

The Power of the Auteur : The Case of the Anna Myth (1870-1999)

อิทธิพลของผู้สร้างเรื่อง : กรณีศึกษาเรื่องเล่า

ของนางแอนนา (คศ. 1870-1999)

เฉลิมศรี จันทสิงห์*

Chalerm Sri Chantasingh

Abstract

The critically acclaimed musical **The King and I** (1951), which has been immortalized by R & H music and the legendary Yul Brynner, originated from four articles published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1870, by a woman commonly known as Anna Leonowens.

Contrary to the general belief that the narrative of the legendary Anna is the factual account of the battle between Anna, an English governess, and a Siamese king and his court, the musical is actually an American cultural production aimed to engage American audiences. They are unaware that the narrative is embedded with American idealism, which is crucial to the popularization and immortalization of this narrative, so much so that it has been reproduced time and again with financial successes. American audiences did, and some still do, believe in the alleged historical facts presented in the musical.

The crux of this article focuses on the strategies employed in the productions of this popular American-made myth and the re-creation of the legendary Anna character, i.e., the various manipulative methods of the media industry to authenticate their fabricated versions of the Anna narrative, such as the 'reality-show effect' and the 'eye-witness effect'. The paper discusses the real *auteur* of all versions, from the 1870 original articles and book, to its 1951 musical and the latest and most historically disputed 1999 movie version.

*ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ คีอากเตอร์ ประจำภาควิชาภาษาอังกฤษ คณะอักษรศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร

บทคัดย่อ

ละครเพลงอันเลื่องชื่อเรื่อง แอนนา กับพระเจ้ากรุงสยาม (The King and I, 1951) ซึ่งกลายเป็นละครอมตะด้วยผลงานเพลงของนักแต่งเพลงผู้มีชื่อเสียงคือ รอดเจอร์และแฮมเมอร์สไตน์ และด้วยฝีมือการแสดงของยูล บรินเนอร์ เป็นละครที่สร้างขึ้นจากรวบรวมงานต้นฉบับคือ บทความสี่ตอนจบที่ลงพิมพ์ในนิตยสารรายเดือนชื่อ *เดอะ แอตแลนติก มัธลี* (The Atlantic Monthly) ในปี ค.ศ. 1870 จากปลายปากกาของผู้เขียนต้นฉบับซึ่งเป็นที่รู้จักกันในนามนางแอนนา เลียวโนเวนส์

แม้ผู้อ่านทั่วไปจะเชื่อกันว่าเรื่องเล่าเกี่ยวกับนางแอนนา เลียวโนเวนส์นั้นเป็นเรื่องจริงที่กล่าวถึงการต่อสู้เชิงอุดมการณ์ระหว่างนางแอนนา พระพี่เลี้ยงชาวอังกฤษฝ่ายหนึ่ง กับพระเจ้ากรุงสยามและราชสำนักอีกฝ่ายหนึ่ง หว่าความจริงแล้วละครเพลงเรื่องนี้เป็นผลงานด้านวัฒนธรรมอเมริกันที่ตั้งใจสร้างขึ้นเพื่อให้เป็นที่ประทับใจผู้ชมชาวอเมริกันซึ่งไม่รู้ตัวเลยว่าละครเรื่องนี้ได้แฝงแนวความคิดแบบอุดมคติอเมริกันเอาไว้เพราะเป็นแนวความคิดที่สำคัญมากในการเผยแพร่และคงความเป็นอมตะของเรื่องเล่าของนางแอนนา ความเชื่อดังกล่าวนี้นำให้ละครเรื่องนี้เป็นที่นิยมจนมีผู้นำมาจัดแสดงเป็นละครเวทีนับครั้งไม่ถ้วน และประสบความสำเร็จทุกครั้ง ตลอดเวลาที่ผ่านมากผู้ชมชาวอเมริกันหลงเชื่อและแม้ในปัจจุบันก็ยังคงเชื่อว่าเรื่องเล่าของนางแอนนาเป็นเรื่องจริง

ประเด็นหลักของบทความฉบับนี้กล่าวถึงกลยุทธ์ในการสร้างตำนานเรื่องนางแอนนา และการสร้างลักษณะตัวละครเอกฝ่ายหญิงของเรื่อง การที่อุตสาหกรรมภาพยนตร์ใช้วิธีการหลากหลาย เช่น การใช้เทคนิคการสร้างความจริงและการใช้เทคนิคพยานบุคคลในการเล่าเรื่อง เพื่อสร้างลักษณะตัวละครแอนนาและเพื่อเสริมสร้างความเป็นจริงอันน่าเชื่อถือให้กับเรื่องเล่าของนางแอนนา บทความนี้กล่าวถึง "ผู้สร้างเรื่อง" ตัวจริงของตำนานเรื่องนางแอนนาทุกฉบับ ตั้งแต่ฉบับแรกในปี ค.ศ. 1870 ซึ่งเป็นบทความและหนังสือมาจนถึงฉบับปี ค.ศ. 1951 ซึ่งเป็นละครเพลงบรอดเวย์ และฉบับล่าสุดคือภาพยนตร์ที่สร้างในปี ค.ศ. 1999 ซึ่งนับว่าเป็นฉบับที่มีข้อมูลเชิงประวัติศาสตร์อันเป็นที่ถกเถียงกันมากที่สุดอีกฉบับหนึ่ง

This article is an extension of the previous research on the musical, **The King and I** (1951), in which the researcher has already established that the Anna story is an American cultural production re-created entirely for the American audience. The corpus of this article is based mainly on seven materials related to the Anna myth and the musical **The King and I** (1951) by Rodgers & Hammerstein II. These include Anna Leonowens' original four articles entitled "The English Governess at the Siamese Court" (1870) ; the book under the same title (1870) ; Margaret Landon's **Anna and the King of Siam** (1944) ; the black-and-white movie, **Anna and the King of Siam** (1946) ; the R & H Broadway musical **The King and I** (1951) ; the musical film by the Fox Studio (1956) ; and, the latest movie version, **Anna and the King** (1999).

Historical veracity is crucial to the Anna narrative. It is what the audiences over time believe to be true and what they have paid for. Therefore, for mutual understanding, the article begins in Part I with Historical Background, a brief introduction of the persona involved in the narrative. It provides the reader with some historical information in comparison with fictional facets of the Anna narrative. The discussion is in Part II : The Power of the Auteur.

I. Historical Background

A. The Siamese Court and King Mongkut

King Mongkut or Rama IV (r. 1851-1868) was the fourth king of the present Chakri Dynasty of Thailand (formerly Siam, whose capital city was Bangkok, established in 1782 as the fourth kingdom of the Thai people).

King Mongkut was considered "the first and foremost democrat" of Siam, a very 'liberal' monarch,¹ dedicated to the modernization of his country so that it could be well 'respected' in the international political arena. Amidst the maelstrom

¹ M.R. Seni Pramoj, "King Mongkut as a Legislator," in *The Journal of the Siam Society*. Vol. XXXVIII (Bangkok, Thailand, 1950) 32.

of vigorous colonization efforts of several Western powers in Southeast Asia, Siam remained the only country in the region never been colonized by any Western nations, despite its vulnerable geographical location and political position at the time. The king's efforts resulted in the opening of the country to Western cultures and the influx of trade ambassadors and missionaries. A few of them had already begun trading with Siam in the reign of King Mongkut's half-brother, Rama III (r. 1824-1851).

