

Patriarchal Failure and Maternal Power: An Ecofeminist Reading
of the Thai Folktale *Pla Boo Thong*
(Kegagalan Patriarki dan Kuasa Maternal: Satu Pembacaan Ekofeminis
Terhadap Cerita Rakyat Thai *Pla Boo Thong*)

KORRAKOT KUMHAENG ^{1*}

¹ Department of Thai Language, School of Liberal Arts, Walailak University,
Thasala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat 80160, Thailand

Received: 31 August 2025 / Accepted: 4 February 2026

ABSTRACT

Folktales in Thailand preserve communal values while reflecting social tensions, yet their gendered dynamics and ecological symbolism remain underexplored. This article examines the Thai folktale Pla Boo Thong (The Golden Goby) through an ecofeminist lens, addressing the gap in scholarship on how Southeast Asian oral traditions critique patriarchal institutions. Drawing on the poetic version Pla Boo Thong Klon Suad, the study employs ecofeminist close reading to investigate the tale's representations of violence, absent fatherhood, and maternal resilience. The theoretical framework integrates key ecofeminist concepts—women–nature interdependence, patriarchal dualisms, sacred ecology, and maternal agency through reincarnation—together with sociological studies on absent fathers and domestic violence. Findings show that Pla Boo Thong constructs violence as systemic within polygamous households, critiques male passivity and failure to protect, and reimagines justice through maternal reincarnations in nature (golden goby, eggplant tree, Bodhi tree). These symbols highlight how natural and spiritual forms function as active agents of justice, offering female-centered alternatives to failed patriarchal authority. Unlike Western “Cinderella-type” narratives resolved by male intervention, this folktale positions nature and spirituality as culturally embedded sources of healing and balance. The article contributes to global ecofeminist discourse by foregrounding how Thai folklore encodes resistance, resilience, and non-patriarchal visions of authority rooted in sacred ecology and maternal continuity.

Keywords: Thai folktale; ecofeminist literary criticism; patriarchal failure; maternal reincarnation; Southeast Asian oral literature

ABSTRAK

Cerita rakyat di Thailand memelihara nilai-nilai kemasyarakatan di samping mencerminkan ketegangan sosial, namun dinamik jantina dan simbolisme ekologiinya masih kurang diteroka. Artikel ini meneliti cerita rakyat Thai, Pla Boo Thong (Ikan Ketutu Emas), menerusi lensa ekofeminis bagi menangani jurang keserjanaan tentang bagaimana tradisi lisan Asia Tenggara mengkritik institusi patriarki. Berdasarkan versi puisi Pla Boo Thong Klon Suad, kajian ini menggunakan kaedah pembacaan rapi ekofeminis untuk menyiasat representasi keganasan, ketiadaan bapa, dan daya tahan maternal dalam cerita tersebut. Kerangka teoretikal kajian menyepadukan konsep-konsep utama ekofeminis—saling kebergantungan wanita-alam, dualisme patriarki, ekologi suci, dan agensi maternal melalui penitisan atau kelahiran semula—berserta kajian sosiologi mengenai bapa yang tidak hadir dan keganasan domestik. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa Pla Boo Thong membina keganasan sebagai sesuatu yang sistemik dalam isi rumah poligami, mengkritik kepasifan lelaki serta kegagalan mereka untuk melindungi, dan membayangkan semula keadilan melalui penitisan semula ibu ke dalam alam semula jadi (ikan ketutu emas, pokok terung, pokok Bodhi). Simbol-simbol ini menyerlahkan bagaimana bentuk semula jadi dan spiritual berfungsi sebagai ejen keadilan yang aktif, menawarkan alternatif berpusatkan wanita terhadap kegagalan autoriti patriarki. Berbeza dengan naratif "jenis

* Corresponding author: korrakot.ku@mail.wu.ac.th

Cinderella" Barat yang diselesaikan melalui campur tangan lelaki, cerita rakyat ini memposisikan alam semula jadi dan spiritualiti sebagai sumber penyembuhan dan keseimbangan yang berakar umbi dalam budaya. Artikel ini menyumbang kepada wacana ekofeminis global dengan mengetengahkan bagaimana sastera rakyat Thai menyelaraskan penentangan, daya tahan, dan visi autoriti bukan patriarki yang berteraskan ekologi suci dan kesinambungan maternal.

Kata Kunci: cerita rakyat Thai; kritikan sastera ekofeminis; kegagalan patriarki; kelahiran semula maternal; sastera lisan Asia Tenggara

INTRODUCTION

Oral literature, particularly folktales, plays a profound role in the cultural and social development of societies. These narratives function not only as entertainment but also as reservoirs of communal knowledge, traditions, and values, ensuring their preservation across generations (Shukla, 2024). Folktales, myths, and legends also serve as moral guides and cultural touchstones, fostering social cohesion and continuity (Dahal & Bhatta, 2021). Globally, collections such as the *Panchatantra* and *Jataka tales* in India—renowned for their enduring moral and philosophical lessons—and the Grimm Brothers’ tales in the West exemplify the universal appeal of folktales (Chamoli et al., 2021). In Thai society, folktales similarly act as vital conduits between past and present, reinforcing cultural identity, moral principles, and shared values. They encapsulate collective wisdom and address universal human experiences such as love, conflict, morality, gender, and identity.

A recurring theme in folktales across cultures is familial violence, particularly involving stepmothers and stepchildren. In Grimm’s *Snow White* and *Cinderella*, jealousy and cruelty position the stepmother as the antagonist, reflecting survival challenges and moral anxieties in pre-industrial Europe (Zipes, 2002). Fromm (2013) interprets such violence as rooted in deficiency and impotence, underscoring that women themselves may also enact violence upon other women. Similar archetypes appear in Thai folklore, where stepmothers often mistreat stepdaughters, mirroring Western parallels. In Korean tales, stepmothers sometimes attempt murder, with the father’s absence intensifying conflicts (Yang, 2014). In contrast, Chinese tales from the Han Dynasty occasionally portrayed stepmothers as nurturing, suggesting that cultural values shape how stepfamily dynamics are imagined (Wu, 2023).

