THE TRANSFORMATION OF MEANINGS OF GHOSTS
IN THAI SOAP OPERAS

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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The main objective of the research “The Transformation of Meanings of Ghosts in Thai Soap Operas” is to study the construction of ghosts’ meaning and the transformation of ghosts in Thai soap opera through textual analysis according to narratology. The study focused on the soap operas related to ghost during 1987 – May 2014. Twelve soap operas in total were chosen to be studied in this research. The study revealed that the meanings’ transformation of ghosts in Thai soap opera is the effect of the kind of media called “TV soap opera” that constructs the ghosts’ meaning through the narrative compositions such as genre, narrative structure, character typology, theme and iconography.

The ghosts’ meaning is transformed and divided into two parts. First is the convention where the transformation of ghosts is being broadcasted and reproduced which reflects that ghosts are scary, powerful, different from human (otherness) and binding to the law of karma. The second part is the invention where the ghosts’ meaning is constructed from the understanding of the differences of individuals and the reconstruction through variety of narrative compositions such as intertextuality, pastiche, nostalgia, discontinuity, reproduction, implosion of meaning, hyperreal and simulation.

Consequently, the ghosts’ meaning that is repeatedly portrayed in Thai society has changed or been transformed. For example, ghosts are not powerful, ghosts exploits human for their own hidden agenda and ghosts are able to live with human.
These changes also reflect the changes in human perspective towards ghosts. Ghosts have become the symbol of the different kind in the society. Moreover, the transformation of ghosts also weaken the ancient ideal and belief about ghosts in Thai society.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Significance of the Research

Since ancient times, people have been curious about external and internal phenomena and tried to explain, sort out, interpret, and define them. Over time, as they developed their thinking processes and accumulated knowledge, they developed beliefs that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Thus, inevitably, everything society has learned and processed is linked through language, which has established truths for humans (Chairat Charoensin-Olarn, 2013a). Language is the tool for speaking about the world; it is representative of objects, thoughts and beliefs. It also plays an important role in creating our thoughts and identities as well as our spiritual beliefs, the existence of gods, psyches and universal truths.

Ancient people developed thinking systems that helped them live with surrounding nature, as they had to find ways to understand unpredictable natural phenomena, like the sunrise and sunset, rain, lightning and drought. Such natural occurrences, even before man-made, could destroy their security and safety as they were unpredictable and beyond their control. Thus, people came up with ways to deal with and protect themselves from these natural phenomena, which included, beliefs in spirits and deities in order to explain them, which also meant the evolution of language. For these reasons, the term “ghost” has been defined as “an invisible supernatural power holder”.

With the development of language, beliefs were passed on through narratives. People from ancient civilizations made up stories to make their beliefs more acceptable such as some god creating man and civilization or the concept of reincarnation or life after death as was believed in ancient India and Egypt,
respectively. When we take a closer look, we can see that each belief has always had its own supporting stories and that each believer has their own explanation as to why they believe in what they do. In these ancient times, life, beliefs and stories were inseparable, and could be easily found integrated into the civilization’s economy, politics, administration, art, literature and architecture. Therefore, the idea of a spiritual world and rituals dedicated to invisible powers has been part of people’s way of life for millennia. These beliefs form the folk wisdom that ancestors developed to maintain peace and security for themselves and their children. The earliest beliefs were probably forms of animism, which was used to explain, negotiate and deal with natural phenomena related incidents – both good and bad. People believed that powerful spirits controlled and caused many things, and they would worship, or attempt to communicate with these supernatural powers in order to gain peace and security. This is how and why rituals were created and evolved to ensure that these supernatural powers would be satisfied and protect rather than destroy their homes, families and livelihoods.

Worshiping ghosts has also played a role in explaining mysterious incidents. It was a strong part in the development of Brahmanism in which people created and practiced rituals to communicate with these spirits and beg them for protection. Over time, the rituals became more and more complicated and then became almost magical to answer the desires of the worshippers. Meanwhile, other forms of belief were built up and became social traditions that were passed down from generation to generation, which over time became forms of organized “Religion”.

Pinyo Jitdham (1979) said that religion could have originated from superstitions, but, most of the time, there were other hidden intentions. It helped educate people and could have a positive effect on their behavior and social rules after years and years of practice. S. Siwalak (2014) said that religion has provided the answers to the things people do not know or understand. It also linked each person’s state of mind and way of thinking. The principles, or rules, that were set up and called “religion” still included beliefs that may or may not have any supportive explanations. Kanchana Kaewthep (1999) said that spiritual philosophy and religion in Thailand consist of three major systems: animism, Brahmanism and Buddhism. These three systems are virtually inseparable, all incorporating a belief in spirits, or ghosts, which
have changed and diversified over time, leading to the construction of different definitions in accordance with social and traditional contexts.

From ancient times up to the present, the existence of “ghosts” remains an abstract idea despite the efforts to prove the contrary. There are no solid conclusions as to what exactly a “ghost” is, where it comes from, what its function is or what it is for. While its existence has still not been proven beyond a reasonable doubt, there are many supportive cases from different fields of knowledge that have been trying to give a concrete definition to this term “ghost”.

Thailand’s Royal Institute Dictionary (1999) defines the word ‘Ghost’ as what is believed by human beings to be a mysterious state that cannot be seen, yet is able to appear in human form and can help or harm persons, as it can be either kind or wicked. In Thai, there are, for example, Phi Pu Ya Ta Yai (Ancestor Ghost), Phi Baan Phi Ruan (Household Ghost), or just Phi, a ‘Ghost’, which refers to any dead person. The word Phi, ‘ghost’, also has other different meanings. In ancient Thai, ‘Phi’ meant ‘angel’, while in spoken Thai it has meant ‘bad’, for example, ‘Khon Phi’ (a bad person) or ‘Phi Pa-nan’ (a compulsive gambler). Furthermore, there are many kinds of ‘Phi’ that refer to persons who have passed away, namely Phi Kong-Koi, Phi Ruan and Phi Pong. The word ‘Phi’ can also be combined with other words or phrases to create new words, such as Phi Tak Pha Aom, Phi Poong Tai (a shooting star).

When talking about ghosts, Lukkana Sakunasigh (2013) explained the related beliefs derived from the abstract thoughts of individuals. The construction process of any belief starts with a thought about that matter or the acknowledgement of something that comes from fear, ignorance, inability to understand or the lack of supportive explanations. Therefore the word “ghost” is used to explain the things that people do not understand.

As stated previously, there are a number of meanings for the term ‘ghost’. It can be defined as things of different dimensions. Manasikarn Hengsuwan (2007) analyzed different terms used in Thai for ghost used by members of the Suan Kaew Temple community, Nonthaburi province. Her results showed that ghosts were named according to 10 aspects: appearance, condition, goodness / badness, cause of death, habitant, power, age, food, gender, and special characteristic. Among these, three are the most important, appearance, condition and goodness/badness. Despite the
different ghost names, or terms, used by the villagers of Suan Kaew Temple community, a ghost is believed to have a body, gender and age just like humans. A ghost needs food and a place to stay, and can do both good and bad things, just like people.