However generous and liberal, King Mongkut's prior status as rightful heir of his father made him more inclined to act cautiously lest the ruling king was suspicious of his intention. In an attempt to eradicate any suspicion, the then Prince Mongkut left the secular world entirely and remained a devout Buddhist monk during the 27-year reign of his half-brother. He spent the time studying both Buddhism and other branches of knowledge. To gratify his zealous desire to learn western technology, he started studying French and Latin, as well as learning about Christianity, with the French bishop, Monsignor Pallegoix.²

King Mongkut's English lessons with American missionaries also began during his monkhood in 1845 with Rev. Jesse Caswell (1809-1848). He asked Caswell to give him, and ten other monks, lessons in the English language. In return, he provided a room in his temple where Caswell could "preach the Gospel" and distribute Christian writings to Siamese monks and "a large company of royal personages and their attendants" who regularly came to visit Mongkut.³

In addition to learning several Western languages, Mongkut was also very interested in astronomy and several other branches of Western knowledge, such as

² Sir John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam* (Kuala Lumpur : Oxford University Press, 1969) 370.

³ D. Bradley in Rev. George Feltus, *Abstract of the Journals of Rev. Dan B. Bradley* (Oberlin College, 1936) 101-102.

printing, ship-building, administrative style, sanitation, and medicine, all of which he deemed useful for the modernization of Siam.

B. The Real Anna Leonowens

Several researchers had arduously researched on Anna Leonowens' life—not without difficulty. Born Ann Harriet Edwards (1831?-1915), she took the name Leonowens after her husband's death in 1859. She had never disclosed her life before the Siamese Court to anyone, not even her own family members. Two detailed and extensive research on her life history are Bristowe's book, **Louis and the King of Siam** (1976), and Leslie Smith Dow's book, **Anna Leonowens : A Life Beyond The King and I** (1991).

Bristowe's and Smith Dow's stories of Mrs. Anna Owens, with additional information from Susan Kepner's 1997 research, can constitute a rather detailed account of her life. These authors concur that Anna's father was an enlisted soldier, a Sergeant Thomas Edwards (not Crawford, as publicized by Landon's 1944 book). Her mother, Mary Ann Glasscott of Bombay, was believed to be "coloured".⁴ This might explain why Leonowens had a rather dark complexion, which her Victorian American and Canadian audiences interpreted as having been "ruined by the climate of the Orient".⁵

Leonowens' parents were married in 1829 at St. James' Church in Bombay. Their daughters, Eliza (b. 1830) and Anna Harriet (born three months after her father's death) were born at Ahmednugger. At the time of his death in 1831, Sgt. Thomas Edwards was literally penniless. Within five months, his widow re-married an Irishman, Patrick Donoughey, a second Corporal in the Engineers before being later demoted

⁴ Bristowe, W.S. **Louis and the King of Siam** (London : Chatto & Windus, 1976) 26-27 ; and Kepner, Susan. "Anna (and Margaret) and the King of Siam," in **Crossroads**. 10 (2) (1997) : 1-32.

⁵ Landon maintains that she also received two letters from the women who had met Anna Leonowens and made similar comments about her dark complexion.

to Private for bad conduct. Lenowens was never willing to talk about her stepfather and her childhood, nor did she maintain contact with her only sister.⁶

In 1845, the 14-year-old Anna met a thirty-year-old clergyman, Rev. George Percy Badger, the regimental chaplain of the East India Company in Puna, where her family was living at the time. When Badger was transferred to the Middle East, Anna accompanied him and lived abroad for more than a year.⁷

A year after her return from the Middle East to India, Anna married a Mr. Thomas Owens on December 25, 1849. She was eighteen. He was twenty-two. When their first child, Selina, was born in 1851, he was an assistant in the Military Pay Office in Bombay. They later moved to Malaya. In 1859 Thomas died of apoplexy in the Prince of Wales Island (Penang).⁸

In 1859, Anna Leonowens surfaced in Singapore as a schoolteacher, probably at a British garrison school.⁹ In 1862, Mr. Tan Kim Ching, a Chinese mer-

⁶ In a letter that John Pratt (the grandson of Leonowens' sister, Eliza) wrote to Avis Fyche (Leonowens's granddaughter), Pratt mentioned 'a very strange reply' Eliza (Leonowens' sister) received from Leonowens in Siam in which Leonowens mentioned that "in consequence of these sufferings [in the past] she had determined to cut off all communication with her relations with whom her sad past was bound up... [and] that she would answer no further communications from her relations and she even went so far as to say that if anyone came to Siam to find her she would commit suicide." (John Pratt quoted by Margaret Landon and re-quoted in Susan Kepner p.10).

⁷ Many researchers have different theories regarding the Middle East trip of Leonowens. While Margaret Landon contends that Leonowens took the trip with Rev. Badger and his wife, Bristowe speculates that she traveled as his wife to avoid scandal. Susan Kepner, on the contrary, has an entirely different theory. She maintains, quoting several pieces of circumstantial evidence, that Leonowens might have been sexually abused by her notoriously violent step-father who might have impregnated her, and thus rendered necessary such a trip away from home for longer than a year (Landon 9, Bristowe 4, 28, and Kepner 8-9).

⁸ Bristowe, 29.

⁹ Leslie Smith Dow, *Anna Leonowens : A Life Beyond THE KING AND I* (Nova Scotia : Pottersfield Press, 1991) 3-4.

chant, the then Siamese consul in Singapore, extended an invitation for her to come to the Siamese court as teacher to the children of King Mongkut. Anna Leonowens arrived in Bangkok with her son Louis in March 1862, after having sent her daughter, Avis, to a boarding school in England.¹⁰ Leonowens and her son Louis were to remain in Siam until July 1867. She was then granted permission for a six-month vacation, presumably to arrange for her son's education. Near the end of her vacation, she sent a letter to King Mongkut asking for a loan of \$200 and a raise in her salary. The king, however, did not agree to her request, and Leonowens was never again invited to resume her teaching position.¹¹ When the king passed away in October 1868, she was in New York.

The obscurities of Anna's ancestry and her reluctance to talk about her family made it almost impossible for people to know the truth about her early life.¹² It is not inaccurate to contend that the life of 'Anna Leonowens' actually began when she accepted the teaching position at the Siamese court, the job of a lifetime.

C. Anna Leonowens at the Siamese Court (March 1862-July 1867)

There is little historical evidence about Leonowens' activities at the Siamese Court. However, King Mongkut's scribe (*Phra Alack* in Leonowens' account) once referred to her in an official letter to the Siamese deputy-consul in Singapore :

Ma'm Leonowens, who is the royal children's teacher, is getting more naughty, putting this with that, and that with this, and getting bolder. A few days ago while we were having an audience in the evening, she sent her son into the throne hall, requesting an audience, saying that she had an urgent business. The king told her

¹⁰ Smith Dow, 10.

¹¹ *Anna and the King of Siam*, 350.

¹² Smith Dow, 1.