Cinderella-type tales, classified as ATU 510A in the Aarne–Thompson–Uther index, are ubiquitous across cultures (Kawan, 2016; Sakamoto Martini et al., 2023). ATU 510A refers to narratives centered on a persecuted heroine, typically subjected to domestic abuse by a stepmother, who ultimately achieves recognition or restoration through moral virtue and supernatural assistance. These narratives typically depict a mistreated young woman who triumphs through moral virtue and supernatural assistance. In Thai culture, *Pla Boo Thong* (*The Golden Goby*, also romanized as *Pla Bu Thong* in some studies) exemplifies this archetype: the protagonist Euay suffers cruelty from her stepmother and stepsisters but ultimately prevails through her virtue and the magical interventions of her deceased mother. The tale has circulated in Thai oral traditions for centuries and survives today in multiple forms, including the poetic version *Pla Boo Thong Klon Suad* (Fine Arts Department, 2014), comic books, and televised adaptations in 1994 and 2009. This cultural continuity underscores its importance in shaping Thai moral and gendered imagination. Comparable motifs of maternal sacrifice, stepfamily rivalry, and magical aid appear in Cambodian folklore such as *Moranak Meada* (Boonpok, 2009; Phat, 2019), illustrating both regional resonance and cultural specificity.

Cultural distinctions also emerge in the roles of male figures. While Western versions often rely on the prince or the father to resolve conflict, *Pla Boo Thong* instead minimizes male agency, portraying Euay's father as passive and ineffective. This narrative pattern raises critical questions about how paternal absence and structural patriarchy operate within the tale's moral framework. Despite its enduring cultural resonance, *Pla Boo Thong* has rarely been examined through a framework that interrogates the relationship between gendered violence, patriarchal authority, and ecological symbolism. Previous studies have tended to emphasize comparative folklore or patterns of violence (Pagobtham et al., 2024), but its ecofeminist dimensions—particularly passive fatherhood, systemic gendered violence, and maternal reincarnation into natural forms—remain underexplored.

This study argues that *Pla Boo Thong* does more than replicate the Cinderella archetype: it reconfigures the narrative through an ecofeminist logic that exposes patriarchal failure, foregrounds systemic gender-based violence, and elevates maternal reincarnation into natural forms as an alternative moral authority. By applying ecofeminist literary criticism, this article demonstrates how the tale critiques patriarchal absence while envisioning nature-based justice as a culturally grounded source of female agency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ecofeminism, an interdisciplinary field of study, explores the intricate connections between women and nature while critiquing the patriarchal structures that exploit both. Rooted in feminism and environmentalism, ecofeminism highlights how gender, class, race, and ecological degradation intersect under systems of domination. As noted by Warren (2000) in *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, ecofeminism not only critiques these systems but also develops ethical theories and practices that resist male-biased perspectives on humans, animals, and the environment. Different strands—cultural, socialist, and spiritual ecofeminism—emphasize distinct dimensions of the women–nature relationship (Warren, 2000). In literary criticism, ecofeminism provides frameworks for analyzing the symbolic and material links between women and nature. Vandana Shiva's *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development* (2016) underscores how patriarchal capitalism marginalizes both women and ecological systems. Other studies, such as Abbasi and Moslehi's (2016) reading of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*, envision women-centered societies in harmony with nature. Sangeetha and Rathna (2021) show how natural metaphors empower refugee women in *Mirage*, while Chandra et al. (2019) discuss spiritual and ecological empowerment in Indonesian literature.

Recent ecocritical scholarship has further emphasized ethical interconnectedness between human and nonhuman worlds, foregrounding humility, environmental accountability, and spatial anxieties within literary texts (Khosravi et al., 2017; Khalid & Satkunanathan, 2024). These studies expand ecological literary criticism by examining both ethical subjectivity and environmental crisis across diverse narrative contexts. More recent ecofeminist research has also turned toward cross-cultural and postcolonial perspectives, highlighting sacred ecology and gendered environmental violence in non-Western traditions. Dasht Peyma (2025) underscores the ethical interdependence between women and nature within culturally embedded spiritual frameworks, while Dube (2024) situates African ecofeminisms within postcolonial and intersectional struggles linking motherhood, land, and resistance to ecological destruction. Similarly, Das and Hossain (2023) demonstrate how indigenous sacred ecologies articulate

environmental justice through marginalized female subjectivities. Together, these studies extend ecofeminism beyond its Western foundations by foregrounding localized cosmologies and spiritual epistemologies of justice. Nevertheless, ecofeminist readings that explicitly examine gendered ecological violence within Southeast Asian folktales remain comparatively underdeveloped.

Some scholars have extended ecofeminist perspectives to film, particularly in Southeast Asian horror genres. Beng and Balaya (2016) discuss the Pontianak in Malaysian cinema as a paradoxical figure of female resistance and repression, while Duile (2020) interprets the displacement of supernatural feminine figures in Indonesian folklore as metaphors for ecological and cultural loss. Tan (2010) similarly frames female monstrosity in Singaporean cinema as a site of patriarchal anxiety. While these studies are informative, they remain tangential to this paper's focus. More relevant are literary analyses that apply ecofeminist frameworks directly to folktales, though such studies remain scarce. For example, Byar Rufael's *Dlumū Lā Tajiffū* and Forna's *Ancestor Stones* (Gebreyohannes & Ambachew, 2024) employ natural symbols and female resilience to critique patriarchal control, albeit in cultural settings distinct from Southeast Asia.

In the Thai literary landscape, ecofeminism has been applied in limited but significant ways. Sangkhaphanthanon (2013) interprets natural symbols in *Phra Aphai Mani* through ecological feminist theory, arguing that depictions of women and nature as erotic, alien, or sacred reflect socio-cultural anxieties about female power. This work highlights the metaphorical links between femininity and nature in Thai literature, paving the way for further research. Despite the richness of Thai folktales, however, few studies focus explicitly on gendered power dynamics or ecological symbolism. Existing works on *Pla Boo Thong*—such as Boonpok (2009) and Phat (2019)—offer comparative folklore perspectives but do not engage feminist or ecofeminist interpretations. Pagobtham et al. (2024) analyze violence in *Pla Boo Thong Klon Suad* using the World Health Organization's categories of physical, sexual, psychological, and neglect-based violence, yielding valuable insights but neglecting the tale's spiritual or environmental dimensions. Broader research on stepmother archetypes in Thai, Korean, and Cambodian folktales (Yang, 2014; Wu, 2023) confirms how familial violence and maternal rivalry reflect patriarchal structures, but these studies tend to treat violence as interpersonal conflict rather than systemic outcomes of gendered hierarchy and male absence.

This study adopts an ecofeminist lens to interpret *Pla Boo Thong*, guided by six interrelated concepts that shape the analysis. First, women–nature interdependence highlights symbolic and material linkages between female figures and ecological forms. Second, patriarchal dualisms—such as male/female and culture/nature—illustrate how the feminine is systematically devalued. Third, the notion of spiritual ecology draws on Buddhist-inflected sacred nature and karmic justice as alternative sources of authority. Fourth, maternal agency through reincarnation emphasizes the persistence of protection and guidance beyond death. Fifth, distinguishing structural from interpersonal violence frames familial abuse as systemic rather than isolated. Finally, the theme of absent fatherhood underscores how patriarchal neglect destabilizes the household and necessitates non-patriarchal forms of justice. These concepts are informed by Warren's (2000) notion of the “logic of domination,” which explains how hierarchical dualisms legitimize the subordination of feminized subjects, and by Shiva's (2016) articulation of sacred ecology as an ethical alternative to patriarchal exploitation. Together, these concepts provide a culturally grounded ecofeminist framework that links symbolic motifs to broader power structures and informs the analysis that follows.

