kluay I* and *Khan Kluay II*: Khan Kluay, Phu Pha, Ngung Dang and Nga Nil are royal elephants but their characteristics are totally different. Analysis of *Khan Kluay I* and *Khan Kluay II* show that the films were produced through Thai point of view that aims to depict Thai characters as heroes and Burmese characters as villains.

Khan Kluay, the protagonist, is constructed in the films as a true patriot, a loving son, and a responsible father. In *Khan Kluay I*, Khan Kluay decides to leave his mother to look for his father whom he has not met before in his life. During the time he lives in Hin Kao village, he trains himself very hard to be ready for the royal elephant selection ceremony. He keeps practicing his martial arts skill everyday for many years. At first he always fails because of his young age and size but later he becomes stronger and more skillful. This reminds the young audience that age is not an obstacle for being a patriot. When Khan Kluay is chosen to be a royal elephant of King Naresuan, he still tries to look for his father in the palace until Jid Rid, a bird who works as a messenger, brings him to the royal elephant hall. He meets an old male elephant who went to the war with his father. The old elephant told him about his father who was killed in the war because he has tried to save his friend's life. Khan Kluay is shocked with the news and his mother asked him not to go to the war or else he might be killed like his father. Before Khan Kluay and his mother leave the hall, the old elephant says to Khan Kluay:

สำหรับนักรบ มันไม่สำคัญหรอกว่าจะมีชีวิตอยู่ได้นานแค่ไหน แต่อยู่ที่ว่าการตายของเรา  
ได้สร้างประโยชน์อะไรไว้ให้กับแผ่นดินบ้าง ถึงภรรยาจะตายไป แต่ความกล้าหาญ ทำให้เขา  
มีชีวิตอยู่มาจนถึงทุกวันนี้

For the warrior, it does not matter how long we can live but our sacrifice for

the mother land does. Even if Phu Pha passed away, his courage makes him immortal.



Figure 1: The old elephant in the royal elephant hall asking Khan Kluay to join the army

After listening to an old friend of his father, he makes a decision to go to the war in order to fight with the enemies like his father did before, even if his mother disagrees. This scene presents the nationalistic character of Khan Kluay. He is very brave and does not fear death. He is willing to sacrifice his life for his homeland.

Another scene that shows Khan Kluay's patriotism is in the beginning of *Khan Kluay II*. The film starts with Chaba Keaw being upset with Khan Kluay because he does not have enough time to pay attention to her. She complains that she married Khan Kluay, not the royal elephant who sees the importance of the war more than a family. So she needs more attention because she is pregnant. Khan Kluay asks Chaba Keaw whether he does anything wrong because his duty as a royal elephant is to protect Siam. When Chaba Keaw tells him that she is pregnant, he is very excited and tries to persuade Chaba Keaw to stay with him in the palace instead of going to give birth at Hin Kao village. Suddenly, the bird Jid Rid comes and tells Khan Kluay that he has to be prepared for the next war since the enemy moves close to the city. This news immediately distracts his attention from Chaba Keaw and he keeps asking the birds about the details of the enemy's invasion. Here we can see that Khan Kluay sees

national security as more important than family matters, and the film implicitly tells the audience that to be a true hero, the well-being of your country must always come first.

Kan Kluay's mother, Sang Da, is another patriotic character even though she does not want to lose Khan Kluay in the war. So, Sang Da asks Khan Kluay not to look for his father or go to the war. Surprisingly in *Khan Kluay II*, she changes her mind to support Khan Kluay to do his duty and promises him that she will help taking care of Chaba Keaw and her babies while they move to Hin Kao village. Before she leaves, she tells Khan Kluay not to worry about his family and to do his best in protecting the country because he is the pride of the family. Later, the Burmese come to Hin Kao village and capture her family. She sacrifices herself to protect Chaba Keaw and her grandchildren in order to save Khan Kluay's family as she has promised, believing that if Chaba Keaw and children are in danger or killed, Khan Kluay will not be able to focus on his work as a royal elephant, and Siam might be in danger. The depiction of her great concern for the country and her willingness to give up her life to defend her homeland is clearly meant to suggest to the audience that true patriotism often involves sacrifice.

When he is informed by Jid Rid that his mother was killed in the fire trying to rescue his wife and twin children from the Burmese, he makes a decision to leave the palace to look for his family. Before he leaves, he visits his father's ashes in the royal elephant hall and apologizes for his decision. He promises to his father's ashes that he will return to the palace and receive the punishment because escaping the army during the wartime is not something a royal elephant should do:

“ตอนนี้ลูกเมียของลูกกำลังตกอยู่ในอันตราย ลูกจึงจำเป็นต้องไป ถึงแม้ว่าการละทิ้งหน้าที่ยามศึกสงครามจะเป็นความผิดใหญ่หลวงต่อแผ่นดินอยุธยาแต่ไม่ว่าอะไรจะ

เกิดขึ้น ลูกก็จะกลับมารับโทษทัณฑ์ในสิ่งที่ลูกได้กระทำให้ไป”

“Now, my wife and kids are in danger. So, I have to leave even if I know that it’s the crime to leave Ayudhya in the war. No matter what happens, I will come back and accept all the punishment.”