*to come in, but she might have been intimidated by the fact that there were several ministers and nobles in the congregation. The king suspected that she might have been sent by the British consul, to discourage the king from sending our envoy to London, and then encourage the idea of sending Sir John Bowring instead, [In which case,] she might be able to collect some thousands [for her reward].*¹³

Claiming Louis' few letters to his sister Avis as evidence, Bristowe contends that Leonowens' life in Siam was not exactly what she had depicted in her book. Because of his youth, the young Louis might have been more resilient and adaptable to the new surroundings. In his letters, he gave a completely different picture from that of his mother's. Louis mentioned how the king had shown his generosity and kindness to him and his mother by taking them on an expedition with his family.¹⁴ In addition, we know that Anna and Louis Leonowens were well provided for. In 1861, after the Westerners' petition for a road to go riding to entertain themselves as they were used to in their own countries, the king had the first road constructed after the Western fashion, which is still called New Road today.¹⁵ Louis and Anna each had a pony for their morning rides. Louis's love for horses would persist into adulthood. In 1865, the king took them on another expedition to "a beautiful Watt temple far away in the country called Phra Pa Thom" (about thirty miles south of Bangkok). From Louis' letter to his sister Avis in February 1865, we know that he was very happy at the Siamese Court and that everyone loved him and

¹³ Translated from Sri Suntorn-woham in Prince Damrong-Rajanuparb ed., **Correspondence of King Mongkut** (Bangkok : Sophon-pipattanakorn Publishing House, 1926) 5-6.

¹⁴ Bristowe, 32.

¹⁵ Chao-Praya Thipakorawong, **Royal Chronicles of Events During the Reign of Rama IV** (Bangkok: Kuru-Sapha, 1961) 260.

his mother. He also recounted how he played with the little princes, including the future King Chulalongkorn, and that Louis once gave Prince Chulalongkorn a black eye.¹⁶

Rev. Dan B. Bradley, King Mongkut's arch-critic, provided a record of an incident in the *Bangkok Calendar* when the king was giving a dinner reception to the newly appointed American Consul, J. M. Hood. The report gives a positive picture of the situation and the king's attitude towards Louis:

There was none at the table but the Consul and his suite and a lad, son of Mrs.

*Leonowens, the teacher of the King's children. This bright boy his majesty seemed to regard as an adopted son.*¹⁷

The Siamese life style and the palatial splendor that he witnessed in the royal court must have made very significant impressions during Louis's formative years. Despite his mother's label of the Siamese Court as "the most hideous place on earth," Louis came back to Siam in 1881 and lived his life to the fullest, in the country that his mother had publicly condemned. In 1884 he married his first wife, Caroline Knox, a daughter of the British Thomas Knox and a Siamese lady. Despite his love for his wife, he kept a large harem in Northern provinces where he frequently visited as an agent on a teak venture for the Borneo Company. After her 1893 death of kidney trouble, their two young children, George and Anna Harriet, were brought to Leonowens in Halifax, Canada, and were raised in the family of his sister Avis.¹⁸ In 1899, Louis, then 43, married a twenty-year-old Australian, Reta MacLaughlan.¹⁹ Louis and Reta resided in Siam until after his retirement from Louis T. Leonowens Company in 1906. In 1919 Louis died of influenza in London. His wife donated most of her share of his inheritance to certain Siamese charities.²⁰

¹⁶ Bristowe, 32-33.

¹⁷ D. Bradley in *Bangkok Calendar* cited in Bristowe, 33.

¹⁸ Smith Dow, 87.

¹⁹ Bristowe, 99.

²⁰ Bristowe, 126-129.

D. Anna Leonowens' Literary Career after the Siamese Court (1867-1915)

When the news of King Mongkut's death reached Anna Leonowens, she was living in New York. The newly enthroned King Chulalongkorn, her former student, sent a reply to her letter of condolences. He did not, however, invite her back to the Siamese court.

Mrs. Leonowens thus started teaching school on Staten Island, presumably with the assistance of her daughter Avis.²¹

In 1870 the *Atlantic Monthly* published Leonowens' first four articles in its spring and summer editions (April, May, June and August). They were an instant success. The articles were expanded into a book published in the same year with the original title, **The English Governess at the Siamese Court**. The book was dedicated to Mrs. Katherine Cobb, wife of Dr. Cobb of Boston who had supposedly introduced her to the American ideal of abolitionism and abolitionist literature. Leonowens maintained that it was Dr. Cobb who had recommended her to the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*.²²

In 1872 Mrs. Leonowens spun her second set of articles for the *Atlantic Monthly*, "The Favourite of the Harem" and "L'Ore, the Slave of a Siamese Queen." These were also expanded into a book with a new title, **The Romance of the Harem** (later, **Siamese Harem Life**, 1872). By that time Mrs. Leonowens had become a literary celebrity of New York City. Writing and lecturing became her lucrative oc-

²¹ It should be noted that after his ascension to the throne, Chulalongkorn continued his royal father's modernization scheme. However, he never invited Leonowens to resume her position, nor did he import any foreign teachers for his children. Instead, he sent his young sons, as well as some intelligent Thai youngsters, to various boarding schools in England, France, Germany, and Russia, to study something that would be useful for the development of the country. At the same time, he opened local schools in the Western fashion for commoners, thus distributing the responsibility for educating the young formerly held by the temples for boys, and the Inner Palaces for girls.

²² Smith Dow, 64, 67.

cupation, bringing her more fame. Her audience sometimes had to pay up to \$60 admission fees to attend her lecture. According to Smith Dow, Anna Leonowens became known as "an Orientalist" and was well accepted into the Victorian New York circle, as well as in Canada, where she moved (in 1878) to reside with her daughter's family until her death in 1915.²³

II. The Power of the Auteur

For mutual understanding regarding the term 'auteur,' this author maintains that the term used in this discussion is borrowed from François Truffaut's 1954 article, though only partially or loosely.²⁴ Whereas Truffaut has defined that the *auteur* is the one person, normally *the director*, who could impose his/her "creative will" on a production, in this discussion, the word will be used more broadly. In the case of the Anna narrative and the musical **The King and I**, this author contends that the *auteur* of each version that has essentially influenced the audience or the reader, can be the author, the director, the producer, or even the managing director of the particular studio that produces the stage performance or the movie. Each *auteur* has reconstructed both the Anna narrative and her mythical character with different techniques to reinforce historical veracity so that her heroic role becomes convincing to the audience, and thus capable of adding credibility to her stories. Imbedded within the story, however, are the persistent themes to promote American ideals and values. The audience of each version never realizes that its *auteur* has successfully imprinted the desirable images of Anna and her noble mission, and thus immortalized the Anna narrative.

The genesis of the Anna myth is four articles published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the famous Boston-based magazine, entitled **The English Governess at the Siamese Court** (1870). The original *auteur* of the Anna myth was Mrs. Anna Harriet Owens, commonly known as Anna Leonowens. In these four original articles, histori-

²³ Smith Dow, 137.

²⁴ Truffaut cited in John Caughie, **Theories of Authorship** (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) 9-15.

cal veracity arises from two significant elements of the accounts. Firstly, they are articles written in the memoir style with 'real' characters, settings, and historical period of time. When the articles were later compiled into a book under the same title in the same year, the publisher used sketches of real places in Siam as illustrations, which conveniently add to the credibility of Leonowens' accounts. Her audiences at the time had no means to prove or disprove her stories. For example, an illustration in her book shows the king receiving someone on an ornate sedan chair in a procession. The illustration caption reads "Presentation of a Princess".²⁵ As a matter of fact, that sketch was a re-fabrication of a photo from the topknot cutting ceremony for King Mongkut's son, Prince Chulalongkorn. Everything in the illustration and the original photo is identical, except for the person seated on the sedan chair. In the original is the prince in ceremonial costume whereas in Leonowens' illustration is a long-haired woman. In other words, the author manipulates the 'reality' surroundings to authenticate the fictional character.