The belief in ghosts has been passed down from generation to generation, like a treasure that comes with the means to ease misery in a person’s life. The belief in ghosts has become another system of reasoning and thinking based on the relationship between human beings and the supernatural, which here can be divided into two types: gods and spirits with non-human origin and ghost and monsters, or spirits, of dead people (Yod Santasombat, 2013). Satienkosed (2010) said the forms of these relationships are defined by language and are valued differently. Furthermore, the term ‘ghost’ could have originally referred to both good and evil spirits, but then the good ghost became known as an angel, sylvan or guardian spirit, leaving the word “ghost” to represent evil spirits that could do harm to humans.

In the midst of these differences, there are still some solid ideas about the term “ghost” that everyone agrees on. First of all, Thai people have long been bound to this phenomenon, while holding differently points of view and forms of expression. The belief in ghosts is at the root of Thai “folk religion” (Kanchana Kaewthep, 2001), as people turn to these spirits more than ever when religious institutions fail to help them solve their day-to-day problems. Folk religion in Thailand is widely popular, while the trend seems to come and go with the help of the “media”. However, the term ghost in Thai society is still used to explain beliefs constructed during ancient times.

Personal experience is something each individual defines, values and practices. Not everyone believes in ghosts because of the lack of proof. People still, however, dare not deny their existence and continue to worship these spirits in the hope of receiving help with issues they feel are out of their control. Despite the trend towards materialism and high technology, the belief in ghosts can still be seen in Thai society in many different forms. Mass media has been especially influential in presenting an image for these spirits through communication innovations. People around the world have gotten to know surreal stories about ghosts through stories about, which made the concept much more real and touchable.
The transition from rural inhabitants’ religious faith and belief in spirits to urban society has been strongly influenced by the mass media as it introduces their consumers to new and different ways of thinking from other parts of the world. However, the factual contents are often partly made up, manipulated and interpreted differently, so that the mass media is playing a much greater role in constructing various meanings for the spirit worlds. Mass media, thus, has become a connector for people now sharing similar indirect experiences and mystical phenomena through the process of selecting, editing and presenting narratives. Thus, the real world can be different quite different from the world created, or communicated through the media.

TV soap operas, or dramas, are considered a powerful tool as one of today’s most popular forms of entertainment for Thai people, which have now been aired for more than 50 years. Watching TV soap operas is relaxing and relieves stress; it also inspires people to be hopeful and keep fighting their problems. People can often relate to the stories as they are about common issues that can happen every day (Somsuk Hinwiman, 2011). Things that appear on the screens are as real as what can be normally seen in the society, and these programs help people to understand and show empathy to the characters. Lessons can be learned from TV soap operas which can be adapted for the daily life.

TV soap operas are commonly believed to imitate or represent truths about life. They overpowered early studies of narratives that tended to use logic to analyze narrations and ignore their unique features based on the principles of construction. Either the plot or the relationships between characters can determine what a story is trying to communicate. Punpatis Theppatima (2003), who studied the Transmission of the Concept of the Spirituality in Films, examined 11 Hollywood, Thai and Asian films between 2001 and June 2003 to learn how spiritual concepts were communicated through conflicts and characters, looking particularly at the belief and faith in gods or holy objects, the quest for truth or core of life, the adherence to virtue or common sense, materialism in contemporary society, sacrifice, love and lusts. In the study, Transnational Whispering of Contemporary Asian Horror, Adam Knee (2006) talked about key elements found in most Asian horror, or ghost, films: 1) Women were often victimized, sad and distressed and often came back as a ghost to seek revenge or justice; 2) There were complicated relationships between the ghost
and the one haunted by the ghost; 3) There was always a plot twist at the end; and 4) Technologies became part of the communication process leading to specific values and ideologies introduced through the stories.

Thai society’s belief in ghosts has served as the root for developing a family of ghosts in Thai films. Wichuda Parnklang (1996) analyzed different versions of the famous Thai ghost story, “Mae Nak of Phra Khanong” during 1978-1989. She found that there were two fixed formulas for presenting ghost stories in the Thai ghost film genre, i.e. the plots adjusted according to the ages and creativity of the directors and a community-ghost-religion connection was a vital element in the film based on Buddhist myths. The films presented the definitions of ghost through chronological order using cameras to record the stories as well as other theatrical techniques, including lighting, camera angle, frame size, editing, sound effects and soundtracks. In the same way, Sakulwadee Suk-anan (2010) studied Thai ghost films through in-depth interviews with film directors and members of the audience. The research revealed a formula for the creation of Thai ghost films based on seven criteria: narrative structure, characters, theme, setting / the composition of image, use of symbols in communication, gimmicks used to captivate the audience and ideology. It was found that Thai ghost films were related to Thai ideologies which would influence the production in order to meet audience expectations. Still, the construction of any value or ideology was also influenced by the imagination of the film or television soap opera director, screenwriter and producer. These people brought their imagination to life through the stories that would be broadcasted or screened. As seen in Pimporn Soontharawiriyankul’s study (2008) on the Construction of Ideology in Thai Television Series during the political crisis in 2006 and 2007 found that in 15 selected television dramas aired between September 2006 and December 2007, the TV stations themselves had a strong influence on content, as ratings played a key role in determining what the story should be about, whether it be love, greed, anger or lust. They wanted to provide an easy to understand plot that would touch the hearts of their audience, and thus make them popular. Therefore, the producer’s vision and personal experience were passed on to the scriptwriter who would present contents in accordance with the will of the TV station and the producer.
In the research of Chalongrat Chermarncholamak (2011) who looked at 40 stories to study the relationship between narrative, intertextuality and genre in Thai ghost films aired between 1970 and 2011, he found that the ghost film industry had gone through many changes. In terms of narrative, the more contemporary ghost stories were much more real and did not depend on ancient principles, beliefs or tales. These films or program also adopted the character of foreign ghosts into the ghost narration. Most of the ghosts were still female and would appear anywhere at any time. In terms of intertextuality, there were various kinds of connections between past and present contexts and fiction and non-fiction narratives which were mixed and matched continually. In terms of genre, there were combinations of genres to satisfy a broader range of audience preference.

The first thing the audience would expect from the story is fear. Most people are scared just to think about ghosts. Therefore, different narrative techniques need to be employed to create this sense of fear. Tossaporn Kornkit (2007) compared the horrification in 50 American, Korean and Thai ghost films that were released between 1999 and 2008 and found that there were three main elements used in making the ghost film frightening, especially Thai ghost films: 1) the ghost character – often appearing as a Thai traditional ghost that has been redefined or reinterpreted and mixed with other cultures, 2) the code – divided into a general code and cultural code which mostly relate to religion, belief, values, vision and lifestyle and 3) the relation of images and sounds – not limited by culture because image and sound are universal languages. The research also found three similar horrification techniques that consist of: 1) concealment - using the plot to cover investigation in which the truths remain secrets until the end, 2) delusion - which misleads the audience to unexpected incidents by either confusing the characters or spoiling the situations and 3) reality – which is used to captivagte the audience with specific points of view.