His decision above shows that he is brave and responsible for his action. The audience can see that he is courageous and does not want to run away from his responsibility. He always adheres to the military discipline but this time he is the only one who can save his family. He does not feel any fear for the punishment even though he knows he will get the death penalty. While he is rescuing his family, he also tries to save King Naresuan from the Burmese. Finally, he can rescue his family, protect the king and save Siam at the same time. Therefore, Khan Kluay is a role model of being a good citizen as he determines to save the king and protect the country even if he has to sacrifice himself.

Apart from Khan Kluay the protagonist and his mother, the characterization of other Thai male elephants in *Khan Kluay I* and *II* also helps convey patriotism. They are willing to protect Siam like humans do. In the movies, they act and think like humans by training themselves to be ready for the war. They are disciplined, patient and determined as they practise martial arts and learn to improve their skills. They follow the military disciplines by standing in lines, doing the training all together and respecting the leader. In the battle, they fight tirelessly and bravely without fear, as can also be seen from the images below:



Figure 2: Characteristics of Siam elephants

The characteristics of Thai elephants portrayed in *Khan Kluay I* and *Khan Kluay II* can be equated to the traits of Thai heroes who are willing to sacrifice themselves for their motherland. Nonetheless, while the films were produced to promote nationalism, they also seek to create negative and racist stereotypes of the Burmese. To illustrate, Burmese royal elephants are not depicted as heroes even if they fight for their country. On the contrary, they are created to be revengeful and ruthless villains.



Figure 3: Burmese elephants are attacking Siamese captives

Burmese elephants are clearly constructed to convey the negative characteristics of the Burmese nation and its people. In the films, the Burmese elephants are trained to attack and kill the Siamese as well as Burmese human characters. They look unfriendly, fierce and aggressive, and this makes them totally different from the brave and kind-



hearted Thai elephants. The contrast between the Thai and the Burmese elephants as portrayed in the films corresponds with De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak's argument that the discursive construction of nations and national identities is always accompanied by the construction of 'the Other' as different, inferior, and possessing negative attributes (153).

#### 4.2.1.2 The Bird

The other animal character who embodies positive characteristics of a patriot is the bird Jid Rid, who works as a messenger for the Siamese. Jid Rid is one of the main characters in *Khan Kluay I* and *Khan Kluay II*. He is very small but he fights bravely against Burmese soldiers who are much bigger than him. When Khan Kluay finds out that his father was killed in the war and is nearly persuaded by his mother not to join the war, Jid Rid reminds Khan Kluay of his duty in protecting Siam as he is now a royal elephant who must not be discouraged and who has to fight bravely even if he might lose in the end. Jid Rid's action shows that he loves his nation and he has patriotic spirit even though he is just a messenger, not a soldier.

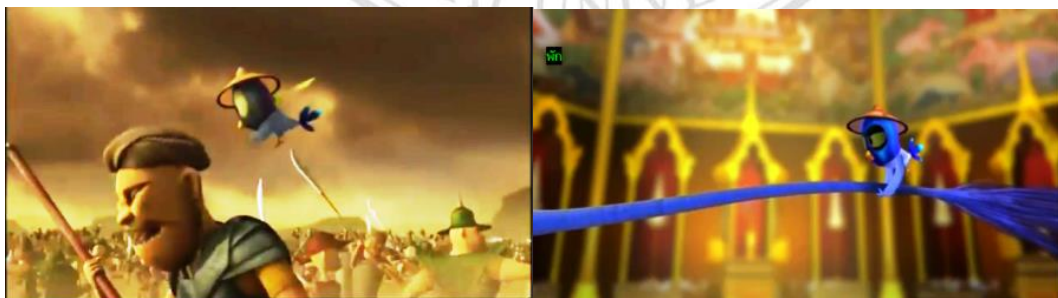


Figure 4: Jid Rid, the bird messenger of Thai army

#### 4.2.1.3 The Ruling Class

Both *Khan Kluay I* and *Khan Kluay II* highlight King Naresuan's heroism, showing how he sacrifices himself to liberate his country from Burmese oppression. His image in the films is that of a great king who is totally devoted to people and his



homeland. He leads the troops to fight the Burmese bravely and his power and prestige are widely recognized. Therefore, the king as portrayed in the films is a centre of nationalist feeling. The king is also depicted as the most powerful person of Siam, who tries to unite and encourage people to fight bravely against the enemy, as revealed through the king's speeches below:

เราพร้อมที่จะสละเลือดเนื้อและชีวิตให้กับแผ่นดินเพื่ออิสรภาพและความร่มเย็น  
ของบ้านเมืองเราสืบไป

I am ready to fight against Hongsawadi and sacrifice myself to protect  
our motherland.