The gap in the literature is clear: although Thai folktales have been studied for their moral and cultural content, few analyses investigate how these narratives critique patriarchal institutions or depict women–nature alliances as sources of resilience and justice. Ecofeminist approaches to Thai folktales—especially those exploring reincarnation, maternal power, and sacred natural symbols—remain underdeveloped. This study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing *Pla Boo Thong* as a narrative that intertwines familial conflict, gender-based violence, and nature-based justice. By drawing from feminist literary criticism and ecofeminist theory, it demonstrates how Thai oral literature encodes resistance through maternal spirituality, reincarnation, and ecological symbolism, offering a culturally rooted critique of patriarchal failure. These insights form the foundation for the methodological approach discussed in the following section.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs an ecofeminist close reading of the Thai folktale *Pla Boo Thong*, grounded in Karen Warren’s (2000) concept of the “logic of domination” and Vandana Shiva’s (2016) articulation of sacred ecology. Rather than a generic qualitative textual approach, the analysis foregrounds hierarchical dualisms—such as male/female and culture/nature—and examines how these structures legitimize gender-based violence and patriarchal authority within the narrative. The primary source is the poetic version *Pla Boo Thong Klon Suad* (The Poem of Pla Boo Thong), edited by the Fine Arts Department (2014). Drawing on ecofeminist literary criticism, the study interprets symbolic connections between women and nature, cyclical representations of reincarnation, and the socio-cultural implications of maternal power and spiritual justice. Additional theoretical input is drawn from gender studies and family sociology, particularly concepts of absent fatherhood and domestic violence (McLanahan et al., 2013; Thiara & Humphreys, 2017).

The analysis is organized around three interrelated categories. First, representations of violence are examined, including physical, emotional, and structural violence within polygamous family systems. Second, patriarchal absence and failure are analyzed through the passive or negligent role of the father and its consequences. Third, spiritual-natural agency is explored by tracing how natural and supernatural forms—such as the goby fish, the eggplant tree, and the Bodhi tree—function as narrative devices to restore justice and empower female characters. Methodologically, the study undertakes sustained close reading with attention to recurring motifs, symbolic imagery, and narrative progression. Interpretations are situated within Thai cultural and religious contexts, integrating Buddhist cosmology, karmic justice, and oral narrative traditions to ensure a culturally grounded ecofeminist critique. This methodology allows for a nuanced understanding of how *Pla Boo Thong* critiques patriarchal norms while envisioning eco-spiritual alternatives to male-centered authority.

PLOT OVERVIEW OF *PLA BOO THONG*

Pla Boo Thong is a renowned Thai folktale that shares similarities with Western Cinderella stories and Cambodian literature, *Moranak Meada* (មរណកម្ដៅ). Adapted from oral traditions, the tale has found its way into literary forms like *Pla Boo Thong Klon Suad* (*The Poem of Pla Boo Thong*), children's comic books, and serialized television dramas, with notable adaptations in 1994 and

2009. These variations underscore the enduring cultural significance of the story in Thai society. The tale of “*Pla Boo Thong*” revolves around themes of familial conflict, jealousy, maternal sacrifice, and the eventual triumph of resilience and justice. The story begins with Taraka, a wealthy fisherman, who has two wives. His first wife, Khanittha, has a daughter named Euay, while his second wife, Khanitthi, has two daughters, Ai and Ei. One day, Taraka takes Khanittha to fish in a canal, where he catches only one pregnant golden goby fish after numerous attempts. As dusk falls, Taraka decides to keep the fish, but Khanittha, moved by compassion, pleads with him to release it. Enraged by her insistence, Taraka beats Khanittha to death and disposes of her body in the canal. When Taraka returns home, Euay enquires about her mother, to which Taraka responds falsely, claiming that Khanittha has fled with another man and will never return. From that point on, Euay endures constant mistreatment by her stepmother, Khanitthi, and her stepsisters, Ai and Ei, while her father remains indifferent to her suffering.

Heartbroken and longing for her mother, Euay often sits by the riverbank crying. One day, she encounters the golden goby, which is the reincarnation of her mother. The fish reveals its true identity, and Euay begins bringing rice to feed it daily while sharing her troubles. However, Khanitthi and her daughters notice Euay's improved demeanor and secretly discover the fish's identity. In a cruel act, Khanitthi captures the goby, cooks it, and leaves the fish scales in the kitchen. Devastated upon finding the scales, Euay buries them and prays for her mother to be reborn as a plant. Her wish is granted, and a thriving eggplant tree grows from the buried scales. Euay lovingly cares for the tree every day, but when Khanitthi discovers this, she cuts down the tree and eats its fruits. Euay gathers the leftover seeds, plants them, and offers prayers for her mother's rebirth as a sacred tree in the forest, impervious to harm or movement. Her prayers bear fruit, transforming the tree into the legendary “Pho Thong-Pho Ngern” (Golden and Silver Bodhi Tree). During a forest expedition one day, King Brahmadata discovers the tree and orders its relocation to the palace, but no one manages to uproot it. The king then announces a reward for anyone who can move the tree. Euay steps forward and, praying to her mother, successfully uproots the tree. Impressed by her virtue, King Brahmadata takes Euay to the palace and marries her, crowning her as his queen.

Consumed by jealousy, Khanitthi and her daughters send a letter to Euay, falsely claiming that Taraka is gravely ill and requesting her return. Upon her arrival, Khanitthi sets a trap by placing a cauldron of boiling water beneath a hidden plank. When Euay steps on the plank, she falls into the boiling cauldron and dies. Khanitthi then sends Ai to impersonate Euay and return to the palace. Euay reincarnates as a myna bird (Nok Khaek Tao). Euay soars to the palace, where King Brahmadata, oblivious to her true identity, finds the bird's intelligence endearing and keeps it near. This angers Ai, who orders the plucking and cooking of the bird. The bird narrowly escapes, hides in a mouse hole, and regrows its feathers with the help of mice. Later, Euay flies to the forest, where she encounters a hermit. The hermit, using his spiritual insight, recognizes Euay's true identity and restores her human form. He also creates a magical child from a drawing to serve as Euay's son. When the boy grows up, Euay sends him to the palace with a garland and a message for King Brahmadata. Upon receiving the garland, the king learns the truth about Euay's tragic fate from the boy. Filled with sorrow and anger, the king orders the execution of Khanitthi, Ai, and Ei. He then brings Euay back to the palace, where they are reunited and reign together in harmony.