The horrification in ghost films is considered as the construction of the meaning of the ghosts through the narrative structure and symbols. Prachya Thongchoom (2015) studied the symbols of image and sound in Thai ghost films and found four types of sounds used in Thai ghost films: speech, sound effects, music and silence. These sounds are influential in communicating with the audience and leading
them into the created realm. Sound also plays a part in the construction of “ghost-
ness”, reconfirming that ghost is real, it represents power, depicts different emotions
and confirming an ‘otherness’ to humans. The construction of the ghost’s meaning
can be made through other forms of symbolism as well. When the media keep
repeating a representation, the meaning will eventually form into a firm image for
the ghost. Kris Kamnon (2009) in his research on the representation of images
through facial make-up s for Thai television drama characters found that make-up was
needed to present the character of both the protagonists and villains. The characters’
make-up reflects a real-like image of people nowadays. The make-up helps the
characters to fit the roles in the story, and in the case of a ghost story, the characters
will be made up to be scary with a disfigured face, or dark or red eyes.

The construction of meaning consists of elements both structural and
symbolic. In TV soap operas, this is achieved not only through symbolic images and
sound, but also through the communication process, for example, using other
language structures and fictional plots. Fiction consists of conflicts, rising action to
climax, ending with resolution. Since each composition has its own meaning, all the
elements works together to create an explanation, or meaning that refers to the
meaning of the ghost or ghosts in the narrative.

Language is not only considered as a tool to describe the earth or represent
objects, thoughts, and beliefs, it is also used to create worlds, thoughts and identities.
Therefore, meaning construction through mass communications affords the ability to
communicate with a wide audience, whish is especially true with TV soap operas.
These dramas influence viewers’ knowledge and sense of truth that includes values
and ideologies conveyed through different elements of the story. Nirin Petrachai-
anan’s research (2007) studied the representation of female ghosts and found three
different types of female ghosts in Thai ghost stories – the ghost waiting for the lover,
the unwilling ghost and the mother ghost – all constructed from male norms. The
stories are mostly about love, beauty, virginity, karma, motherhood and cityhood,
which all fall under the control of sexual ideology.

From all the research reviewed regarding the different aspects storytelling, this
researcher found that the construction of the meaning of ghosts in television has not
been a popular study topic. Still, TV soap operas continue to grow in popularity in
Thailand. Nowadays, through new media, people can watch TV ghost soap operas at almost any time. Moreover, TV language, which comprises both verbal and nonverbal communication techniques, has the potential to construct and convey deep and detailed meanings to the audience. Consequently, TV soap operas have become a powerful platform that encourages transforming individual beliefs into social values and ideologies which passed on from one generations to another. Therefore, the study of “The Transformation of the Meaning of Ghosts in Thai Soap Operas” aims to study the construction of the meanings of ghosts in Thai TV soap operas to better understand the process based on narrative composition and see how the meaning of ghosts in TV soap operas has been transformed during the past 30 years. These processes represent sets of codes that enable the audience to understand the meaning of ghosts as presented in TV ghost soap operas.

1.2 Research Questions

1) What are the characteristics of the composition used in the narration of TV ghost soap operas?
2) What are the characteristics of the construction of the meaning of ghosts in TV ghost soap operas through narration?
3) How has the characterization of ghosts in TV ghosts’ soap opera been transformed?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1) To analyze the composition used in the narration of TV ghost soap operas.
2) To analyze the construction of the definition of ghosts definition through narration.
3) To analyze the transformation of ghosts in TV ghost soap operas.
1.4 Definitions

1) Free TV refers to the TV stations that offer programs that are free of charge or membership fee. Nowadays, there are three free TV stations that broadcast TV soap operas during evening primetime (20.00 – 22.30): Royal Thai Army Radio and Television Channel 5, Thai Television Channel 3 and Bangkok Broadcasting Television Channel 7.

2) TV drama / Soap opera refers to a television drama that is presented in a series of 20-30 episodes. Each episode is connected, broadcasted at the same time and performed by the same cast of characters. Soap operas in this study refer only to the television dramas aired during primetime (20.00-22.30) on a free TV.

3) Genre refers to the type, or category, that has a unique production style, which in this study’s case refers to the “Ghost” story genre, which includes supernatural phenomena, and a ghost as a main, or lead, character.

4) Ghost refers to the being that is constructed with supernatural abilities, that may or may not be scary, helpful or harmful or have or not have form or shape and that may reside in a human body or appear independent and may or may not already be dead.

5) The meaning of a ghost refers to the value and significance of a ghost to the thoughts or beliefs constructed to communicate and be mutually understood by the audience, who are affected by different cultural and social factors.

6) Transformation refers to the adjustment or modification of the values or significance of ghost as well as the thoughts and beliefs constructed to communicate and be mutually understood by society who are affected by different cultural and social factors.

7) Narrative structure refers to the framework of the story line in a TV soap opera that can vary depending on themes and genres.

8) Ideology refers to a concept presented in a soap opera that conveys specific ideas or beliefs.
1.5 Scope of Study

The period of study in the transformation of the meanings of ghosts in Thai soap operas was between 1987 and May 2014 and included dramas comprising 15-30 episodes that were broadcasted during primetime (20.30 - 22.30) on free TV (channel 3, 5, and 7). The reason for choosing this time period is because it has the highest number of viewers.

1.6 Benefits of the Study

1) To provide a better understanding of the aims in the development of knowledge and truth achieved through mass communication, especially television, that presents different social beliefs and ideologies. This study is expected to show the relations between beliefs, knowledge and truths based on different social institutions, contexts and dimensions.

2) To demonstrate the power of television as an important part in the construction and transformation of social meanings.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND APPROACHES

The main objective of this research on ‘The Transformation of Meanings of Ghosts in Thai Soap Operas’ is to analyze the meaning, construction and transformation of the concept of ghosts in Thai soap operas by applying the following theories.

2.1 Beliefs of Ghosts in Thai Society

Belief refers to a concept, acceptance or behavior that comply with an entity or entities caused by fear, misunderstanding or unreasonable reaction. A story, whether good or bad, can have a mysterious power. Therefore, a person who holds to certain beliefs will try to find a way to satisfy the mysterious power in order to gain benefits or happiness for him/herself or his/her family.

A belief originates from an abstract concept caused by fear and ignorance. Although “humans should live with and befriend nature”, changes in nature drove the earliest human generations to find ways to prevent natural changes because they believed that the changes were made by the power of gods or ghosts.

Thai people believe that humans are composed of a mind and body that cannot be separated. The earth and objects are considered tangible, while spirits reside in the realm of the intangible. Thus, nature is not a resource that humans can freely use. As a result, humans pay respect to the nature. If any mysterious or miraculous phenomenon occurs, they will begin to feel fear, as they do not understand it. This was particularly true during ancient times, before science had begun to develop, so that people chose to rely on supernatural powers to explain the unexplainable. They thus adhered to the belief that nature was controlled by powerful spirits that caused
unexplainable phenomena, both good and bad. Therefore, human tried to reach, or communicate with these spirits to ensure their safety and happiness.

Moreover, the ideas about the origin and formation of the earth have allowed people to believe in intangible things (abstract) such as spirits. Thiran Anawajsiriwong (2008) concluded two assumptions about the origin of the world as follows:

1) The world was created by gods. It consisted of humans and other life forms. Thus, ghosts referred to powerful spirits such as Phee Fah, Phaya Than and Phra Inn.