เหล่าทหารกล้าทั้งหลาย จงอย่ากลัวศัตรูที่อยู่เบื้องหน้า ยิ่งกองทัพเราเล็กเพียงใด  
ชัยชนะก็จะยิ่งใหญ่เพียงนั้น เลือดเนื้อที่จะนองสนามรบในครั้งนี้ ไม่ใช่เพื่อ  
ประกาศแสนยานุภาพ แต่เพื่อกำจัดศัตรูผู้เหยียบย่ำและรุกรานแผ่นดินของเรา วันนี้  
เราจะสู้ไล่พวกมันออกไป รักษาผืนแผ่นดินนี้ไว้ให้กับลูกหลานของเรา

All my brave soldiers, do not be afraid of the enemies standing in front  
of you. The small army we are, the more victory we can get. The blood  
that will cover the land in this war is not to show our great power but to  
get rid of the enemies who invaded us. Today, we are going to fight and  
get rid of them. Protect this land for our next generation.

From the king's speeches above, the audience can see that King Naresuan determines to protect Siam with his life. This portrayal of the king clearly aims to make Thai people feel proud of the monarchy and grateful for what Thai kings in the past did for the country. The films clearly focus on the leadership of monarchs who are presented as the nation's heroes. At the same time, the negative feeling towards the Burmese is created because the films also show that the Burmese invade Siam and

victimize the Siamese. As the films seek to remind the Thai audience of the supposedly devastating things done to Siam and its people by the Burmese, this could lead the audience to feel the hatred against the Burmese and see them as enemy.



Figure 5: Pictures of King Naresuan

In *Khan Kluey II*, a Thai princess is also depicted as a true patriot who sacrifices her happiness for her homeland. In this film, Princess Suphankanlaya, the princess of Siam, agrees to marry the Burmese king to appease the powerful Burmese king. She believes that her marriage to the Burmese king will help bring peace to Siam and she later tries to persuade the Burmese to release her younger brother to return home. Through what she does for Siam, she becomes the symbol of self-sacrifice, courage and determination.



Figure 6: Pictures of Princess Suphankanlaya

While the Thai monarch and princess are created to be the symbol of patriotism, the Burmese king and princes are depicted as villains who are full of wrath, jealousy and desire for revenge. When the Burmese king and princes appear in the film, the atmosphere is dark and gloomy. The sky outside is dark red and black as if to suggest that the Burmese king and princes are representatives of dark power full of cruelty, aggressiveness and violence. This constructed contrast between the Thai and the Burmese royalty clearly aims to impart the message that Burma is ruled by evil figures who want to harm others.



Figure 7: the Burmese crown prince in *Khan Kluy I*

The image of the Burmese king in *Kan Kluay II* is even more negative than that in *Kan Kluay I*. In *Kan Kluay II*, the Burmese king wants to take revenge for his son who was killed by King Naresuan in the previous war. The Burmese king is represented as a merciless and revengeful figure and his speech below reveals his cruel and vengeful nature:

พวกมันจะต้องชดใช้กับสิ่งที่ทำกับลูกข้าอย่างสาสม ทหารแห่งหงสาทั้งหลาย พวก  
อยุธยา เคยสร้างความเจ็บแค้นให้กับเราอย่างแสนสาหัส บัดนี้ ด้วยแสนยานุภาพของ  
กองทัพหงสาวดี เราพร้อมแล้ว ที่จะมอบความเจ็บปวดนั้นคืนให้กับพวกอยุธยา  
They are going to pay for everything they have done to my son. The  
Ayudhya people hurt us a lot in the past. With the power of Hongsa, we  
are ready to give the pain back to them.

Also, in a scene in a throne hall, the Burmese king treats a young prince, who is half Siamese and half Burmese, badly. The king pushes away the food tray of the young prince only because the tray contains Siamese food. The tray drops on the floor and the food is scattered all over. The Burmese king in this scene appears rude irrational, and heartless, and what he says below conveys his hatred towards Siam:

ที่หงสาเลี้ยงเจ้าไม่ดีพอหรือไง ถึงต้องกินของอยุธยา  
“You Siamese think that we do not raise you well enough? Why do you  
still eat Thai food?”