This approach can be comparatively labeled *the reality-show effect*. It is being exploited to the fullest today in 'reality shows' on television such as **The Bachelor**, **Survivors**, and many others. Everything seems so realistic and naturalistic, with the characters presumably recruited at random from the general public. There seems to be no scripted acting. Audiences never stop to think, however, that once on camera, either partially or even sketchily scripted, no shows can be 'real.' They are as fictional as any screenplays or scripted stage performances. The real-life surrounding elements are simply exploited to authenticate the happenings. They also help manipulate the audiences into believing that they are watching 'reality' accounts unfolding before their eyes.

The second approach that Leonowens employed to authenticate her alleged 'historical' records of Siam and to give credit to her tall tale was to establish herself as an "Orientalist," an expert in anything Oriental. She told various tales about

²⁵ **The English Governess**, 85.

several Asian countries with no evidence of her actual visit to those countries or her experience with their peoples. In addition to the stories, she possessed the looks and the dark sunburnt complexion, which her audiences at the time believed to be 'ruined' by the horrible sun of the Orient.²⁶ She also demonstrated her 'linguistic prowess.' In the articles (and later during her lectures), Leonowens liberally quoted several exchanges in the Siamese language, and translated them for her audiences.²⁷ The fact that her translations belied her inadequate knowledge of the language she meant to show off eluded the audiences of her time. Unable to understand the language themselves, her audiences did not realize her *real* proficiency in the Siamese language. Instead, they must have been impressed.

The crucial approach Leonowens used to enhance her social status as an *Orientalist* and to authenticate her 'historical' recollections was to popularize her stories. She appeared at social gatherings and even at certain conferences to 'lecture' about her experiences at the Siamese Court. In so doing, Leonowens had enhanced the sense of reality to her stories. The audiences could hear from the horse's mouth all the stories they were prepared to believe. They all had the ring of truth because the author herself appeared before their eyes to relate the story. Leonowens had successfully 'factualized' her allegedly historical recollections of the Siamese Court.

The next--and perhaps the most--influential *auteur* of the Anna mythical narrative was Margaret Landon (1903-1993), wife of a Presbyterian missionary to Siam.

The credibility of Margaret Landon's Anna story lies mainly in the claim that her version of **Anna and the King of Siam** (1944) is "seventy-five percent facts and twenty-five percent fiction based on facts". In addition to the information from Leonowens' two books, Landon claimed that she also did her own research at the Library of Congress and the National Archives.²⁸

²⁶ Smith Dow V, citing Phyllis Blakeley of the *Atlantic Advocate*, January 1967.

²⁷ **The English Governess**, 212.

²⁸ Lina Mainiero, **American Women Writers : A Critical Reference Guide from Colonial Times to the Present** (NY : Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1982) 496 ; and, **Anna and the King of Siam**, 360.

The most crucial aspect of Landon's research, which helped confirm her credibility and claims of authenticity, was her access to diaries, letters, and other family materials given to her by Leonowens' granddaughter, Avis S. Fyshe of Montreal, Canada.²⁹ Combined with her assertion that her version contains "75% truth," Landon's story seemed convincing to the 1944 reading public. It was then easy for the public to accept all historical claims Landon made in her books as factual and accurate. How Landon manipulated the 'facts' she had also eluded her audience.

Although Smith Dow maintains that having a respectable and genteel family lineage was crucial to Leonowens³⁰ in order to be accepted into the Victorian New York circle whose obsession for aristocracy and class distinctions was legendary,³¹ it was Landon who established the noble family background for her. Leonowens, as a matter of fact, never directly referred to her family background in her books. To complement the gaps in Leonowens' version, Landon's account depicts Anna as a genteel Welsh-born lady, living the usual life of an officer's daughter in the Imperial British Army, whose father died "a soldier's death" when she was seven. So she traveled to India at the age of 15 to joined her mother and stepfather who "held a prominent position" in the Public Works Department in Puna, a city in India. However, Landon never mentions Eliza, Anna's sister.³²

She was only six years old when her parents sailed for India. Captain Crawford and his regiment had been ordered to reinforce the troops

²⁹ In her 1997 article "Anna (and Margaret) and The King of Siam," Susan Kepner maintains that Landon strongly identified herself with Leonowens, and that it was "a kind of transmogrification of the original Anna-through Margaret, into Margaret." In "Anna and I," Margaret Landon admitted that, "In retrospect, some things seem destined to be ... **Anna and the King of Siam** was like that for me. It happened so inexorably that I could almost say it began when I was born" (Landon quoted in Kepner 8).

³⁰ Smith Dow, 68.

³¹ Douglas T. Miller, *Jacksonian Aristocracy* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1967) 163-170,

³² *Anna and the King of Siam*, 5-6.

*there in the face of impending war. His little daughter was left with a relative who conducted a school for girls.*³³

According to Landon, Anna married a Major Thomas Leonowens in 1851 and lived a life of comfort with “an army of servants” at her beck and call. It was only after her husband’s death on a tiger-hunting trip that she began to face hardship.³⁴

Another decisive aspect in Landon’s book is the new persona she has given Anna. The high-handed, condescending governess in the original book has been made to look gentler, more genteel, and more religious. It is this version that has established the immortalized image of Anna as frail but courageous, fighting against the “relentless despot and his crawling minions”.³⁵

It is also in Landon’s version that the emphasis on American ideals manifested in Anna’s character is much more pronounced than in Leonowens’ original book. Exploiting the rhetoric of the American Declaration of Independence, Landon has turned Anna into an idealist with American values and democratic ideals. Landon emphasizes three characteristics: Anna the Emancipator, Anna with her Manifest Destiny, and Anna the feminist, to allegedly free the Court ladies from their suffering and enslavement, and the king from his purportedly innate ignorance and natural barbaric inclinations.

Landon’s impact as an influential *auteur* of the Anna narrative is evident in the re-production of the first cinematic version, **Anna and the King of Siam** (1946).

When Landon’s book was translated into this 1946 black-and-white movie, starring Rex Harrison (as the king) and Irene Dunn (as Anna), the narrative of the film was significantly altered from that of the book. In this movie, Anna remains in Siam until 1870, three years longer than the real Leonowens did in flesh and blood. Even before the story begins, the producer claims historical accuracy for the movie,

³³ **Anna and the King of Siam**, 5.

³⁴ **Anna and the King of Siam**, 12.

³⁵ **Anna and the King of Siam**, 73.

and conditions the audience into believing it. The movie is introduced with the following prologue.

In the Victorian era of the early 1860s, a young English woman faced with the then difficult problem of earning her own living had accepted a post teaching English to the children of the King of Siam.

*Her arrival in Bangkok marked the beginning of the necessary but almost terrifying adventure into the strange and still half-barbaric country.*³⁶

Furthermore, the narrative alleges that Anna is to bear "the white woman's burden" to remain in Siam in order to extend "knowledge and civilization" to the heathen barbarian king and his subjects, with her indispensable presence and wisdom. The destiny repeatedly manifests itself to Anna. To emphasize the point, the *auteur* of this version twists another plot development (and also a historical fact) unprecedented in other versions by severing Anna's last familial tie with Louis' fatal accident, rendering her totally alone except for 'her children' of the Royal Family and the Siamese Court. Anna thus decides to remain in Bangkok. Her significance at the court eventually unfolds. She is 'sent for' to be by the king's deathbed. At the end of the film, the producer uses *cinematic affirmation* technique to imprint in the audience's mind how important she has been to the modernization of the country. As a matter of fact, this narrative does not indicate her leaving Siam at all. The audience is allowed to see Anna remain in Siam to oversee the new king's proclamation to abolish slavery and his other efforts to 'civilize' the country although her presence at this historic happening in 1910 bore no historical facts.