2) The world originated from the transformation of phenomena that already existed, through an evolutionary process based according to the rules of nature and other factors, which is a Buddhist-held explanation. It is also believed that there is not just a human world, but also the worlds, or realms, of demons, angels and deities, according to Thai principle, “Tri Bhumi”. In general, heaven and hell do exist, while Nirvana is considered as a state that is completely free of the life cycle, beyond the tangible and intangible.

Scholars, when referring to Western philosophy, have stated that the Thai belief system cannot be considered as a philosophy because it does not aim to search for truths. Therefore, according to the empirical concept, Thai thinking is a “Thai Principle” rather than “Thai Philosophy”.

Nevertheless, the concept of the spiritual world and the rituals to communicate with invisible powers has existed in civilizations through many eras. The concept originated from doubts about natural phenomena, including visible and invisible ones, and because of this, “local wisdoms” were created. These were the first beliefs that our ancestors created, forms of Animism, the attribution that plants, inanimate objects and natural phenomena could have souls, or spirits residing in them, in order to explain the unknown. This led to a belief that powerful spirits could control and create good and bad events. Thus, began an age of natural and ancestor spirit worship.

After Thais adopted Brahmanism and then Buddhism, they combined their animistic beliefs and practices as I still seen daily rituals. The belief in spirits integrated into the Thai administration are clearly reflected in the Pho Khun Ramkhamhaeng Maharat stone inscriptions produced during the reign of Sukhothai.
The inscriptions describe the worship and making of offerings to ghosts and angels, demonstrating that the integrated relationships between humans and supernatural powers were difficult to separate at that time.

The ghost that Sukhothai people created was “Phra Khapoong Phi”, which protected Sukhothai city. The Thai people have continued to believe in ghosts. Although they adopted Buddhism. Moreover, there is much evidence that shows how strongly Sukhothai residents believed in ghosts such as “The Headless doll”- a baked clay headless doll that could appear as a woman holding a baby or as a man. The reason for making these headless effigies was to trick the ghosts into thinking that the doll was a dead person. These were usually used when women were giving birth because in ancient times many died during delivery. Therefore, the headless doll represented the dead to fool the ghost, so it would not take the living being.

Manee Payomyong (1986) explained about the northern Thai Lanna worship of ghosts, explaining that these spirits were divided into two categories: good ghosts and evil ghosts. The good ghosts would not do bad things unless they were aggravated. Previously, they were called “Phi Fah”, or Sky Ghosts, as they resided in the sky. Later they were called “Thewada”, or Angels, taking the term from ancient Sanskrit. On the other hand, the evil ghosts would bully people, so they were afraid of them.

Satienkosed (2010) came to the same conclusion that there were good ghosts and evil ghosts. “Phi Fah”, or Sky Ghosts, were considered of higher rank and would be worshipped by the people. Afterwards, they were called angels, deities or guardian spirits. Even the term in Northeastern Thai, “Phra Sue Mueng”, was changed to “Phra Sue Mueng”, which changes the meaning from ghost to holy spirit. At the same time, the word “Phi” was still used to describe evil ghosts such as “Phi Sua Nam” or ancestor ghosts, “Phi Pu Ya Ta Yai”, which has continued up till today. Evil ghosts are the same as bad people, who bully others or at least scare people. Consequently, people had to find ways to protect themselves from these evil ghosts.

According to other research on the belief of ghosts in Thai society, the different meaning of Thai ghosts depends on cultures, traditional belief and religions. Thailand’s Royal Institute Dictionary (1999) defined “Ghost” as an entity that people believe is mysterious - a spirit that is usually invisible but may be seen. They can be
good or evil and may be in the form of ancestor or housekeeper ghosts as well as unattached ghosts of the dead.

As a consequence, Thai society predominantly adheres to a combination of three major spiritual concepts: ghosts, Brahmanism and Buddhism (Kanchana Kaewthep, 1999). This began with the Thai traditional belief in the spirits of persons who had died and would have supernatural power over a person who is alive. Then, when Buddhism arrived in Thailand, these beliefs were integrated with Brahmin superstition and became Thai tradition and culture. Buddhist teachings were next deeply connected to supernatural beliefs, with an ulterior motive to educate followers to behave well. Over time, as people adopted these beliefs and behaviors, they became traditions that were passed from generation to generation and eventually formed a Thai interpretation of Buddhist beliefs (Pinyo Jitdham, 1979), which have evolved into key principles, rules and responsibilities for Thai society.

When Western technology developed and expanded as fast as religious belief in the 18th century (Age of Enlightenment), it transformed religious doctrines into scientific processes that required observation and experiment to understand the ghosts and spirits through science. For example, science defined ghosts as a combination of energy that produced waves that matched human retina frequencies, making ghosts visible to ghosts. Therefore, scientific meaning for a ghost was the appearance of a form of energy that functioned creature.

Moreover, for a psychological point of view, the concept of ghosts can be considered as a disorder that causes an illusion, auditory hallucination or scent hallucination. These symptoms are found in patients diagnosed with schizophrenia. The patients have a different understanding of reality, have dysfunction thinking and cannot separate what is real or unreal (Lersan Poomchusri, 1988). Therefore, the field of psychology does not recognize the existence of ghosts, but consider them an abnormal manifestation of the human mind.

However, when Western industry and capitalism became dominant, Thais began to think more like Westerners and believed that the world did not consist of any spirits like. Traditional beliefs seemed to be transformed into rituals related to superstition and extrasensory powers that combine with Buddhism. Accordingly, the concept of ghosts still exists in Thai society today.
2.2 Narratology and Narration in Soup Opera

2.2.1 Narratology

Narration is a communication tool used in daily life, expressed through spoken and written language that appears in every culture. It can be said that any society that has a language will have narrations, or narratives. Apart from letters and words, pictures can also narrate a narrative, or story. Moreover, narration connects actions and events together. As a result, narration has become a part of social experience as it helps people gain greater understanding that can make it easier to live among each other.

In the past, narratology examined literature only, but now it includes the study of mass media communication, like TV soap operas. Narratology covers story analysis, fiction such as novels, TV soap operas and films that reflect lifestyles, visions and values.

Therefore, the study of narratology developed as stories, or narratives, were created to duplicate reality. It is based on identity, or definitional analysis – the process of meaning analysis based on consented meanings. Now that narration consists of many compositions with their own meanings, these are studies to determine and explain consolidated meanings. Therefore, narration in mass media occurs through the change of paradigm in literature, which can be divided into three major factors as shown in Figure 2.1.
First is the change of meaning narration from the reflection of reality to the construction of narration where people believe that the story is not a reflection of a real life story, but something created by people themselves.

Second, there is the change of narration scope from literature, or fiction, only to non-fiction such as news, documentaries and entertainment.

Finally, there is the change of narrative objectives from concentration on appreciation to understanding. However, concentration on appreciation still remains, but less so than before.

Narratology originated in the 20th century, evolving from the study of narration, which was believed to be the duplication of reality. This belief made the study of narration tend to bring external logic into the narrative construction of reality. This may not have shown that "the narration contained the principle of construction in itself", as normally the construction would comply with internal logic of the narration not external. Accordingly, this became the origin of narratology as it examined changes in situations, beginning with two levels of narration as defined by Nopphorn Prachakul (1999).