The folktale *Pla Boo Thong* is a narrative that critiques patriarchal family structures, elevates female resilience, and emphasizes the intertwined relationship between women and nature. This section explores the thematic implications of the story through an ecofeminist lens,

focusing on three key discussions. The first examines the dynamics of violence and power within a polygamous family structure, highlighting the suffering and agency of the “first wife” and her daughter amidst systemic injustices. The second delves into the consequences of an absent father figure, revealing how patriarchal failure forces female characters to seek strength through nature and supernatural forces. Lastly, the analysis focuses on the symbolic relationship between women and nature, emphasizing the enduring power and justice inherent in natural and spiritual realms through reincarnations and sacred landscapes.

FINDINGS

A FIRST WIFE WHO TURNED INTO A GOLDEN GOBY: VIOLENCE AND POWER CONSTRUCTION IN THAI FOLKTALE

The following analysis examines how these ecofeminist dynamics materialize in narrative form, particularly through representations of violence and power within a polygamous household structure. Three interrelated aspects are highlighted.

THE PASSIVE MALE AND THE ABSENCE OF PATRIARCHAL LEADERSHIP

In *Pla Boo Thong*, the father’s passivity highlights a significant critique of patriarchal structures and their failure to maintain harmony within the family. The father, the nominal head of the household, represents a patriarchal figure who abdicates his responsibilities by being polygamous, weak, and emotionally detached. His moral shortcomings create a power vacuum that allows cycles of violence and discord to unfold unchecked. The father’s failure to intervene is not merely a personal weakness but reflects what Warren (2000) describes as the “logic of domination,” in which hierarchical dualisms legitimize the subordination of feminized subjects within institutional and familial structures. Rather than exercising protective authority, he remains passive, thereby reinforcing a patriarchal order that privileges male status symbolically while neglecting ethical responsibility. This abdication exposes the structural instability of a patriarchal polygamous household, where authority exists in name but fails in moral practice. The father’s actions—or lack thereof—play a pivotal role in setting the stage for familial instability. His murder of the first wife, a figure of maternal virtue, symbolizes the failure of patriarchal leadership to uphold moral order and protect the vulnerable members of the household. After the death of the first wife, the father’s complete withdrawal from familial matters further exacerbates the dysfunction within the household. He fails to intervene in the escalating tensions between the stepmother and Euay, his daughter, leaving these relationships to deteriorate under the strain of jealousy and competition. This abdication of responsibility underscores the systemic flaws in patriarchal polygamous families, where men wield nominal authority but neglect the duties necessary to maintain balance and justice. By stepping away from his role as a mediator, the father allows the household to become a site of unchecked violence, with women and children bearing the brunt of this failure. The scene of him murdering his wife is described in *The Poem of Pla Boo Thong* by the Fine Arts Department (2014, p.8), which states that he felt no remorse for his actions and only the wife was concerned for her child who was still alive until her last breath, as follows:

Furious, the husband stormed within,
With neither word nor pause of sin.
A paddle struck her chest so deep,
Till bruises marked her final sleep.

As waters claimed her dying breath,
Her thoughts defied the sting of death.
To the fish, her child she did confide,
Her soul reborn, the goby's guide.

Yet cruelty reigned, the rich man's bride,
Who harassed and beat till life had died.

Moreover, the father's absence from the resolution of the narrative further underscores the inadequacy of patriarchal leadership. This inversion of traditional patriarchal roles reflects a broader commentary on the limitations and failures of male authority within such family structures. The tale suggests that patriarchal systems, rather than providing stability, may destabilize families when the central figure fails to fulfill his duties. Patriarchy, as a social formation in various cultures, assigns leadership roles to men based on masculine traits, often linked to fatherhood and the ability to uphold societal and family norms (Frank, 1998; Johansson & Andreasson, 2017). The passive male archetype reveals several critical implications. First, the father's abdication of his protective and mediatory role destabilizes familial harmony, leaving women and children vulnerable to cycles of violence and exploitation. Second, his inaction challenges the traditional ideal of patriarchy as a stabilizing force, instead exposing its potential to create power vacuums that amplify internal conflicts. Lastly, the absence of effective male leadership necessitates alternative forms of justice, often embodied by supernatural forces and the agency of women within the tale. This is consistent with findings that the absence of a father can lead to emotional and social challenges for children, as they lack the unique contributions that fathers provide, which are not easily replaced by other forms of support (Eastin, 2003; Lamb, 2013; McLanahan et al., 2013). Furthermore, the absence of effective male leadership necessitates alternative forms of justice, often embodied by supernatural forces and the agency of women within the tale. This reflects the broader societal need to address the gaps left by absent fathers, as seen in the ongoing impact of men's violence on the mother-child relationship, where the 'absent presence' of the father also continues to affect family dynamics (Thiara & Humphreys, 2017).

VIOLENCE AGAINST THE FIRST WIFE

Khanittha, the first wife in *Pla Boo Thong*, experienced profound victimization and systemic injustice. Her murder by her husband, motivated by her compassion for the golden goby, serves as both an act of physical violence and a symbolic silencing of her voice within a patriarchal system. The murder of Euay's mother by her husband constitutes not only an act of interpersonal brutality but also a manifestation of hierarchical dualism in which women are positioned as expendable within patriarchal systems. As Warren (2000) argues, the "logic of domination" operates by naturalizing unequal moral worth between binary opposites such as male/female and culture/nature. In this narrative, the wife's silencing represents the systemic marginalization of feminized subjects, exposing how patriarchal authority legitimizes violence through structural imbalance rather than isolated cruelty. This act starkly highlights the fragility of women's positions in polygamous households, where even virtuous qualities fail to shield them from male violence and betrayal. Khanittha's death not only underscores her husband's moral and emotional failure

but also marks the beginning of a cycle of suffering that extends beyond her physical life. Even in death, Khanittha's multiple reincarnations as the golden goby, an eggplant tree, and eventually a sacred Bodhi tree perpetuate her suffering. The stepmother and her daughters destroy each form, symbolizing the unrelenting violence and systemic oppression women face. This repeated violence reveals the deeply entrenched power imbalances in the family structure.

Khanittha's recurring reincarnations, however, also symbolize resilience and resistance. These transformations highlight her undying maternal love and her efforts to protect and guide her daughter, even from beyond the grave. Yet, the reliance on supernatural elements to reassert agency reflects a grim reality: within the constraints of the patriarchal and polygamous family system, women must often depend on forces beyond human control to challenge systemic oppression and reclaim justice. Khanittha's narrative scrutinizes the inherent instability of polygamous families, where the absence of equitable male leadership intensifies competition and jealousy among women. Furthermore, her repeated destruction and eventual deification highlight a paradox: despite celebrating women's resilience and maternal devotion, a structure consistently undermines their agency, requiring divine or supernatural intervention for justice to prevail. Thus, her story stands as a testament to the systemic injustices women endure, as well as their resilience in the face of overwhelming obstacles.