It is arguable who was the *real auteur* of this 1946 movie version. From Rudy Behlmer's book, **Memo from Darryl F. Zanuck** (1993), it is evident why the movie version is quite different from Landon's 1944 book upon which it has claimed to be

³⁶ *Anna and the King of Siam*, 1946, Film prologue, emphasis added.

based. George Custen in **Twentieth Century's Fox : Darryl Zanuck and the Culture of Hollywood** (1997), also studies the influence of Zanuck, a native of Wahoo, Nebraska, who often imposed upon his films Midwest small-town attitudes and values recognized as fundamentally American, on the Hollywood productions. Custen mentions that a producer like Zanuck had much greater influence and impact on a film than audiences would have realized. Zanuck's 'suggestions' and reactions to a script called for immediate adaptation and alteration of the original script. In the light of Custen's argument, we can draw a conclusion that by the time the film appeared on the screen the character's viewpoints as expressed in the film were already Zanuck's. It was a widely accepted fact that he took "particular pride in his talent for remaking movies in the cutting room."³⁷

It is a matter of fact that the most significant role of the Anna story in Landon's version and the 1946 b/w film is the re-creation of the Anna character. From then on, Anna Leonowens has established, at least among American audiences, her genteel lineage, her devout-Christian personality, her unconquerable and courageous character, her egalitarian aspiration, and her American democratic ideals, as Landon wanted her to be. This mythical image and personality has lived on ever since.

Therefore, unbeknownst to her audiences, when Anna Leonowens appeared on stage in 1951, she had gone through several stages of fabrication and re-creation. The general public had known her, or known of her, for some time. More importantly, it had believed in the story and images that several auteurs of the pop culture industry had created for her. Still, the mythical image of Anna would further be 'retouched' before Anna appeared on Broadway in the much-acclaimed musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein II, **The King and I** (March/29/ 1951-March/ 20/1954, St. James' Theatre), which would subsequently be immortalized in its film version produced by the Fox studio in 1956.

³⁷ George F. Custen, **Twentieth Century's Fox : Darryl Zanuck and the Culture of Hollywood** (New York : Basic Books, 1997) 190 ; and David Smith, "Biography of Darryl F. Zanuck," in IMDb Website.

Thematically speaking, the 1951/1956 musical is evidently the signification of the American ideals of democracy. The aspiration of the narrative is the idealistic notion of liberty and freedom for all, which, historically, was not yet achieved in the 1950s America. The focus of the 1951/1956 musical, however, seems to be on the romantic effect of the narrative and the American idealism that the righteous Anna strives to establish in this untamed frontier, the Land of Siam. Yet, in a detailed study of Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals in his book **Rodgers and Hammerstein** (1992), theater historian Ethan Morrdan contends that the re-edited script of the musical wholly re-imagines the piece and that the feeling is greatly altered.³⁸ A totally new theme emerges in the musical, which is non-existent in the earlier versions, the emphasis on love and the freedom of choice regarding love. Many other narrative alterations also occur in the musical, which employs music scores and lyrics to advance its plot and character development. The producers' purpose, however, was not to comply with historical accuracy. That R & H never meant to focus on historical or cultural facts is evident from Rodgers' record about the musical in his memoir, **Musical Stages** (1975).

It was obvious that the story of an English governess who travels to Siam to become a teacher to the children of a semi-barbaric monarch had the makings of a beautiful musical play. There was the contrast between Eastern and Western cultures ; there was the intangibility of the attraction between teacher and king ; there was the tragic subplot of the doomed love between the king's Burmese wife and the Burmese emissary ; there was the warmth of the relationship between Anna and her royal pupils ; there was the theme of democratic teachings triumphing over autocratic rule ; and lastly, there was the added features of Oriental pomp and atmosphere.³⁹

³⁸ Ethan Morrdan, **Rodgers and Hammerstein** (New York : Harry S. Abrahms Inc., Publishers, 1992) 132.

³⁹ Richard Rodgers, **Musical Stages** (New York : Random House, 1975) 270.

In this memoir, Rodgers makes a metaphorical comparison of his production to that of an American painter who would “put his impressions of Bangkok on canvas. It would look like Siam, but *like Siam as seen through the eyes of an American artist*.”⁴⁰ The producers’ attitude to the narrative and the production techniques they employed has resulted in a new mythical narrative. It is evidently a Western romance with the king as the bad guy in the barbaric frontier of Siam. The musical creates yet a new persona for Anna. She has become a larger-than-life legend. She symbolizes the force of Western virtue, who finally wins the heart and respect of the barbaric un-Christian despot. Her conquer is a cultural domination, not territorial. The American ideals that she represents and preaches are adopted by the new leader. Anna has finally fulfilled her “white woman’s burden.”⁴¹

The English governess in the 1951/1956 versions is thus glorified and immortalized **not** because of her being a British national or her British ideology. It is her American-ness and the American ideals signified in the narrative that help authenticate Anna’s character and her story. Regarding Anna as a symbolic embodiment of the American ideology, her audiences are ready to embrace her and accept her story. Therefore, the musical simply reconfirms to the American audiences what they are ready to accept as real and authentic.

It is crucial to distinguish the **real** *auteur* of the 1951 stage musical and the 1956 musical film although they are almost identical to the general public. From all available documents, it is conclusive that the *auteur* of the 1951 Broadway musical was Rodgers & Hammerstein. They both were responsible for all the imagery presented on stage, particularly the actor who would personalize their aesthetic aspiration. It was them who handpicked Yul Brynner, a Russian-born no-name actor, for

⁴⁰ Rodgers, 273-274, emphasis added.

⁴¹ For a detailed analysis of the various versions of the Anna legend, please see the author’s Ph. D. dissertation (1999) entitled “The Americanization of *The King and I*: The Transformation of an English Governess into an American Legend.”

the role of the king because the actor fit the image of the savage Siamese in their mindset.

*The first candidate who walks out from the wings was a bald, muscular fellow with a bony Oriental face. [. . .] He **looked savage, he sounded savage, and there was no denying that he projected a feeling of controlled ferocity.** When he read for us, we again were impressed by his authority and conviction. Oscar and I looked at each other and nodded.*⁴²

The above-discussed points confirm that R&H had predetermined decisive images of the musical and the characters, despite the fact that it was originally meant to serve as a vehicle for Gertrude Lawrence who had retained its production rights before having commissioned R & H to stage the musical for her.⁴³

Contrary to popular belief, the 1956 musical movie, while retaining most of the 1951 narrative line, was greatly influenced by the Fox Studio and its mogul, Darryl F. Zanuck, who asserted several 'comments and suggestions' to the director. For example, before filming the musical, Zanuck 'strongly suggested' to R & H about the length of the staged musical and thus the film. In his memo, he contended that, "no successful musical picture, to [his] knowledge, has ever run longer than two hours and twenty minutes".⁴⁴ Therefore, six songs from various scenes of the 1951 stage version were not included in the film, along with the two intermediate scenes (after act 1, sc. 4, and after act 2, sc. 4) and several small episodes. R & H also had to retain the hilarious effects of the 1946 b/w movie, which Zanuck had found

⁴² Rodgers, 272, emphasis added.