2.2.1.1 Content / Discourse Level refers to the novel content through textual or film content perceived by the eye. The study of the narration in the content level will look at how the narration is constructed and what is the internal logic,
particularly when it comes to continuity or and kind of conventions. The first thing that must be checked is "the compositions and presentation", including characters, setting, time, theme, narrator, arrangement and narrative aspect. Furthermore, the communication of composition and narrative strategy relate to three aspects, as follows:

1) Relating to media. The audience and producer must know each code, or convention, of each media.

2) Relating to genre. The codes, or conventions relating to genre will determine plotting and reality. Identifying genre will allow the audience to have a different focus on their perception. Moreover, each genre creates expectations for the narration.

3) Relating to culture codes. The culture codes, or conventions, play an important role in creating the narration to be verisimilitudinous. Verisimilitude means that a narration is accepted in terms of codes, or conventions related to the culture. Narration verisimilitude doesn’t depend on duplication of reality, but it depends on the belief based is mostly on mythology or values attributed to the action depicting reality.

2.2.1.2 Story Level / Structure Level is a structural level of a narrative where narrative grammar is needed to determine and control the structural relations of the narrative’s units to better understand the process of the narration, which can be described in three parts, as follows:

1) Story refers to “What’s happened to whom” and Discourse refers to “How the story is told”. A story is a situation which is told as a narrative with a turning point, but it is arranged by time sequence relying on characters, narrative structure, setting, and conclusion. In addition to Discourse, there is expression conveyed through speaking or writing. In short, it is the text that will help determine “the language used”, which is based on the characters and time. In reality, all situations may occur in the same time, but when it is portrayed on TV, the narrator can only present one situation at a time. As a consequence, situations will sometimes be presented from a beginning to an end, while other times they will be presented as flashbacks.
2) Plotting refers to the chronological order of the narration, which can be classified as Explosion: to draw audience attention by introducing a scene, location or conflict of the story; Rising Action: a process in which situations occur and affect the characters’ lives; Climax: which occurs when the story reaches a turning point when the lead characters must face a problem and make a decision; Falling Action: which means after the climax, the lead characters will try to find the origin of the problem and a solution, making the story more and more intense; and finally, the Conclusion/Ending: which can be tragic, happy or, even, leaving doubt.

3) Theme refers to the main concept behind the story that the writer, director and/or producer want to present. The theme can be identified by observing all the aspects of the narration such as title, characters’ names, values, words and symbols. Popular themes are goodness and evil, love and hate. However, details for each story will be different. There can also be many sub-themes supporting the main theme of the story. Therefore, when considering a story’s theme, the sub-themes must be considered by also separated from the main theme to best understand the story.

2.2.1.3 Schedule arrangement refers to how the narration is structured to best influence the telling of the story. In short, this is how the different phases, or scenes, of the narrative are written and presented.

2.3 Narration in Soap Opera

2.3.1 Soap Opera Concept

Television is a communication tool that provides information, news, entertainment, ideas and real social situations. Thus, people’s thoughts, beliefs, values, ideologies, and cultures from the past up to the present can be portrayed through TV soap operas.

Television is considered a mass media that is often considered more special than other media because of its technology that disseminates messages through both vision and sound. Therefore, television attracts the attention of people. Moreover, as it can be watched publicly, it contains social values and ideologies that are universal.
Currently, in Thailand, the most popular TV programs are “soap operas” due to their various styles and contexts. Normally, soap operas are dramas that entail both real and imagined stories, or plots that are similar to the daily lives of their audience. Accordingly, the viewers feel they much more a part of the story and will pay closer attention.

Among the different media, television is considered to play a very important role in emphasizing social ideologies. Most television programs are regarded as forms of entertainment, with soap operas one of the most popular after the first was aired in 1946 (Suksom Hinwiman, 2002). The important feature of soap operas is that these are fictional stories that focus on emotions, especially joy. Soap operas comprise a theme, plot, characters, settings, interaction/dialogue, points of view, style and tone that interact to create and communicate the narrative. They can also be easily accessed, particularly when viewers are in their home. Overall, soap operas are stories that have been adapted from real-life situations or are based on a true story.

As a result, soap operas reflect daily life and thus, make it easier for the audience to relate and feel empathy towards the characters. Moreover, viewers can apply what they have learned from the soap operas to their daily life as Somsuk Hinwiman (2002) discovered in his research in which he identified five major reasons why people become addicted to TV soap operas:

1) Therapy or substitution: to fill a void
2) Tension: to relieve tension
3) Escapism: to escape boring routines.
4) Empathy: to feel an affinity with the characters
5) Social interaction: to have a common topic for discussion

A television drama, or soap opera, like any narrative comprises the plot, conflict, climax and resolution. Moreover, the actors, their makeup and costuming, dialogue, soundtrack, settings, camera angles, lighting and editing altogether create the composition of the narrative that leads to “contestation of meanings” through conflict and integration.

Thiran Anawajsiriwong (2012) divided the format of a Thai soap opera based on-air length and continuity as follows:
1) **Series**
A soap opera that consists of a number of episodes that follow a theme and include the same characters, with each episode coming to its own conclusion.

2) **Serial**
A soap opera that comprises 15 - 30 episodes and continues from one episode to the next.

3) **Mini-series**
A soap opera that comprises 3-5 episodes and continues from one episode to the next.

4) **Anthology**
A set of short soap opera dramas that are completed in one episode, follow a similar theme but have different characters in each story.

Apart from the above formats, Thiran Anawajsiriwong (2012) also classified these productions according to genres, as follows:

1) **Drama**
This is a soap opera in which the main characters have to struggle in order to live. The lead characters are similar to real people, who can be both good and bad. The characters are developed according his or her habits, behaviors and beliefs.

2) **Melodrama**
This is an emotional soap opera usually about love, jealousy and conflict. The lead characters are flat, or stereotyped in their roles such as leading actor and actress, villains and jesters.

3) **Comedy**
This is a soap opera that tells a story about people in an amusing way. Comedies can be divided into two categories:

   1) **Romantic comedy**
   This is a soap opera that can be quite creative but still reasonable. It is about virtually perfect leading characters who are handsome or beautiful. They will face some problems right from the start of the story, but they struggle and eventually end up happy and together. The story can be quite entertaining. Viewers will laugh because of the silly, innocent or even clumsy behavior of the characters.
(2) Situation comedy

This is a funny soap opera that based on situational conflicts that could be caused by a coincidence, for example. A unique character is usually required for this category to make the story more amusing.

4) Action

An action soap opera emphasizes fight scenes between a good and bad character. The good character is intelligent and brave, although he is usually defeated by the bad character at some point in the story. Still, he will overcome his adversary in the end. This soap opera focuses on creating excitement and interest as the audience will want to know how the antagonist is defeated.

5) Horror

This is an exciting, frightening and horrifying soap opera that includes ghosts, spirits, black magic, superstition and/or mystery. Today, more and more amusement is being added to this genre.

6) Period drama

This refers to a soap opera that is set in a past era.

7) Historical

A historical soap opera relies on a story that has been chronicled with usually famous historical characters.

8) Fantasy

This is a story related to magic and supernatural phenomena, often based on a legend or tale. This genre can also include mythology and science fiction.