Because of his revengeful mind, when the Burmese king knows that King Naresuan is ready for war, he gets upset and goes to see Princess Suphankanlaya and abuses her with harsh words. This negative depiction of the Burmese king obviously aims to cast him as a villain who deserves hatred from the audience. His negative characteristics also help emphasize the virtue and morals of the Thai king and princess,



the representatives of the Thai monarchy, which according to Saichon Sattayanurak has occupied a central position in Thai nationalist ideology and “Thainess.” (Sattayanurak 5-6).



Figure 8: The Burmese king in *Khan Klauy II*

In *Khan Klauy II*, there is an aristocratic Burmese wizard, who is the assistant of the Burmese king and helps the king prepare for the invasion of Siam. The wizard looks very evil and he has ugly appearance. He also has black magic that can control evil spirits. The Wizard uses his dark power to make the Burmese troop more evil and he derives a lot of enjoyment from his cruel plan:

ตอนนี้ช้างศึกของเราเริ่มคุ้นเคยกับกลิ่นคาวเลือดของพวกเขาอยู่ชยาแล้วพระเจ้าคะ แก่  
นี้ยังน้อยไปพระเจ้าคะ อีกไม่นานอาวุธพิเศษที่ข้าเตรียมไว้ก็พร้อมที่จะถวายให้

พระองค์ได้ ทอดพระเนตร

“Our war elephants get used to the smell of blood of the Siamese.....

That’s still not enough, his majesty. Soon, the special weapon that I’ve  
been prepared will be ready for you to take a look.....Now, it’s time to  
ruin the Siamese!”



Figure 9: Burmese necromancer in *Khan Kluay II*

There is also another Burmese aristocrat who looks totally evil and malicious, and this character appears in both *Kan Kluay I* and *Kan Kluay II*. This character has a Chinese-look, with small eyes, small-lined eyebrows and mustache. In *Khan Kluay I*, he orders Burmese soldiers to chase the young Khan Kluay to capture him. He also does a number of other evil things. The image of this evil aristocrat is shown below:



Figure 10: The Burmese aristocrat in *Khan Kluay I*

Moreover, another highly unpleasant Burmese character who appears in both *Kan Kluay I* and *Kan Kluay II* is the Burmese general. He looks like an Arab with big round eyes, thick beard and mustache and he has muscular figure. He invades a Thai village, threatens and hurts Thai people. In *Khan Kluay II*, he is turned into an evil-looking zombie like other Burmese soldiers, and he is finally killed during the war



against Siam. Through this character, the films again emphasize the evil of the Burmese and there seem to be the suggestion that the punishment for evil Burmese is death.



Figure 11: The Burmese general

#### 4.2.1.4 The Soldiers

In *Khan Kluay I*, Burmese soldiers are created to look like monkeys and they look tricky and untrustworthy. They also act foolishly and tend to do things impulsively. They do not have any leadership or teamwork skills and they fail to complete their missions. They are clearly created to be the contrast of Thai soldiers who have good looks, pleasant personality, and ability to complete their missions.





Figure 12: Burmese soldiers who look like monkeys

In *Khan Kluiy II*, Burmese soldiers are turned into zombies due to the dark power of the Burmese necromancer. The Burmese is defeated and the Burmese prince is killed by the Siamese king. Later, the king of Burma finds the way to take revenge on Siamese army with the supernatural power of the necromancer, who turns human soldiers into zombies so that the Siamese army cannot win. This association of the Burmese with black magic creates even more negative image of them, making them so different from the Siamese who fought bravely and never resorted to evil tricks.



Figure 13: A Burmese soldier who looks like a zombie.

Contrastingly, in the films Siamese soldiers look much better than their Burmese counterparts. Siamese soldiers in *Khan Kluay I* have similar looks; they all look like young boys who are innocent but at the same time they also look determined and brave. In *Khan Kluay II*, the Thai soldiers appear older but they all still have pleasant looks and personality. The films clearly attempt to make the Thai soldiers look superior to and appear more likeable than the Burmese. In other words, through the different looks and characteristics of the Thai and the Burmese soldiers, the films seek to contrast the Thai and the Burmese national identities. As Anderson argues, nationalist discourse highlights the “sameness” of those perceived as members of the same nation while showing them as different from foreigners or outsiders (15).

The films can be seen as taking part in influencing the audience’s notion of what it means to be a Siamese, who is part of the Siamese nation with its long history of glory and bravery. Yet what is also embedded in the films is cultural racism, as conveyed through the negative stereotypes attached to the Burmese characters.