STEMMOTHER'S VIOLENCE AGAINST THE STEPMOTHER

In *Pla Boo Thong*, the stepmother and her daughters embody the archetypal roles of antagonists in Thai folktales, engaging in violent acts driven by envy and competition. This conflict is particularly pronounced in their treatment of Euay, the stepdaughter, who endures unrelenting physical and emotional abuse. Overworked and denied even the most basic forms of compassion, Euay becomes the primary target of the stepmother's cruelty. Her bond with her reincarnated mother, represented through the golden goby and other natural symbols, is violently severed, further isolating her and intensifying her suffering. The stepmother's cruelty and violence towards Euay is depicted in *The Poem of Pla Boo Thong* by the Fine Arts Department (2014, p.14) as follows;

With skin so fair, young Euay did hear,
Her stepmother's anger, loud and clear.
Tears streamed down as she crawled near,
Hands raised in wai, her voice sincere.

"My kind stepmother, I have come,
If you desire, I'll serve, I'll run.
But please, no more, I plead in pain,
I feel my life slipping, in vain."

Khanitthi, in fury, shouted back,
"Your pain? It matters not, attack!
You're but an orphan, low as a dog,
Go feed the ducks, clear the fog!"

This dynamic of abuse highlights a deeper structural issue within polygamous family systems. The stepmother's cruelty toward Euay should therefore be understood as structural rather than merely interpersonal. Her actions unfold within a patriarchal polygamous framework that fosters competition, scarcity of affection, and hierarchical valuation of female worth. Such

violence exemplifies what Warren (2000) describes as the institutionalization of domination, where subordinated subjects reproduce oppressive structures in attempts to secure survival. The narrative thus reframes domestic abuse as an embedded feature of patriarchal hierarchy rather than a deviation from moral order. The competition among women for limited resources, recognition, and security in a patriarchal household intensifies this structural violence. The stepmother's actions, while cruel, are emblematic of the systemic pressures placed on women within these environments. Her violence is not only a product of personal animosity but a response to the precariousness of her own position in the family hierarchy. The fragmentation of familial bonds under such strain exposes the inherent instability and inequity of polygamous households. Rather than fostering unity, the family structure pits women against one another, forcing them into roles of competition and conflict. The systemic imbalance that perpetuates this rivalry underscores the failure of patriarchal systems to create equitable or harmonious family dynamics.

In conclusion, *Pla Boo Thong* portrays harmful and destructive behaviors, especially among the women who must assert dominance and ensure their survival in a competitive and hierarchical environment. The stepmother's cruelty exemplifies this dynamic, as her value within the family is tied to her ability to maintain control over other members, while the role of the father is absent and passive. Her actions reflect not just individual malice but also the systemic pressures of a patriarchal framework that places women in adversarial roles. For the stepmother, asserting power becomes a survival strategy within a system that inherently devalues women's agency and pits them against one another. Meanwhile, this hierarchy relegates the first wife and her daughter, Euay, to subordinate positions. Their suffering highlights the plight of the most vulnerable members of such families, where moral virtue and familial loyalty are insufficient to shield them from exploitation and violence. Overall, *Pla Boo Thong* critiques the patriarchal, polygamous family as an unstable and inequitable institution. It portrays violence as a mechanism through which this instability manifests, disproportionately affecting women and children, who bear the brunt of the systemic dysfunction. Thus, *Pla Boo Thong* emphasizes how the lack of appropriate leadership and the rigid power hierarchy within such families exacerbate conflict, perpetuate cycles of violence, and erode familial harmony, ultimately challenging the idealized image of the patriarchal family as a source of stability.

THE ABSENT FATHER: PATRIARCHAL FAILURE AND FEMALE RELIANCE ON NATURE AND SUPERNATURAL FORCES

In *Pla Boo Thong*, the father epitomizes the collapse of patriarchal authority, undermining the very foundation of the family structure. Traditionally, the male figure in polygamous households serves as the stabilizing force, mediating conflicts and ensuring familial harmony. However, the father in this folktale neglects his responsibilities, setting the stage for chaos and abuse within the household. The father's passivity and absence of leadership create a power vacuum, leaving the female characters to navigate a fractured household on their own. In this environment, unchecked power struggles emerge, particularly among the stepmother and her daughters, who exploit the father's indifference to assert control over Euay. In *The Poem of Pla Boo Thong* by the Fine Arts Department (2014, pp. 89-90), it is told that when Khanittha died, her father, unsure how to break the news to Euay, lied and told her that her mother had left with another man. Heartbroken, Euay wept uncontrollably for her lost mother. Fearing the villagers might uncover the truth, her father and stepmother resorted to severe beatings and abuse to her, as follows:

The father seized Euay by her hair, in anger's grip,
While the stepmother, with a stick, did her cruelty whip.
She struck her relentlessly, until Euay fell,
A broken body, under the stepmother's spell.

With a voice like thunder, the stepmother declared,
Her power supreme, none could have compared.
"See how I rule, no one can defy,
The beating continued, with Euay's cry.

Her body shook, her cries filled the air,
As blood poured forth, a desperate prayer.
She collapsed, her soul near to take flight,
Yet the stepmother showed no mercy that night.

His failure to protect his daughter or maintain familial harmony reflects a critique of patriarchal systems, which, while prioritizing male dominance, often fail to hold men accountable for their familial and moral responsibilities. The absence of a "heroic father" forces the female characters to rely on natural elements and supernatural forces to confront and resolve conflicts.

The narrative of *Pla Boo Thong* intertwines the resilience of women with the power of nature, positioning the natural world as a critical source of strength and stability in the absence of patriarchal support. Khanittha's reincarnations as a golden goby, an eggplant tree, and a Bodhi tree showcase how nature becomes a medium through which female agency persists beyond death. Through her reincarnated forms, Khanittha maintains her presence in Euay's life, offering guidance and emotional strength despite her physical absence. These natural embodiments enable her to nurture and protect her daughter, underscoring the cyclical and enduring power of nature. In *The Poem of Pla Boo Thong* by the Fine Arts Department (2014, pp. 15-16), stated that before Khanittha died and was reborn, her spirit deeply connected with the goby fish she had once saved, while her thoughts remained profoundly with her daughter, as follows:

Khanittha's heart, though death drew near,
Clung to her child, her love sincere.
For the goby she'd saved, her merit strong,
Bound their souls, a bond lifelong.