9) Folktale

In Thai, this genre is usually called "Chak Chak Wong Wong" and is about local tales, mythology or legends.

10) Musical

This is a soap opera that combines melodies, lyrics, dialogue and dancing altogether.

Nowadays, the genres are also divided further into sub genres. As a result, there are some crossovers between the old and new genres called “Conventions”, for example, the Action-Fantasy-Hero drama, like the soap opera "Nheu Manud" that depicts cultural hybridization.
2.3.1 Narrative Composition in TV Soap Operas

2.3.2.1 Plot

Plot refers to the construction of the story from the beginning to the middle and end. Plotting is planning the narrative, creating problems for the characters to face and solve. Every situation in the plot will be relevant and follow from one scene to the next. Vladimir Propp (1975 quoted in Berger, 2014) suggested that the basic, or minimal unit in narratives was what he called a function and explained as “the act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action.” In essence, Propp made a content analyses of the actions of the characters in his collection of fairy tales and came up with what he called “an initial situation” that instigates the tale in addition to 31 functions of characters.
### Table 2.1 Propp’s Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial situation</th>
<th>Members of family introduced or hero introduced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Absentation</td>
<td>One of the members of the family absents self from home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Interdiction</td>
<td>An interdiction addressed to hero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Violation</td>
<td>An interdiction is violated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reconnaissance</td>
<td>The villain makes attempt at reconnaissance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Delivery</td>
<td>The villain receives information about his victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Trickery</td>
<td>The villain attempts to deceive his victims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Complicity</td>
<td>The victim submits to deception, unwittingly helps the enemy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Villainy</td>
<td>The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Lack</td>
<td>One member of a family lacks something or wants something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Mediation</td>
<td>Misfortune is made know, hero is dispatched.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Counteraction</td>
<td>Seekers agree to decide on counteraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Departure</td>
<td>The hero leaves home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. 1st function of donor</td>
<td>Hero tested, receives magical agent or helper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Hero’s reaction</td>
<td>Hero reacts to actions of the future donor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Receipt of magic agent</td>
<td>Hero acquires the use of a magical agent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Spatial transference</td>
<td>Hero led to object of search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Struggle</td>
<td>Hero and villain join in direct combat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Victory</td>
<td>Villain is defeated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Liquidation</td>
<td>Initial misfortune or lack is liquidated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Return</td>
<td>Return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Pursuit</td>
<td>A chase: the hero is pursued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Rescue</td>
<td>Rescue of hero from pursuit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Unrecognized arrival</td>
<td>The hero, unrecognized, arrives home or in another country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Unfounded claims</td>
<td>A false hero presents unfounded claim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Difficult task</td>
<td>A difficult task is proposed to the hero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Solution</td>
<td>The task is resolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Recognition</td>
<td>The hero is recognized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Exposure</td>
<td>The false hero or villain is exposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Transfiguration</td>
<td>The hero is given a new appearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Punishment</td>
<td>The villain is punished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Wedding</td>
<td>The hero is married and ascends the throne.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Propp, 1975 quoted in Berger, 2014.
The Bulgarian theorist Tvetzn Todorov (Wall, 2011) offered a more detailed approach to defining the typical structure in a narrative, one in which each of five stages have a relationship with normality or peace, a state which he terms equilibrium.

**Table 2.2** The Narrative Structure Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1: Equilibrium</td>
<td>There is a state of peace in which opposing forces are balanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2: Disruption of equilibrium</td>
<td>Something happens to disrupt the peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3: Recognition of disruption of equilibrium</td>
<td>Key characters in the narrative realize that disruption has taken place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4: Repair of disruption of equilibrium</td>
<td>This often accounts for a very large part of the narrative as the main characters struggle to restore the peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5: Return to equilibrium</td>
<td>A better peace is restored, one in which the source of the disruption has been eliminated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Bateman et al., 2011.

Accordingly, plot analysis comprises five stages as follows:

1) **Exposition**

   Exposition is to help draw audience attention by introducing the scene, location or even conflict of the story. Exposition does not need to be in chronological order. Some stories begin in the middle, while some begin at the end.

2) **Rising action**

   This refers to story continuity in which the conflict between a protagonist and antagonist gradually becomes more intense. The character may be depressed, and the situation can be quite critical.
3) Climax

Climax refers to the highest conflict of story, which can be the breaking point. The characters in this situation are forced to make a decision.

4) Falling action

This refers to a situation following the crisis, which will result in the lead characters being able to solve the conflict.

5) Ending

It is the final scene of story. There are many endings, for example, happy, tragic, or mysterious.

2.3.2.2 Character

Characters are both active and passive. The leads will have or develop thoughts, habits and attitudes towards situations they confront in their life. Their change must be reasonable. The composition of a character can be divided into two parts. First, the conception, which is normally hard to change unless there sufficient reason. Second, the presentation, which may not always conform to the initial conception.

Propp (1975, quoted in Berger, 2014a) also analyzed the dramatis personae of fairy tales as follows:

**Table 2.3** Seven Dramatis Personae in Propp’s Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Role</th>
<th>Sphere of Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Villain</td>
<td>Fights with hero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor</td>
<td>Provides hero with magical agent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helper</td>
<td>Aids hero in solving difficult tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess and her father</td>
<td>Sought-for person. Assigns difficult tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispatcher</td>
<td>Sends hero on his mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hero</td>
<td>Searches for something or fights with villain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False hero</td>
<td>Claims to be hero but is unmasked.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Propp, 1975 quoted in Berger, 2014.
However, the characters’ expression usually conforms to audience expectations. The role of a ghost character in a TV soap opera may be varied or the character may switch roles. In this study, character habits and the relationship of ghost characters were analyzed in relation to Thai society. Therefore, examined “ghost” characters when presented in the story as both alive and dead.

2.3.2.3 Conflict

Normally, the narration will parallel the conflict faced by the lead characters. It is often vital to find the origin of the conflict as well as the solution. Therefore, conflict refers to antagonism in behavior, action, thought, wish and intention, while it can be divided into three categories, as follows:

1) Conflict between person and person: characters cannot get along with each other; they try to oppose and fight each other, for example a such as feud between two families.

2) Conflict in mind: occurring within the lead character’s mind. The character will be confused, distressed and unable to make a decision. For example, the conflict between responsibility and social norms.

3) Conflict with an external power: such as conflict with the environment.

Nick Lacey (2009) discussed binary opposition as a method used in the development of conflict. This concept is based on the belief that humans can understand the world by through a dualistic comparison such as earth and ocean, female and male. Binary opposition works by dividing words into two groups. These two groups are contradictory and when applying to the soap opera, conflict will be more prominent. For example, town and country are characterized by the following oppositions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>town</th>
<th>country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>artificial</td>
<td>natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commercial</td>
<td>non-commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangerous</td>
<td>safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exciting</td>
<td>boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over-crowded</td>
<td>deserted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polluted</td>
<td>clean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3.2.4 Theme

Theme is an important aspect of a narration, especially when the key idea is being analyzed. Theme is the main concept that needs to be determined in order to understand the story that is to be conveyed. Theme in the narration must be harmonious with the plot and characters. The method used in presenting a theme is through the situations that occur in the story.