Figure 14: Thai soldiers in *Khan Kluay I* (left) and *Khan Kluay II* (right)

#### **4.2.2 The Use of Colors**

The use of colors to create totally different images of Siam and Burma will be discussed in this section. Color is an important aesthetic component in any artistic creations and it is also a form of non-verbal communication that can set a mood, convey an emotion, invoke a physiological reaction or inspire people to take action. The colors and tones used in films are chosen to maximize emotional impact and carry the hidden message from the message senders to the audiences (Xue, et al 1).

##### **4.2.2.1 The Colors of Burmese and Thai landscapes/geography**

In the opening scenes of *Khan Kluay I and II*, there are a lot of natural resources such as forest, waterfall and rice fields shown in the Siam's geographic scenes. These scenes indicate the abundance and fertility of Siamese land. Everywhere, both inside and outside town there are a lot of trees and living things. According to Cerrato, green can be interpreted as a color of nature. It symbolizes growth, harmony, freshness, and fertility. It has strong emotional correspondence with safety and great healing power. It is the most restful color for human eyes and can improve vision. It also suggests stability and endurance (8). The use of green color makes Siam appear an ideal place to live, where people have perfect lives and live happily with plenty of natural resources.

The example of the use of green appears in the opening scene of Khan Kluay's birth. Khan Kluay and his family live in the plentiful forest. There are trees, flowers and wild animals around them. It seems to be a very happy and peaceful life. Another example is when young Khan Kluay and young Chaba Keaw first meet in the forest and walk to Hin Kao village. The background color is always green. Everywhere they go, the audience can see green landscapes. This gives the audience a picture of a good place to live like a heaven of all living things.





Figure 15: The use of green to represent Siamese landscapes

Moreover, gold is used to symbolize the wealth and prosperity of Siam. There is a picture of a big Buddhist image in the center of the city with golden ray. In this scene, the picture of the Buddhist image is shown while a song is being played. The lyrics celebrate the glory of Ayudhya. Here the film tries to convey that Siam is a country with a long history of Buddhism and people live peacefully. According to Cerrato, the color gold implies generosity of money and spirit. It is the color of victory, hence the use of gold medals for winners (18). Apart from the opening scene in *Khan Kluay II*, there is another scene with the use of gold. In *Khan Kluay I*, when the elephants are cleaning themselves in the river of Hin Kao village, the golden light is used in this scene. As Cerrato argues, gold is seen as the color of inner wisdom, quality and wealth (18). The use of gold here therefore seems to suggest the idea that the elephants are wise creatures with the potential to do great things.



Figure 16: The use of the gold color with Siamese landscapes

Another color frequently used to depict Siamese landscapes is blue. The use of blue and green always comes together probably because they are the colors of the nature. Blue geography can be seen many times during the movie. For instance, the color of the sky above Siam is blue in both day and night time. In addition, blue is used to describe one of the most popular Thai festivals, Loy Krathong. In this scene, we can see river and sky in blue. Blue is also often associated with calmness. As Cerrato claims, blue symbolizes trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, truth, and heaven. Blue is also considered as beneficial to the mind and body. It slows human metabolism and produces a calming effect (Cerrato 11).

ลิขสิทธิ์มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่  
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Figure 17: The use of blue to depict Siamese landscapes and activities

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Figure 18: The use of dark brown and dark green to represent the Burmese landscapes

Contrastingly, the landscapes of Burma are totally different from the Thai landscapes. The dark tones are applied in Burmese scenes, especially dark brown and dark green. According to Cerrato, dark brown shows sadness, depression, lack of humor and sophistication, while dark green is associated with ambition, greed, and jealousy (8). In the battle scenes, Burmese troops always come with dark sky, which seems to signify mercilessness, cruelty and evil. The Burmese grand palace in both *Khan Kluay I* and *II* is also designed in the dark tone. It can be noticed that there is no sun light, fresh air or abundant natural resources and it makes audience feel uncomfortable. The films seem to convey the message that Burmese people live in mystery and are under dark power.

The use of color can indirectly affect the perception of the audience. It helps create pictures in the audience's mind in a way that the producers want them to believe. The audience sees the differences between the landscapes of Siam and Burma. After that, they may compare and judge the two countries from what they have seen. The Thai audiences may feel proud of Siam as an ideal place to live because of abundant

resources. At the same time, Burma is judged as not a very good place to live due to the drought and terror. Negative perception of Burma is therefore formed on the minds of some in the audience, and it can lead to prejudice or bias against the Burmese. This kind of prejudice and bias can be classified as cultural racism, which according to Jones, assumes the superiority of one race's cultural and national heritage over that of other races (472). Moreover, the use of colors in the films, which emphasizes the sameness of the beautiful Siamese landscapes, as contrasted to the dark and gloomy Burmese landscapes, parallels Anderson's claim that nationalist discourse is based on the assumption that all members of the nation belong to the same unique community, and other nations are different from theirs(15).