⁴³ In his book, Ethan Morddan mentions that Lawrence had bought the production rights before sending her lawyer to discuss with R & H about producing the musical for her (Morddan, 132).

⁴⁴ Darryl Zanuck cited in Rudy Behlmer, Ed. **Memo from Darryl F. Zanuck** (New York : Grove Press, 1993) 249, 251.

amusing and marketable. The final version of the 1956 musical picture in its initial release ran two hours and thirteen minutes and was a great success. The omissions, however, shift the thematic 'voices' in the film version and turned it into an exotic romantic comedy.⁴⁵

It is then not too far-fetched to assert that the auteurs of the 1956 film were not only R & H, but also Darryl Zanuck of the Twentieth Century Fox Studio.

American audiences had to contend with the 1956 musical movie of **The King and I** until 1977 when the musical was revived on Broadway for the first time with Constance Towers as Anna and Yul Brynner as the king (May/02/77-December/30/78, Uris Theatre). The director retained most of the 1951 script for the stage with some slight changes in his choice of musical pieces.⁴⁶

In 1985 Broadway saw another revival of **The King and I** with Yul Brynner for the last time. With Mary Beth Peil as Anna, Brynner played to packed audiences, which were willing to pay up to \$75 a seat to see him. According to the *New York Times*, it was a record-breaking success totaling more than \$1,541,547 in the first week of its season (January/07/85-June/30/85, Broadway Theatre). Brynner knew this revival to be his "farewell" performances of "the king." A few months after the end of the season, he died of lung cancer on October 10, 1985. It also broke another record with its 807 total performances to become the longest-running R & H revival in Broadway history.⁴⁷

Broadway had to wait for ten years to see another revival of **The King and I** in the 1996 season (April/11/96 - February/22/98, Neil Simon Theatre). Without Yul Brynner, the role of the king in the original cast went to Lou Diamond Phillips, and Anna was played by Donna Murphy. The revival was another phenomenal success

⁴⁵ Please see Tables I and II in the Conclusion section below.

⁴⁶ Please see Tables I and II in the Conclusion section below.

⁴⁷ Hal Erickson, "All Movie Guide" in < <http://www.answers.com/topic/yul-brynner> > and, R & H Pages.

and received the three most desirable Broadway awards for Best Revival : the Tony Award, the Drama Desk Award, and the Outer Critics' Circle Awards.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Awards list <<http://www.merry-go-round.com/show-detail-pages/show2-detail.html>>

**Awards list for *The King and I* and its revivals
on Broadway**

1952 Tony Awards (for the 1951 original musical, *The King and I*)

Best Musical

Best Actress in a Musical - Gertrude Lawrence

Best Featured Actor in a Musical - Yul Brynner

Best Scenic Design

Best Costume Design

Best Costume Design

Best Actress in a Musical - Donna Murphy

Best Actor in a Musical - Lou Diamond Phillips
(Nominee)

Best Featured Actress in a Musical - Joohee
Choi (Nominee)

Best Lighting Design (Nominee)

Best Direction of a Musical - Christopher
Renshaw (Nominee)

1977 Drama Desk Awards

Outstanding Musical (Nominee)

Outstanding Actor in a Musical - Yul Brynner
(Nominee)

Outstanding Actress in a Musical - Angela
Lansbury (Nominee)

1996 Drama Desk Awards

Best Musical Revival

Outstanding Director of a Musical - Christo-
pher Renshaw

Outstanding Set Design for a Musical

Outstanding Costume Design

Outstanding Actor in a Musical - Lou Diamond
Phillips (Nominee)

Outstanding Actress in a Musical - Donna
Murphy (Nominee)

Outstanding Lighting Design (Nominee)

1985 Tony Awards

Special Award - Honoring Yul Brynner

Best Featured Actress in a Musical - Mary Beth
Peil (Nominee)

Best Direction of a Musical (Nominee)

1996 Theatre World Awards

Lou Diamond Phillips (as the king)

Joohee Choi

1996 Tony Awards

Best Revival of a Musical

Best Scenic Design

An interesting point related to this paper is the fact that each of the Broadway revivals has its own *auteur* who, though having based the narrative development on the 1951 script for the stage, asserts his authority through his choice of musical numbers to be included in the show, the crucial element which re-defines each musical on stage.

From critical reviews concerning the revivals of this musical, it is conclusive that not only the narrative, but also other theatrical aspects, such as the music, the setting design and the costume, have successfully captivated the audiences.⁴⁹

The Fox Studio would eventually become the *auteur* of yet another version of the Anna narrative : the most recent 1999 movie version entitled **Anna and the King**.

The long history of the musical's box-office success convinced the Fox Studio to re-make the musical into a film. In addition to the marketable stock incidents or 'formula' such as the bridge-blowing scene 'borrowed' from **The Bridge of the River Kwai** and the charming children scenes from **The Sound of Music**, including some additional 'historical' incidents, the *auteur* of this production has made several crucial changes. Unlike its predecessors whose romantic undercurrents remained subtly implied, the 1999 version turns out to be a romantic but tragic love story of two lovers with uncompromising disparities.

Taking into account the fact that the popularity of the Anna narrative has been built upon the claim by its preceding *auteurs* that this narrative is a factual reproduction of the Siamese Court in the reign of King Rama IV, the *auteur* of this 1999 movie version, in its attempt to add credit and veracity to the narrative, has implemented a crucial and subtle presentation technique which should be labeled *the eye-witness approach*. The whole story is told through the eyes of a significant character in the story, Prince Chulalongkorn. It begins with the prince's voice-over introducing the audience to "the first English woman [the prince has] ever met." At the end of the story, the *eyewitness* tactic is emphasized in the last tableau. The

⁴⁹ See the song lists in Table II in the Conclusion section below.

prince is a 'voyeur' witnessing the farewell dance while the audience also hears the dialogue.

KING : Until now, Madam Leonowens, I didn't understand supposition man can be satisfied with only one woman.

*PRINCE (voice-over) : I was only a boy, but the image of my father holding **the woman he loved** for the last time has remained with me throughout the years. It is always surprising how small a part of life is taken up by meaningful moments. Most of them are over before they start although they cast the light on the future and make the person who originated them unforgettable. Anna has shine [sic] such a light on Siam.⁵⁰*

For un-informed audiences, the auteur's use of the eyewitness technique can definitely make this version of the Anna narrative more convincing because Prince Chulalongkorn is not simply a crucial character in her original book but he really existed. It is a historical fact that he succeeded his royal father and became the beloved King Rama V (r. 1868-1910). The auteur's strategy to use him as the eyewitness to this courtly love affair is a significant move in its attempt to establish the authenticity of the story. In addition, the 1999 movie version ends with a historical fact. Whereas all of the preceding auteurs, by ignoring the historical fact about Anna's departure and the king's last days, allow Anna to stay on in their story until the king passes away and the young Prince Chulalongkorn is enthroned, the auteur of the 1999 version partially complies with history and ends his movie with Anna's last dance with the king and her departure from Siam.

Another remarkable happening involving the production of this movie is the fact that the producer did make a few efforts to appear concerned with historical accuracy, the move that spun out a chain of incidents. Firstly, they wanted to film the entire movie on actual locations in present-day Siam (Thailand). Secondly, the

⁵⁰ *Anna and the King* 1999, emphasis added.

producer hired a team of researchers headed by a well-known Thai scholar on their crew. Thirdly, the producer sent in a 'corrected' script for the approval of the Thai National Film Board. Finally, the opposition cry against the film's distorted historical facts concerning Rama IV (the king in Anna's narrative) prompted an unprecedented measure to popularize the related historical information about the two central characters, e.g. the A & E documentary.