For this research the composition of narration in a soap opera has been divided into the visual and auditory creation through television language. Regarding the analysis, the narrative construction of the meaning of a ghost will use plot, characters, conflict, and theme.

2.4 Semiology and Semiology in Soap Opera

2.4.1 Semiology

Semiaology is an important field in the study of social science and anthropology, as it examines “the concept of Sign”, or “the science of Sign”. Whether called Semiology or Semiotics, the objectives are the same, to learn the origins of communication and how it functions. The word “Semiology” (Berger, 2005) was coined by a Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, while the word “Semiotics” originated from an American philosopher, Charles Sanders Pierce. Both words have their root in the Greek word “Semion”.

The concept of sign, or structuralism, developed with the study of Linguistics. Ferdinand de Saussure, who is considered the father of ‘General Linguistics’, said that in the relationship between “language” and “reality”, language helps humans organize, construct and connect humans with reality.

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) was a French philosopher who set up a structural format using linguistics as a method. He emphasized the core of the rules hidden in the convention that made language work. He pioneered the study of language in terms of grammar, which focuses on the language itself more than the information communicated. Furthermore, he was the pioneer of “sign” science, widely known as “Semiology”, which studies the use signs and pictures in
communication. Saussure proved that humans can communicate comprehensively because of the relationship between signifier and signified, which form the language. Saussure divided the construction process of the defining of sign into two parts, which were “signifier”, a physical form that is perceivable such as the written word, line figures, pictures or sound, and “signified”, the thing that is referred to according to culture context.

![Diagram of Signifier and Signified](source: Lacey, 2009)

**Figure 2.2** Saussure’s Elements of Meaning

**Source:** Lacey, 2009.

According to the diagram, Chairat Charoensin-olan (2002) explained that language was a value system determined by society. It occurs through links between a ‘Signifier’ and ‘Signified’ such as the uttered word “horse” that is a ‘Signifier’ that leads to thoughts about an animal called “horse” - the Signified. Moreover, the relationship between ‘Signifier’ and ‘Signified’ is determined by humans rather than nature.

At the same time, Aubonrat Siriyuwasak (1998) opined that Semiotics aimed at analyzing the process of defining through the relation of signs structure. Semiotics also aims to identify meanings that are not derived from reality. Therefore, Semiotics is considered to be abstract because it is based on the study of the relations of abstract structure, which refers to definition or human experience, not just action.
These realizations are the results of operations that create meaning determined by personal experience.

Roland Barthes (1915-1980), a French philosopher, furthered and improved Saussure’s theory to be more like a system. In short, while Saussure divided the “Signifier” and “Signified”, Barthes expatiated “the meaning”. Barthes thought that the relation between Signifier and Signified was based on difference and comparison, while, the role of language was the separation of reality, which created discontinuity. Therefore, Barthes realized that knowledge and reality were flexible as they can be changed and the separation of reality is done to create different reality comparisons. This system is known as “Hermeneutics of Signs”, and it infers that Barthes realized that the use of spoken or written language was to cause separation to create meaning that possible had no real value (Chairat Charoensin-Olan, 2013a).

For Saussure, the defining process referred to the relation between signifier and signified towards an objective. Barthes expatiated on the defining process in any culture. As a consequence, one word may have more dimensions than what was explained through Saussure’s concept.

Figure 2.3 Barthes’s Myths

Barthes showed that the defining process had two steps. The first is Denotation and the second is Connotation, which can include the belief in Myth. The meaning in this 2nd step will occur if the meaning in the 1st step met with determined value and discourse of the society.

1) The 1st Defining Process, or Denotation, is the basic relation between signs and references. The meaning is based on an assumption that the relation of two systems is objective, without any value inclination such as the Thai aords “Maew” or “Wila” that both mean “cat” and “Mha” and “Sunak” which refer to “dog”.

2) The 2nd Defining Process, or Connotation, is created from a Signifier and Signified where the meaning has already been defined, but can replace a realization, attitude, or value of the sign creator. For example, a soap opera is produced by forming a Signified such as light in the setting. If it is set to be bright, it gives a different feeling than a dim light. This is considered as social defining, which depends on the selection and managing of signs. Therefore, the important factor in the 2nd defining process is about how the signs convey meaning rather than the communication.

3) The 2nd Defining Process in terms of Myth is the long held belief, which can be called a legend. Barthes used this word to show the understanding of the people such as the “Thai ghosts” including Krasue, Krahang, Pop, Sky ghost or Hungry ghost. The belief in these ghosts is combined with traditional and Buddhist beliefs, which are different from Western beliefs in which ghosts or supernatural beings are created and can be destroyed by science such as vampires.

Moreover, Barthes linked the Sign concept with social structure of power, saying that to analyze the Sign was not for understanding the meaning only, but included the understanding as to “who has the authority to create and scatter the Sign and meaning in the society”, which conforms to a Belgium philosopher, Claude Levi Straus’s theory that language creates reality for humans, not that humans create the meaning through language. Levi Strauss studied the thinking process of ancient peoples and suggested that everything can exist by following the structure connects everything and makes it all exist as it should. Therefore, the actions, or
spoken words, do not have their own virtual meanings, but it is the structure that determines the relations within the same system. As a consequence, Strauss did not focus on appearance, but on the deep meaning which is hidden behind the actions, situations or spoken words (Chairat Charoensin-Olan, 2011b).

Fiske (1990a) talked about the study of semiology, i.e. the meaning of signs and how they create social meaning. Their acceptability must be based on the mutual understanding or mutual acceptability of the society.

Semiology is related to three factors, which are discussed in detail below:

1) Sign, which refers to the spoken language, written language, visual language and sound language. Kanchana Kaewthep (2009a) summarized three attributes of Sign as follows:
   (1) Must be a solid image, sound, letter or other material
   (2) Must have more meanings than just itself
   (3) The user must realize that the solid attribute is a Sign.

Saussure described Sign as an internal structure that consists of two compositions, Signifier and Signified. When the Sign is used in the defining process (Signification), it gives the meaning related to the objects in reality.

Peirce divided Sign into 3 categories:
   (1) Icon, which refers to the Sign in the form of image or visible object such as Signs showing title and position of power, or signs such as photos, monuments and statues.
   (2) Index, which refers to the Sign that can also be identified with further meaning using logic such as smoke and symptoms.
   (3) Symbol, which refers to the Sign related to regulation or a belief that is commonly accepted. Symbols, such as words and numbers, must be learned.

These three types of signs cannot be separated from each other, although they may consist of different forms which can include an icon, index or symbol organized in a cluster.
2) Code or system is important to humans in terms of understanding meaning. People must learn the meaning of codes in order to interpret a sign’s meaning. A Sign is not isolates, but belongs to a system. If the Sign is not supported by a good system, it may not be able to convey an understood meaning. The use of a system of Signs allows people to have a mutual understanding, which is considered a "Code”.

3) Culture is where the related Sign and code are combined at the same time. Kanchana Kaewthep (2000b) explained that culture is the result of a Sign and code. A Sign and code will be used under only one cultural context. If the context is changed, the meaning will change as well.