#### **4.2.2.2 The Colors of the Thai and the Burmese Elephants**

The main characters of *Khan Kluay I* and *Khan Kluay II*: Khan Kluay, Phu Pha, Ngung Dang and Nga Nil are royal elephants but they are created to be totally different. One of the important techniques employed to help convey the difference between the Thai and Burmese elephants is the use of colors. The meaning of each color is used to create each different characteristic of the elephant. The colors of Thai elephants are colorful, suggesting friendly and gentle character while Burmese elephants are dark and dull, suggesting their aggressiveness and unfriendly behaviors, as can be seen from the images below:



Figure 19: The differences between the Thai elephants (on the right) and the Burmese elephants (on the left)



Figure 20: Thai elephants with colorful colors and chubby figure

Khan Kluay, the protagonist is blue. According to Cerrato, blue is a masculine color that is widely accepted among males. Blue also symbolizes trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, and truth (12). In the films, blue is chosen to be the color of Khan Kluay, the male protagonist, who is a role model of a patriot who sacrifices himself to protect Siam in wartime and leaves his personal matters behind.

The first character of Burmese royal elephant who is always against Khan Kluay is Ngung Dang. Ngung Dang was the one who killed Khan Kluay's father in the previous battle. Ngung Dang is dark green in color which is associated with ambition, greed, and jealousy. His eyes are like monster because his pupils cannot be seen like other ordinary elephants. His eyes are dark red, just like his trunk. Red, according to Cerrato, refers to vigor, willpower, rage, anger, malice, and wrath (12). Ngung Dang also has a scar on his face, which implies that he is an aggressive fighter and has been fighting in many wars. The follow images show Ngung Dang, the villain.





Figure 21: Ngung Dang, the Burmese royal elephant in *Khan Kluay I*



Figure 22: Young Khan Kluay is confronting Nguang Dang

In the above scene, Khan Kluay is looking for his father in the Burmese camp.

Khan Kluay faces Nguang Dang and asks him a few questions. Instead of answering the questions, Nguang Dang shouts at Khan Kluay when Khan Kluay asks him if he sees his father, Phu Pha. Khan Kluay is just a young elephant whose life is very pitiful for being fatherless. He does not intend to bother Nguang Dang. He just wants to find his father. Nguang Dang is an adult but he unkindly refuses to help Khan Kluay. He is clearly created to symbolize unkindness and lack of generosity.



Figure 23: Nga Nil, the Burmese royal elephant in *Khan Kluay II*

Another Burmese elephant is Nga Nil who wants to kill Khan Kluay in order to take revenge for his father Nguang Dang because the father is killed in the war by Khan Kluay. His skin is dark purple, which symbolizes power, ambition, mystery, and magic. His eyes are also red like his father's. He determines to kill Khan Kluay in order to take the revenge for his father, Ngung Dang. Nga Nil has black ivories, which increase the darkness and obsession of this character since elephants use ivories as a weapon in fighting. Nga Nil also wears earrings like his human masters and this similarity seems to suggest that his personality is similar to the Burmese.

In sum, it can be seen that the use of colors is quite important in the films as it helps foreground the stark contrast between Siam and Burma and their peoples. Again, this contrast between the Thai and Burmese elephants can be seen as implicitly conveying cultural racism. The Thai elephants, apparently constructed to represent the Siamese, are depicted as superior to the Burmese elephants, who represent the Burmese. Furthermore, the films' portrayal of the Burmese elephants as the bad guys reflects the tendency to construct negative stereotypical images of other societies and other cultures.



Therefore, the films can be seen as firmly part of the nationalist discourse that, as described by De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak, excludes or looks down on those perceived as outsiders or foreigners (153).

#### 4.2.3. Nationalism in the songs from *Khan Kluay I* and *Khan Kluay II*

Songs in *Khan Kluay I* and *Khan Kluay II* also help convey and evoke nationalist sentiment. As Miles argues, the expression of nationalism in music can be a tool to inspire people who share the same country, region and ethnicity to have a strong patriotic feeling towards the nation (“Nationalism and its Effect on Music in the Romantic Era”). Music can bring listeners into association with nationalist sentiment, especially when a group of people share cultural experiences together. The sense of unity can make the members of the group desire the formation of a nation. So, songs can be a tool to connect people who have the same political ideas and desire of nationhood (Gawne, “How Music Facilitated Nationalism in the Past and How Music Can Facilitate Nationalism Today”). Nonetheless, it should be noted that a number of songs in the movies *Khan Kluay I* and *Khan Kluay II* also implicitly express warnings about the enemy’s intrusion or invasion. Some songs also encourage Thai people to be well-prepared for wars and to be willing to sacrifice their lives for the nation.