Through death's embrace, her life re-spun,
Reborn a goby, her past not undone.
Her care endured, her spirit stayed,
A mother's love, that never swayed.

For Euay, her connection to the eggplant tree and the Bodhi tree deepens her bond with her mother and serves as a source of solace and strength. By tending to these reincarnations, Euay draws upon the nurturing and restorative power of the natural world, finding protection and guidance in an environment where male figures fail to provide stability. In *The Poem of Pla Boo Thong* by the Fine Arts Department (2014, p. 25), it is stated that after learning her mother, as a goby, was cooked by her stepmother, Euay buried her mother's scales and prayed to reunite with her. Soon, an eggplant tree appeared, and Euay felt joyfully close to her mother again even in this new form, as follows;

Euay, with care, placed scales in the earth,
Praying for her mother's rebirth.
From the soil, eggplant tree did rise,
With fruit so lush beneath the skies.

She bowed to it with reverent grace,
As though her mother's soul she'd face.
In joy and peace, her heart did swell,
Her mother's spirit with her to dwell.

This bond highlights the role of nature as a maternal force, filling the void left by the absence of patriarchal authority. From an interpretative perspective, *Pla Boo Thong* reimagines nature as a surrogate for power, offering stability, support, and renewal in times of familial and systemic collapse.

Moreover, in *Pla Boo Thong*, supernatural forces emerge as essential agents of justice, compensating for the failures of human systems and patriarchal structures. The reincarnations of Khanittha demonstrate her enduring agency beyond death. As a golden goby, an eggplant tree, and ultimately a sacred Bodhi tree, she actively aids Euay in enduring and navigating the relentless cruelty of her stepmother and stepsisters. These supernatural forms allow Khanittha to protect her daughter, resist oppression, and subtly influence the restoration of justice. Her final form as the Bodhi tree is particularly significant, symbolizing immovable maternal protection and sacredness. Despite repeated attempts by the stepmother and her daughters to destroy it, the Bodhi tree stands firm, leading to Euay's eventual recognition and elevation as a consort when discovered by the King Brahmadata.

Additionally, at the end, the role of the hermit is pivotal in resolving the story's conflicts. The hermit, a figure of spiritual authority, restores Euay to her human form after her transformation into a bird. This intervention underscores the reliance on supernatural or spiritual entities, rather than human patriarchal figures, to resolve the injustices inflicted upon the vulnerable. The supernatural functions as a narrative mechanism that empowers female characters, such as Khanittha and Euay, to challenge power imbalances and assert their agency in a world that denies them structural support. In doing so, the supernatural thus becomes a narrative mechanism for critiquing patriarchal systems and imagining alternative sources of justice and authority.

In conclusion, the marginalization of male characters in *Pla Boo Thong* shifts the narrative focus to female resilience, exposing the failure of patriarchal systems to provide stability and justice. The absence of male heroism emphasizes the necessity for alternative, non-patriarchal sources of power and resolution. The father's abdication of responsibility symbolizes the collapse of patriarchal authority, leaving female characters to confront conflict and injustice independently. Their reliance on nature and supernatural forces critiques male-dominated systems while elevating alternative forms of power. By intertwining female agency with natural and spiritual realms, the folktale not only challenges traditional hierarchies but also redefines authority and justice within the family. This analysis underscores how the narrative employs ecofeminist themes to critique patriarchal failures, positioning women and nature as interconnected forces.

WOMEN AND NATURE: SPIRITUAL, REBIRTH, AND HEALING

If the previous sections exposed the instability of patriarchal authority, the following analysis turns to the narrative's eco-spiritual reconfiguration of justice. The recurring transformations of maternal figures into natural forms embody women–nature interdependence, a central tenet of ecofeminist thought (Shiva, 2016). Rather than depicting women as passive victims aligned with nature in a reductive sense, the narrative reconfigures natural elements as sources of resilience, protection, and moral authority. These metamorphoses disrupt hierarchical binaries and challenge the privileging of male-centered justice, presenting sacred ecology as a culturally embedded alternative to patriarchal governance.

In *Pla Boo Thong*, the character of the mother, Khanittha (as the golden goby), undergoes a series of reincarnations into forms deeply connected to nature, including a fish, an eggplant tree, and the sacred Bodhi tree. These transformations can be interpreted as an embodiment of the profound relationship between women and the natural world, where ecological forms become sources of protection, guidance, and justice. This pattern resonates with Shiva's (2016) notion of sacred ecology, in which nature operates not as a passive backdrop but as an ethical counterforce to structures of domination. Rather than confronting patriarchal oppression through direct resistance, Khanittha's power materializes through ecological transformation, allowing justice to emerge through continuity rather than confrontation.

The recurring reincarnations thus signify a cyclical moral cosmology in which nature becomes the medium of justice and the site of restorative authority. Despite repeated destruction, each natural form reappears, suggesting regenerative endurance rather than defeat. In the absence of paternal protection, ecological continuity assumes the role of moral governance, offering Euay emotional and spiritual sustenance. Through this eco-spiritual reconfiguration of power, the narrative displaces patriarchal authority and foregrounds interdependence as an alternative ethical structure. Ultimately, the tale presents justice not as a function of male intervention but as a sacred process embedded within the rhythms of nature itself.

Moreover, nature also plays a significant role in healing and restoring balance within the story's world. Despite being repeatedly destroyed, Khanittha's natural forms continue to return, suggesting the enduring ability of nature to heal itself and support others. Her reincarnations represent the restorative potential of nature, which continues to resist and rebuild in the face of harm. For Euay, these encounters with her mother through nature provide lessons on resilience and determination, helping her confront adversity and maintain her integrity. Through this lens, *Pla Boo Thong* emphasizes the interconnectedness of women and nature as forces of healing and balance. By presenting women and nature as oppressed yet resilient, the story critiques systems of exploitation while celebrating the capacity of both to resist, heal, and restore. Ultimately, Euay's struggle and triumph affirm the intertwined power of women and nature in reclaiming justice and balance in a fractured world. The narrative thus demonstrates how *Pla Boo Thong* interweaves themes of ecofeminism, rebirth, spirituality, and resistance to patriarchal systems, illustrating the empowerment of women through their connection to nature in the face of adversity. The findings demonstrate how female characters, particularly Khanittha and Euay, rely on natural forces for survival, healing, and justice, challenging patriarchal constraints and reimagining non-patriarchal sources of authority. These themes align with and expand upon prior studies, emphasizing the global resonance of ecofeminist narratives across various cultural and literary traditions.

DISCUSSION

These patterns confirm the study's central argument that *Pla Boo Thong* reconfigures the Cinderella archetype through an ecofeminist logic. The analysis of *Pla Boo Thong* reveals a layered critique of patriarchal failure, manifested through violence, absent fatherhood, and the reassertion of female agency via nature and spirituality. These findings resonate with Pagobtham et al.'s (2024) identification of violence as a central plot element but extend their insights by emphasizing how natural and spiritual forces function as restorative agents within an ecofeminist framework.