Other notable attempts are apparent in the characterization, the simulated-authentic Siamese settings reconstructed in Langawi, Malaysia, and the down-play of the "Western better, Oriental stupid" attitude which has been predominant in all the preceding versions. The Siamese characters in this movie version played by American and Hong Kong Chinese actors, at times, even speak (heavily accented) Thai! The king in this version is more human, more reasonable, more motivated, more courageous, more respectable, more democratic, and more loveable than in the other versions. Anna, as usual, remains the paragon of virtue and righteousness. The villains are the snobbish British diplomats, the invisible Burmese army, and the rebel leader (Phra Alack, actually the position of a royal scribe normally with no military power). In addition, Anna is made into the king's almost-equal partner, not his 'better' as in the other versions. However, it is *still* her decisive and ingenious action, which saves the king and his family from the rebels' hand. Her absolute victory is manifested in the last tableau where the king confesses his love. Still, it is the West (as signified in Anna), which has won over the East (as symbolized by the king).

Despite the producer's attempts to appear concerned about historical and cultural accuracy, two aspects remain incorrigible. Firstly, the added historical aspects further mar the movie's claim of accuracy. Even worse, the romantic innuendo is explicit and outrageous. In all the preceding versions, the only occasion when the king and Anna make any physical contact is when they dance. They never even

once show overt sentimental feelings for each other, either verbally or non-verbally. The producers have seen to it that the two characters do not cross the racial and ideological lines. In the 1999 version, Anna makes a few declarations of her feelings for the king. The king himself blatantly confesses his feelings for her, touches her cheeks longingly, and kisses her hands in the farewell dance scene.

Despite all the *auteur's* efforts to authenticate the Anna narrative, the 1999 version was not well received beyond the initial hoopla of the Yul Brynner legacy. The drawbacks must have been in its plot development. The story line is actually difficult to understand. The widely publicized additional historical information is even more distorted. For example, the alleged Burmese attacks were historically impossible during Anna's stay at the Siamese Court (1862-1867) for Burma had become "a province of British India" since 1827. All the alleged 'historical information' only makes the narrative harder to follow. Added to the dialogue in heavily accented Thai, the narrative is simply impossible to understand. It is not surprising that the movie, despite these additional efforts by the production studio, fails to establish the historical veracity of the Anna myth. Furthermore, it was unable to elicit good reviews from movie critics. In addition, it did not bring in financial success. While the production budget was \$75,000,000, its total US Gross was only \$39,251,128--a real disappointment for the production studio.⁵¹

Conclusion

Evidently the legend of Anna Leonowens has traveled a path similar to that of the world-renowned Lawrence of Arabia⁵² and several other mythical figures, the

⁵¹ See details of incomes and costs in <<http://www.thenumbers.com/movies/1999>>.

⁵² For the detailed discussion and analysis of the Lawrence of Arabia myth, see Joel C. Hodson, **Lawrence of Arabia and American Culture: The Making of a TransAtlantic Legend** (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995). This author has borrowed Hodson's paradigm in the discussion of the Anna legendary image as propagated by the industry.

path paved by the entertainment industry. However, these myths are just a fraction of the industry's creative business. In his discussion of Hollywood and its powerful creation of legends and myths, Ian Scott (1996) contends that the industry merely re-confirms what American audiences want to believe about themselves and their fellow Americans.

Table 1 : Changes in the narrative line of **The King and I** (1951) and its variations

Act/sc	Plot/Character	Included in Previous Versions	R & H 1951 version	1956 Version	1999 Film Version
I, 1	Topics of salary and house	1870, 1944, 1946	From \$100 to £20	Retained	Retained
I, 2	First audience	1870, 1944, 1946	Slight change	Retained	Retained with change
	Tuptim	1872, 1944, 1946	Changed and added	Retained	Retained with change
	Luntha	-	Newly created	Retained	Phra Balat, a monk
	Lady Thiang/ Prince Chulalongkorn	1870, 1944, 1946	Change in character	Retained	Great change in both roles and characters
I, 3	Housing issue with K	1870, 1944, 1946	Slight change	Retained	Retained
	King's puzzlement	1946	Slight change	Retained	
	King's prayer	-	Newly created	Retained	
I, 4	"Getting to Know You"	-	Newly created	Retained	
	Tuptim's love scene with Luntha	-	Newly created	Retained	Accused affair with the monk
I, 5	Anna's threat to leave	1946	Slight change	Retained	Retained with change
I, 6	Letter to Lincoln	1946	Slight change	Retained	-
	Banquet for the British	1944, 1946	Slight change	Retained	Retained with change
II, 1	Dancing scene w/ Edwards	-	Newly created	Retained	-
II, 2	Tuptim's plan to elope	-	Newly created	Retained	In disguise as a monk
II, 3	Ballet scene	-	Newly created	Retained	Retained with changes
II, 4	"Shall We Dance"	-	Newly created	Retained	Retained
	King's gift of a ring	1944, 1946	Changed from 1944	Retained	Retained with change
	Tuptim found	1944, 1946	Changed	Retained	With a court hearing
	Tuptim's whipping	1944, 1946	Changed from burning	Retained	Retained

Act/sc	Plot/Character	Included in Previous Versions	R & H 1951 version	1956 Version	1999 Film Version
-----	Intermediate scene (news of K's illness)	1946	Retained	Retained	White elephant plot and bridge-blowing scene
	Louis' fatal accident	1946	-	-	-
II, 5	Anna to dying K	1946	Slight change	Retained	-
II, 6	Death scene	1946	Changed	Retained	Children's celebration and farewell dance
	Anna's presence at new king's coronation	1946	-	-	-

Notes : R & H means Rodgers and Hammerstein II ; and, K means the king character in the story.

Table II : Song lists included in the musical **The King and I** (1951) and its variations

Song List of All Versions	1951	1956	1977	1985	1996	Remarks
	Musical	Film	Revival	Revival	Revival	
1. Overture			•		•	
2. I Whistle a Happy Tune	•	•	•	•	•	
3. Royal Dance Before the King					•	
4. My Lord and Master	•		•	•	•	
5. Hello, Young Lovers	•	•	•	•	•	
6. March of the Siamese Children			•	•	•	
7. Children Sing, Priests Chant			•			
8. A Puzzlement	•	•	•	•	•	
9. The Royal Academy of Bangkok	•		•	•		Replaced with "Home Sweet Home" in the 1956 version
10. Getting to Know You	•	•	•	•	•	
11. So Big a World			•			
12. We Kiss in a Shadow	•	•	•	•	•	
13. Shall I tell You what I think of You	•		•	•	•	

Song List of All Versions	1951	1956	1977	1985	1996	Remarks
	Musical	Film	Revival	Revival	Revival	
14. Something Wonderful	•	•	•	•	•	
15. Finale to Act I	•	•	•		•	(The King's Prayer to Buddha)
16. Western People Funny	•		•	•		
17. Dance of Anna and Edward			•			
18. I Have Dreamed	•		•	•	•	
19. The Small House of Uncle Thomas	•	•		•		(The Ballet Scene)
20. Song of the King	•	•	•		•	
21. Shall We Dance	•	•	•	•	•	
22. Confrontation					•	
23. Procession of the White Elephant					•	
24. The Letter					•	
25. Finale					•	
Total number of songs in each version	15	11	19	14	19	Excluding repetitions

Notes : 1. The 1946 and 1999 film versions are not a musical production. Therefore, musical pieces are not included in the chart.