The first song from the movies that is worth mentioning is *The Elephant Song*, which is a well-known Thai folk song for kids. The producer of the films had the song adjusted by adding more lyrics about how Thai people admire Khan Kluay as a hero of Siam:

โลกกลมๆใบนี้	ชีวิตมีหลากหลาย
ล้วนจะมีความหมาย	ทุกหัวใจมีความสำคัญ
เพียงไม่หวั่นไม่ไหว	มีจิตใจกล้าหาญ

ทำให้สิ่งที่ฝัน	สักวันจะเป็นตำนาน
เจ้าช้างพลายตัวนี้	ที่ทำในสิ่งยิ่งใหญ่
ขี้ขึ้นใจ	เพลงที่ใครก็เคยได้ฟัง
ช้าง ช้าง ช้าง ช้าง ช้าง	น้องเคยเห็นช้างรีป่าว
ช้างมันตัวโตไม่เบา	มีมุกขาวๆเรียกว่างวง
มีเขี้ยวโค้งงวงเรียกว่างา	มีหูมีตาหางยาว

There are many living things in this world. Everything is meaningful and important. We can become a legend only if we are determined, brave and follow our dreams. This male elephant did great things. And once again, this song will always remind us of our brave elephants. Oh, elephants! Have you ever seen elephants? They are very big. They have long noses, which are called trunks. They have 2 teeth, which are called ivories, under their trunks. They also have ears, eyes and long tails.

*The Elephant Song* has been very popular among Thai children. This song is used to teach children at the kindergarten level about the physical appearance of the elephant. In *Khan Kluay I*, the elephant song is used to praise Khan Kluay as a hero who protects the country even though he is an animal. The lyrics are very simple and easy for children to understand and sing along. The song is also short and the music components such as tone and rhythm are appropriate for young people. Thus, this song could serve as an effective tool to teach children about the good role model desired by the Thai state. As the song is played after the movies have progressed for a while, young viewers know that the ‘great things’ Kan Kluay does are related to his sacrifice for his king and his homeland.

Another song in the movies is sung by *Carabao*, a Thai rock band, which is very popular in Thailand and other Asian countries. Carabao's songs often take up social and political issues. The lyrics in this song provide details about Khan Kluay's life and it is clear that the purpose of the song is to encourage Thai people to be patriotic:

ป่าไพรในเมื่ออดีต	มี สัตว์ป่าน้อยใหญ่
เจ้า ป่าก็คือช้างพลาย	กลายมาเป็นช้างทรง
มีความกตัญญูยิ่ง	มีความเสียสละ มีความนุมนานะ
และความกล้าหาญชาญชัย	ออกตามหาบิดา
ผู้คงสาบสูญหายไป	จนชีวิตเติบโตใหญ่
ได้แทนพระคุณแผ่นดิน	ช้างๆ ช้างก้านกล้วย
ช้างๆ เชี่ยวชาญศึก	รบทัพปราบศัตรู
ไม่หวั่นเกรงผู้ใด	ช้างๆ ช้างก้านกล้วย
ช้าง ช้างพระองค์ดำ	นำชัยในสงคราม ยุทธหัตถี
ช้างทรงพระนเรศวร	พลายไชยานุภาพ
ศัตรูสี่โรราบ	บุญบารมีเกรียงไกร
เจ้าก้านกล้วยช้างน้อย	มาเป็นพระยาช้างพลาย
กอบกู้แผ่นดินไทย	จากหงสาวดี
ฟ้า คงให้ช้างก้านกล้วยมาเกิด	ใต้ร่มฉัตร ดิน
คงต่อเติมเพิ่มความกล้าหาญ	น้ำ คอยชลอมโหมกำลังใจ
ให้จดจำ เจ้าคือช้างมีคุณ	กุ่มบุญบารมี เกิดมาทำความดี
กู้ศักดิ์ศรีกู้ชาติไทย	นำชัยให้แผ่นดิน พระนเรศวร

In the past, there were a lot of wild animals. The king of the Jungle was a male elephant who became a white elephant. He was grateful, brave and sacrificing. He left his family to look for his father who lost in the war.

When he grew up, he returned his gratitude to his motherland.

Khan Kluay, the elephant, was keen on war. He fought against the enemy without any fear. He was the white elephant of King Naresuan. His name was Plaa Chayanupaab. He defeated all intruders. He was very well known for his power and goodness. Khan Kluay, a baby elephant, became the great white elephant and fought to win Siam's independence from Hongsawadi.

He had been sent from the heaven to be born in Siam. Earth increased his courage. Water calmed him down and cheered him up. You were the greatest elephant. We all owe you. You were born to do good things by fighting alongside King Naresuan to win Siam's honor back from the enemy.