The portrayal of stepmothers as antagonists reflects a recurring archetype found in folktales worldwide. Similar to *Cinderella*, where stepmothers embody jealousy and cruelty to maintain power (Ozbay & Ugurelli, 2023), the stepmother in *Pla Boo Thong* reveals anxieties about blended families and familial harmony (Bahn & Hong, 2019). What distinguishes this tale, however, is its intertwining of ecofeminist and spiritual dimensions: nature and reincarnation restore balance and justice, subverting Western tropes that typically resolve conflict through male intervention or marriage.

Comparative perspectives further highlight the tale's cultural specificity. Elgama's (2023) study of *The Hill's Musk* illustrates how women's empowerment emerges through connections to nature, fostering solidarity. Similarly, Bag's (2023) readings of *A Leaf in the Storm* and *Exile* show nature as a site of nurturing amid trauma. Yet *Pla Boo Thong* uniquely embeds these dynamics within Buddhist belief and reincarnation cycles, aligning ecofeminist themes with sacred and moral dimensions of Thai culture. Fregara's (2023) analysis of Tokarczuk's works and Ardini's (2023) study of *Bridge to Terabithia* likewise show women forging alliances with nature to resist androcentric power, but these rely on secular or egalitarian visions, whereas *Pla Boo Thong* emphasizes karmic justice and cyclical rebirth. Winarti et al.'s (2022) reading of *The Woman Who Rode Away* similarly portrays women as caretakers of nature, though *Pla Boo Thong* elevates this relationship by imbuing natural symbols with sacred significance.

Parallel insights can also be drawn from Southeast Asian cinema. Horror films such as *Inhuman Kiss* and *Suzzanna: Buried Alive* (Beng & Noor, 2022) depict the supernatural as a site of female empowerment and retribution. Yet *Pla Boo Thong* diverges by emphasizing maternal reincarnation and cyclical restoration, offering a nurturing rather than vengeful model of ecofeminist resistance.

Through its integration of ecofeminism with Thai cultural and spiritual traditions, *Pla Boo Thong* demonstrates how Southeast Asian folktales can articulate distinctive critiques of patriarchy. Unlike Western narratives that frame nature primarily as refuge or rebellion, this folktale positions nature as an active and sacred force essential to justice and balance. In doing so, it contributes one of the first ecofeminist readings of a Thai folktale, broadening global ecofeminist discourse by foregrounding oral traditions as vital sites of gendered and ecological resistance.

CONCLUSION

Pla Boo Thong (The Golden Goby) offers a culturally grounded ecofeminist critique of patriarchal family structures through its symbolic alignment of women, nature, and spirituality. By portraying the reincarnated mother as a golden goby, an eggplant tree, and a sacred Bodhi tree, the tale presents nature not as a passive backdrop but as an active and restorative force. These natural forms serve as conduits for maternal protection, spiritual justice, and moral renewal, standing in direct contrast to the ineffectual and absent male authority figures within the narrative. The folktale thus exposes the systemic failures of patriarchal leadership and underscores the resilience and agency of women in forging alternative paths to justice.

The narrative highlights how female characters, particularly Euay and her mother Khanittha, respond to violence and oppression not through confrontation with patriarchal figures, but through cyclical transformation and eco-spiritual empowerment. Their enduring connection, sustained through nature and rebirth, elevates maternal love and spiritual justice as forces capable of restoring balance within a fractured familial system. Nature, in this context, becomes not only a site of refuge but a powerful agent of resistance and regeneration.

This study extends ecofeminist discourse by integrating Buddhist karmic cosmology into sacred ecology. These findings contribute to literary and gender scholarship by offering one of the first ecofeminist readings of a Thai folktale. It expands the analytical lens used in Southeast Asian literature by demonstrating how oral narratives encode critiques of gendered power structures through ecological and spiritual metaphors. The findings underscore the importance of considering indigenous cosmologies, reincarnation beliefs, and maternal symbolism in understanding localized expressions of resistance. Future research could build upon this work by exploring ecofeminist themes in other Southeast Asian folktales or examining how contemporary retellings engage with environmental and gender justice. An interdisciplinary approach that bridges literary criticism, cultural studies, and environmental humanities may further reveal the enduring relevance of traditional narratives in confronting modern societal challenges.

REFERENCES

- Abbasi, P., & Moslehi, M. (2016). Ecofeminism and Gilman's *Herland*: A Gaardian approach. *3L: Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 22(2), 17-29.
- Ardini, A. S. (2023). Escaping to nature: Ecofeminism in the children's book *Bridge to Terabithia*. *J-Lalite: Journal of English Studies*, 4(1), 1-12.
- Bag, S. (2023). An ecofeminist study of Lalitambika Antharjanam's *A Leaf in the Storm* and Jamila Hashmi's *Exile*. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)*, 5(2), 1-11.
- Bahn, G. H., & Hong, M. (2019). Shift from Wicked Stepmother to Stepmother in Eastern and Western Fairy Tales. *Psychiatry Investigation*, 16(11), 836-842. <https://doi.org/10.30773/pi.2019.0132>
- Beng, L. Y., & Balaya, S. (2016). From international horror films to the local *Filem Seram*: Examining the cinematic identity and roles of the Malaysian *Pontianak*. *KEMANUSIAAN: The Asian Journal of Humanities*, 23(2), 161-174. <https://doi.org/10.21315/kajh2016.23.s2.9>
- Beng, S. J., & Noor, M. M. (2022). Nature as a means of empowerment in *Krasue: The Inhumane Kiss* and *Suzzanna: Buried Alive*. *Journal of Language and Communication*, 9(2), 267-281.
- Boonpok, D. (2009). Morana Mada: Pla Boo Thong Chabub Khner [*Morana Mada: Pla Bu Thong in the Khmer version*]. *Manusat Paritat: Journal of Humanities*, 20(1), 13-22.
- Chamoli, M. A., Khare, M. G., & Kaur, R. (2021). The role of cultural folklore and its influence on Indian societal values. *Ilkogretim Online*, 20(2), 2810-2820.
- Chandra, A. A., Waluyo, H. J., & Wardani, N. E. (2019). Study of ecofeminism in the *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* by Mashdar Zainal. *Proceeding of The 2nd ICOLLiT (International Conference on Language, Literature and Teaching)*, 2019.