2. The star symbol • denotes the songs included in each version.

*In one sense, Americans really do want to believe in the innocent wonder of these citizens who are no more than the creation of Hollywood fantasy, and they wish to partake in their crusade to do good and their innate belief in the American way.*⁵³

⁵³ Ian Scott, "Mr. Innocent Goes to Washington: Hollywood and the Mythology of American Politics," in **Representing and Imagining America**. Ed. John P. Davies (Keele, Staffordshire : Keele University Press, 1996) 234.

Apparently this also applies to the legendary Anna creation. In the process to achieve that agenda, the *auteur* of each version of the Anna narrative has asserted his authority by taking the liberty of altering narrative details and other theatrical elements at will. All these alterations have affected the overall image of the story and the central characters, as the *auteur* has so desired. What remains unchanged, however, is the ideology of the Anna myth : the cultural victory of the civilized West over the barbaric, enslaved East. It is noticeable but not surprising that in the production process, either by Rodgers and Hammerstein, or other Broadway directors and the Fox Studio, none of the *auteurs* have been genuinely concerned about the socio-cultural or historical accuracy of the story, while exploiting real settings and historically real characters. The emphasis is more on the marketability of the end product than the authenticity or veracity of the legend itself. None of them has shown any sensitivity towards the Siamese or other Asian cultures casually dumped into their creations. The *auteurs* of all versions have their personal agenda, and their version of the Anna story has been made to meet that agenda, at the expense of the Siamese revered institutions and culture. Perhaps the words of a Thai ambassador to the United States can sum up the negative effects, which have been overlooked by the exploitation of these *auteurs* and the entertainment industry.

*In this age of "political correctness" it is stunning to sit through a performance of "The King and I" and to see not only the King, but all the Thai people portrayed via an extreme example of ethno-centricity as childlike, simple, and hopelessly unable to cope with the arrival of westerners. The British, however, are portrayed as superior beings, gently trying to uplift their naive hosts. **The wonderful music and the visual treats of the production camouflage the real insult that lies at the core of the play.***⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Faxed letter from H. E. Nitya Pibulsonggram, the Thai ambassador to the USA, in response to Mr. Christopher Cox of **The Boston Herald**, dated September 19, 1997, emphasis added.

References

- Anna and the King of Siam.** Dir. John Cromwell. Perf. Rex Harrison, Irene Dunne, Linda Darnell, Lee J. Cobb, and Gale Sondergaard. Twentieth-Century Fox, 1946.
- Anna and the King.** Dir. John Cromwell. Perf. Chow Yun Fat, Jodie Foster, Bai Ling, Tom Felton, and Randall Duk Kim. Twentieth-Century Fox, 1999.
- Behlmer, Rudy. Ed. **Memo from Darryl F. Zanuck.** New York : Grove Press; 1993.
- Bowring, John, Sir. **The Kingdom and People of Siam.** Kuala Lumpur : Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Bradley, William L. **Siam Then.** Pasadena, CA : William Carey Library, 1981.
- Bristowe, W.S. **Louis and the King of Siam.** London : Chatto & Windus, 1976.
- Caughie, John, **Theories of Authorship.** London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.
- Custen, George F. **Twentieth Century's Fox : Darryl Zanuck and the Culture of Hollywood.** New York : Basic Books, 1997.
- Feltus, George H. Rev. ed. **Abstract of the Journals of Rev. Dan B. Bradley.** Oberlin College, 1936.
- _____. **Samuel House of Siam.** New York : Flemming H. Revell Co., 1924.
- Flood, Chadin. translated. **The Dynastic Chronicles of Bangkok Era : The Fourth Reign (1851-1868).** Tokyo : The Center of East Asian Studies, 1966.
- Griswold, Alexander B. **King Mongkut of Siam.** New York : The Asia Society, Inc., 1961.
- Hammerstein, Oscar II. "Background," **The King and I** Website. 1 May 1999.
<<http://208.129.72.70/theatre/showslevel3/king/background.html>>.
- Hodson, Joel C. **Lawrence of Arabia and American Culture : The Making of a TransAtlantic Legend.** Westport, CT : Greenwood Press, 1995.
- Howe, M.A. DeWolfe. **The Atlantic Monthly and Its Makers.** Boston : The Atlantic Monthly Press, Inc., 1919.

The King and I. By Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. Dir. John van Druten. Perf. Yul Brynner, Gertrude Lawrence, St. Jame's Theatre, NY. 29 March 1951.

The King and I. Dir. Walter Lang. Perf. Yul Brynner, Deborah Kerr, Rita Moreno, and Terry Saunders, Twentieth-Century Fox, 1956.

Kepner, Susan. "Anna (and Margaret) and the King of Siam," in **Crossroads**. 10 (2) (1997) : 1-32.

Landon, Margaret. **Anna and the King of Siam**. New York : The John Day Co., 1944.

Leonowens, Anna. "The English Governess at the Siamese Court," **The Atlantic Monthly**. April, May, June, and August 1870.

———. "The Favourite of the Harem," **The Atlantic Monthly**. September 1872. 335-345.

———. "L'Ore, the Slave of a Siamese Queen," **The Atlantic Monthly**, October 1872. 462-470.

———. **The English Governess at the Court of Siam**. New York : Roy Publishers, 1870.

———. **Siamese Harem Life**. London : Arthur Barker Ltd., 1873.

Mainiero, Lina. Ed. **American Women Writers : A Critical Reference Guide from Colonial Times to the Present**. (4 vols.) NY : Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1982.

Miller, Douglas T. **Jacksonian Aristocracy**. New York : Oxford University Press, 1967.

Morddan, Ethan. **Rodgers and Hammerstein**. New York : Harry S. Abrahms Inc., Publishers, 1992.

New York Times Encyclopedia of Film 1947-1951.

Pramoj, Seni M.R. "King Mongkut as a Legislator," in **The Journal of the Siam Society**. (Bangkok, Thailand), Vol. XXXVIII, 1950, 32-66.

Rodgers, Richard. **Musical Stages**. New York : Random House, 1975.

Scott, Ian. "Mr. Innocent Goes to Washington : Hollywood and the Mythology of American Politics," In **Representing and Imagining America**. Ed. John P. Davies. Keele, Staffordshire ; Keele University Press, 1996.

Smith Dow, Leslie. **Anna Leonowens : A Life Beyond THE KING AND I**. Nova Scotia : Pottersfield Press, 1991.

Williams, William Appleman. **Empire as a New Way of Life**. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Wood, W. A. R. **A History of Siam**. Bangkok : Chalerm-Nij, 1959.

Materials in the Thai Language (titles in translation).

Damrong-Rajanuparb, Prince. ed. **Correspondence of King Mongkut**. 4th ed. Bangkok : Sophon-pipattanakorn Publishing House, 1926.

Tantawantana, Ampan and Sirilak. Eds. **Collection of Articles Related to Life and History of King Pin Klao**. Publication 22, February 1961.

Thipakornwong, Chao-Praya. Ed., **Royal Chronicles of Events During the Reign of Rama II**. Bangkok : Kuru-Sapha, 1961.

_____. **Royal Chronicles of Events During the Reign of Rama IV**, Vols. I and II. Bangkok : Kuru-Sapha, 1966.