The above lyrics celebrate Khan Kluay's heroism after he helps the king defeat the Burmese and regain Siam's independence. Because of his virtues, Kan Kluay is chosen to be a royal elephant who serves the king. The lyrics also worship Khan Kluay as the embodiment of merit and good deeds. The lyrics and music components of the song can influence Thai people to have patriotic feeling towards the nation. However, when analyzing this song more closely, it can be seen that this song not only glorifies Kan Kluay's bravery, but also subtly informs the listeners that Siam has been threatened and abused by "the enemy" and without the king, Kan Kluay and other Siamese heroes, Thai people will not be able to enjoy peace and prosperity. Thai people are therefore indebted to these heroes. The words "enemy" and "protect" also imply that the danger

from Burma is still lurking somewhere and that the Burmese can invade Siam anytime. In other words, even though there is no war at the moment, Thai people still have to be prepared for it. Thus, this song is not merely an innocent celebration of patriotism, but it actually helps instill in the minds of the listeners the fear of “the other”, in this case, the Burmese invaders.

The opening song in *Khan Kluay II* also has the effect of evoking nationalist feeling. In the opening scene, the scenery of Ayudhya is shown while the following lyrics are sung:

แสงทองส่องอนุภาพ      อาบองค์ราชธานี  
กรุงศรีวิไลเลิศล้ำ      อยู่ชยาราชธานี  
ร่มเย็นพระบารมี      ใต้ฟ้าสุจริตเปรมปรี  
นี่คือ สถารณี      อยู่ชยาราชธานี

The golden ray shines brightly all over the kingdom, the great Ayudhya Rajathani. People live happily because of the king's virtues. Here is our Ayudhya Rajathani

The lyrics in full describe the geography of Ayudhya, the then capital city of Siam, people's ways of life, and places such as river markets, temples and the grand palace. Thus, this song aims to reflect the image of people spending their lives happily and peacefully in the city of Buddhism. In this scene, the audience can also see the full picture of Siam's grand palace from the bird eye view angle. This scene is meant to make the audiences proud of the old Siam. At the same time, these pictures of Siam remind Thai people of the historical events about what the Burmese had done in the past with Ayudhya. The sense of abhorrence and mistrust among Thai audience, especially

those who are adults, could be incited, as Ayudhaya, the former capital city of Siam, was believed to be destroyed after Siam's war with Burma.

The other song from the *Kan Kluay* movies that conveys and stimulates nationalist feeling glorifies the duty of Thai men as soldiers:

ภูมิใจที่ได้เห็นบ้านเมืองเป็นสง่า	สุขของปวงประชา
ถือหน้าที่ของชายชาติ	เป็นชายชาติทหาร
เป็นแนวร้วป้องกัน	เป็นเกราะคุ้มภัย
อันตรายที่มารบกวน	มิตรรักของชายชาติ
ส่วนรวมนั่นเรื่องใหญ่	ส่วนตัวไว้เรื่องรอง
รักชาติรักเพื่อนพ้อง	ปกป้องพี่น้องปวงชน

We are proud to see Siam in peace. The duty for men like us is to protect all people and bring them happiness. We are soldiers, like the fence of the nation. We must be the shield against the enemy for our people. Public work comes first but personal life comes after. We love our friends and want to protect the people. This is the love of the real man.

As well as other songs mentioned above, this song also points out the patriotic elements or 'the real love' of Thai men. Audiences are explained the details of Thai males' duties as soldiers. The characteristic of a good soldier includes being brave, self-sacrificing, hard working and having strong determination. Soldiers have to do everything to get rid of the enemy and protect the country, even if they have to die in the war. Again, the Burmese appear as the fearful and ruthless enemy and villain in this song while Thai soldiers are constructed as self-sacrificing heroes.

It can be clearly seen that the songs in *Khan Kluay I* and *Khan Kluay II* largely function to stimulate nationalist sentiment among Thai people. Yet, as discussed earlier,



the lyrics of most of these songs also convey fear, mistrust and hatred against the Burmese, who are clearly depicted in the films' nationalist discourse as 'the Other' or the outsiders.

In sum, through the use of songs, colors and characterization, the films seek to recount a nationalist narrative, which according to Uri Ram, is "produced, reproduced and disseminated by people and they are by no means operating in a vacuum" (153). The filmmakers selectively and subjectively make use of events, both real and imagined, from the archive of historical memory to help construct its preferred version of Thai history. In other words, the filmmakers play a role in, what Hall refers to as, "connecting membership within the political nation state and identification with national culture" with the goal of making culture and state become more or less the same thing (201). Unfortunately, the concept of nation and national identity the films seek to create has its basis on the notion that Thailand is different and superior to Burma, and these results in cultural racism.