- Dahal, H., & Bhatta, B. (2021). Folktales: A moral message from the past to the future generation. *Nepal Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(1), 31–43.
- Das, B., & Hossain, S. M. D. (2023). Ecofeminist Concerns and Subaltern Perspectives on ‘Third World’ Indigenous Women: A Study of Selected Works of Mahasweta Devi. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 25(2), 1-12. <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol25/iss2/2>
- Dasht Peyma, N. (2025). Cultural Perspectives in Eco-Literature. In *Eco-Literature and Environmental Advocacy: Bridging Theory and Practice* (pp. 95-147). Springer Nature Singapore.
- Dube, M. W. (2024). African Eco-feminisms: African Women Writing Earth, Gender and the Sacred. In *Ecofeminist Perspectives from African Women Creative Writers: Earth, Gender, and the Sacred* (pp. 3-33). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Duile, T. (2020). *Kuntilanak*: Ghost narratives and Malay modernity in Pontianak, Indonesia. *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land-en volkenkunde/Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 176(2–3), 279–303.
- Eastin, J. F. (2003). Impact of absent father-figures on male subjects and the correlation to juvenile delinquency: Findings and implications. University of North Texas.
- Elgamal, A. M. A. (2023). Reimagining woman-nature relationships: Healing, transformation, and empowerment in Sahar Elmougy's work. *CDELT Occasional Papers in the Development of English Education*, 83(1), 3–29.
- Frank, S. M. (1998). *Life with father: Parenthood and masculinity in the nineteenth-century American North*. JHU Press.
- Fromm, E. (2013). *The forgotten language: An introduction to the understanding of dreams, fairy tales, and myths*. Open Road Media.
- Fregara, N. (2023). Ecological, feminist, and monstrous trends against women and nature's oppression in Olga Tokarczuk's works. *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory*, 9(2), 150–166.
- Johansson, T., & Andreasson, J. (2017). *Fatherhood in transition: Masculinity, identity, and everyday life*. Springer.
- Kawan, C. S. (2016). Books, files, slips, clippings, copies... In short the stuff which makes a handbook. *The Encyclopedia of the Folktale, its Library and Archives. Estudis de Literatura Oral Popular Studies in Oral Folk Literature*, 5, 99–113.
- Khalid, N. A. M., & Satkunanathan, A. H. (2024). Deterritorialization and ecoGothic space in Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake: A Capitalocenic approach. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 24(4), 356–372. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2024-2404-19>
- Khosravi, G. D., Vengadasamy, R., & Raihanah, M. M. (2017). Ecoethical significance of wilderness in Pablo Neruda's selected poems. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 17(3), 55–69. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2017-1703-04>
- Lamb, M. E. (2013). *The father's role: Cross-cultural perspectives*. Routledge.
- Martini, G. (2020). *Cinderella: An evolutionary approach to the study of folktales* (Doctoral dissertation, Durham University).
- McLanahan, S., Tach, L., & Schneider, D. (2013). The causal effects of father absence. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39(1), 399–427.
- Michael Gebreyohannes, N., & Ambachew, A. D. (2024). The relationship between women and nature: An ecofeminist analysis of Aminatta Forna's *Ancestor Stones*. *Routledge Open Research*, 3, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.12688/routledgeopenres.18648.1>
- Ozbay, I., & Ugurelli, Y. O. (2024). Mirror, mirror, on the wall! Are all stepparents wicked? Impressions of stepparents' role in the fairy tales. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 32(4), 607-620.
- Pagobtham, P., Klannut, P., Kanjon, K., & Klannut, P. (2024). Violence in *Pla Bu Thong Klon Suad* literature. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Songkhla Rajabhat University*, 6(1), 161–188.
- Phat, P. (2019). *A comparative study of the tale literary work Pla Bu Thong in the Thai version with Morana Mada in the Khmer version* (Master's thesis, Mahasarakham University).
- Saladin, C. S., & Rohanda, R. (2024). Relasi alam dan perempuan dalam novel *Dlumū Lā Tajiffu* karya Byar Rufael: Kajian ekofeminisme. *Aksara: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 25(2), 470–480.
- Sakamoto Martini, G., Kendal, J., & Tehrani, J. J. (2023). Cinderella's family tree: A phylomemetic case study of ATU 510/511. *Fabula*, 64(1–2), 7–30.
- Sangeetha, R. K., & Rathna, P. (2021). Behind Our Sip of Tea: An Ecofeminist Study of Environmental Refugees in Kokilam Subbiah's *Mirage*. *3L: Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 27(3). 159-170. <http://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2021-2703-10>
- Sangkaphanthanon, T. (2013). *Phuying Ying Ruea: Phuying, Thammachat, Amnat, lae Watthanatham Kamnot: Satrinyom Choeng Niwet nai Wannakhadi Thai* [Women shooting boats: Women, nature, power, and culture—Ecofeminism in Thai literature]. Bangkok: Nakorn.

- Sharma, K., & Joshi, A. P. (2024). Colonial narrative and woman-nature dynamics in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: An ecofeminist critique. *The Outlook: Journal of English Studies*, 15, 99–109.
- Shiva, V. (2016). *Staying alive: Women, ecology, and development*. North Atlantic Books.
- Shukla, S. S. D. S. (2024). A comparative study of folklore and oral traditions across cultures. *Scholar'Digest: Journal of Arts & Humanities*, 1(1), 55–74.
- Tan, K. P. (2010). *Pontianaks*, ghosts, and the possessed: Female monstrosity and national anxiety in Singapore cinema. *Asian Studies Review*, 34(2), 151–170.
- The Fine Arts Department. (2014). *Pla Boo Thong Klou Suad* [The poem of Pla Boo Thong]. Office of Literature and History.
- Thiara, R. K., & Humphreys, C. (2017). Absent presence: The ongoing impact of men's violence on the mother–child relationship. *Child & Family Social Work*, 22(1), 137–145.
- Warren, K. (2000). *Ecofeminist philosophy: A western perspective on what it is and why it matters*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Winarti, W., Sari, A. A. K., Mayangseto, G., & Istiqomah, F. N. (2022). Continuity and discontinuity of gender-nature relations in D. H. Lawrence's *The Woman Who Rode Away*. *Leksema: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 7(2), 167–174.
- Wu, Z. (2023). Analysis of the phenomenon and causes of stepmother culture. *Academic Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 5(1), 151–154.
- Yang, S. J. (2014). *Adapting Korean Cinderella Folklore as Fairy Tales for Children*. University of Louisiana at Lafayette.
- Zipes, J. (2002). *Breaking the magic spell: Radical theories of folk and fairy tales*. University Press of Kentucky.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Korrakot Kumhaeng holds degrees in Thai literature from Kasetsart and Master's from Chulalongkorn Universities. He specializes in literary criticism and early Bangkok period Thai literature. Currently, he is a lecturer in the Thai Program, School of Liberal Arts at Walailak University, Thailand. bossbkk01@gmail.com