In the study of text using Semiology, with the understanding of Sign, Signification and code altogether comes the understanding of context. The study of the relation between meanings consists of two categories, as follows:

(1) Syntagmatic, which is used to observe syntagmatic relations, how each unit is continually related. Sometimes, it can be observed as a combination, kind of continuous relation in order to find out and manage the narrative process and the meaning that is being conveyed.

(2) Paradigmatic, which is the method to learn about how to replace a relation unit in a narrative as well as find and analyze the hidden meaning in the context.

These two relations are the basic principles for analyzing relations in a narration.
Signification is considered social production and social practice. Everything in this world is created to have its own meaning conveyed through language and symbol as the keys to express the meaning. There are media institutions that produce symbols that are identified with particular meanings that are presented as a social production (Hall, 1986).

Stuart Hall (1997), an expert at the Culture Institute in Birmingham, England, suggested that the Signification process was used to communicate with others and refer an imagined concept not found in the objective world, which he called “Representation”. He explained that there are three signification process approaches through language:

1) Reflective approach, which refers to the meaning that is hidden behind objects, persons, thoughts or events. The language is used as a mirror reflecting the true meaning, and thus, the Representation is only a duplication.

2) Intentional approach, which refers to the use of language, words or messages that depend on the sender or producer’s intention and so cannot be misinterpreted. However, this approach is considered as a flaw because the core of language is communication that depends on conventions and mutual understanding. In short, language cannot be monopolized by any one party.

3) Constructionist approach, which is an approach that adheres to the idea that nothing, or no one, can confine a meaning. Nothing has just a meaning like it appears, as a human defines the object or idea using the Representation process, which combines a thought and a Sign. Accordingly, this approach does not deny the idea that material objects exist in the world, but the approach says that material objects cannot convey a meaning by themselves. People will use a language system to form a representation of their thought process to convey social representatives based on cultural Semiology in the construction of a definition. As a result, the world will have more meanings for an object or idea.

This research uses the Representation of “ghost” as a phenomenon constructed to have meaning to communicate with other people, while in the Representation process, "ghost" is the integration of each composition such as the various understandings of "ghost" conveyed in a soap opera according to the audience who watch the TV program. Moreover, each audience can interpret the
meaning of the Representation of “ghost” differently. Their interpretation depends on audience identity, which means self-expression and social group they belong to. The Representation process will communicate an image for the audience towards the ghost character in a soap opera that can eventually establish social norms.

Therefore, Representation is not static, because it operates like a language. The meaning is constructed from the combination between Signifier and Signified and from the mutual understanding in the society. The use of Semiology in contextual analysis leads to further understanding of meaning, which is interpreted from the media text and does not require knowing a receiver’s intention. This is considered as meaning without bias.

Media institution is an institute playing an important role in constructing “data” and sending it to the receivers (audience). Fiske (2011) explained levels of television encoding that can be adapted for the encoding of television soap operas. The encoding of vision and sound are very similar, as shown in table 2.4:

**Table 2.4** The Levels of Encoding and Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Encode Process</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; level</td>
<td>A situation which will be broadcasted is encoded</td>
<td>Social code</td>
<td>Dressing, Behavior, Gesture, Expression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reality**
Table 2.4 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Encode Process</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd} level Representation</td>
<td>These are technically encoded by being broadcasted on TV</td>
<td>Technical code</td>
<td>Pictures, Sound, Camera Angle, Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Narration, Conflict of characters, Action, Dialogue, Set, Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} Ideology</td>
<td>This is conforms to social beliefs.</td>
<td>Ideology code</td>
<td>Individualism, Races, Class, Materialism, Capitalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fiske, 2011.

In table 2.4, the first level is “Reality”, which is encoded by a culture. The reality is always encoded and broadcasted by a technical code and media presentation culture to using technology and data suitable for the audience.
The social code in the reality level refers to the communication that occurs through appearance, makeup, dress, personality and language as well as the situation.

The second level is “Representation”, which refers to the presentation using media techniques. The signification, or encoding, does not refer to the situation alone, but it also refers to what can be identified and analyzed such as camera angle for the narration.

The third level is “Ideology”, which refers to Representation according to convention and ideology. The relationship between convention and ideology can be invisible and be presented more like a social attitude. For example, a lead actress may always ask the lead actor everything, conveying that men are considered superior to women.

To further understand the above table, “reality”, “representation” and “ideology” must be integrated altogether for an audience to gain full understand. For example, to live according to social norms and traditions, people must behave according to Buddhist principles “as you sow, so shall you reap”. Therefore, Semiology analysis is a method that can show how each level of the encoded meaning is structured.

According to Semiology theory based on the structuralism concept, it is believed that the language structure can explain external truths, including the concept of Representation. Consequently, Semiology plays an important role in explaining the compositions of Signification, and was therefore used as an analysis platform in this research to examine meaning construction of ghosts in Thai soap operas.

2.4.2 Meaning Construction in Soap Opera

Soap operas emphasize more on expression than just communication; therefore, the rule of Thai TV soap operas are based on particular objectives.

Signification in a soap opera needs to rely on Television Language developed from Semiology and adapted to analyze and interpret the constructed language of the soap opera. When considering the structure of a soap opera, there are two important components, Image and Sound. These two components provide the symbols, or signs, used to communicate with the audience. These viewers will use their eyes to read the Television Language and ears to listen to it. Both senses are used simultaneously to
decipher and interpret the story in the soap opera. It is impossible to use only one of these senses to totally comprehend the TV language in its entirety.

Zettl (2012) explained how to understand TV language, television Symbols must be learned, because of the medium consists of syntax, grammar and expression just like written language, which consists of sentences, paragraphs, chapters and punctuation, while soap operas consist of scenes, sequences, camera techniques, pacing, optical effects and editing. All of these are synonymous with symbols used in TV language and each technique has its own methods and objectives.

Baker & Wall (2008) explained that to convey meaning through television, image and sound are considered as Iconography, which is the communication through Visual and Sound Imagery. These important tools that can create empathy among the audience comprise the following:

2.4.2.1 Visual Image Communication

The image will convey facts, the environment, and symbolic interpretations, which all have an impact on imaginary, emotion, story continuity, Signification, and meaning based on the following factors:

1) Camera angles

Camera angles must conform to the narration of the soap opera. The reasons various camera angles are used is to help the audience to understand and follow the content and characters and emphasize emotions. Thai television ghost soap operas often emphasize emotion and mystery. Consequently, there are two important camera angles used for this type of narration.

1) Objective camera angle

This is when the camera is used so the audience can observe the characters in the ghost soap opera as situations take place from the same angle as if they are behind the camera. It is presented through the cameraman’s eyes, similar to a candid camera.

2) Subjective camera angle

This refers to an angle that includes the audience in the scene, for example, when the actor looks and talks to the camera. This type of angle is considered as an eye to eye relationship.
2) Point-of-view

This refers to audience looking at a character’s behavior through the character’s viewpoint, or through the narrator, who can be close or distant with the character. Each viewpoint will be different, which is important for the narrative to communicate emotions to the audience. Point-of-view can be divided as follows:

(1) First-person narrator
The main character of the story is the narrator and will present his or her self with "I".

(2) Omniscient point of view
It is the narration that knows all the characters in the story, everything including situations, places, past, present future and even the characters’ mind. This kind of narration is commonly used in soap opera.

(3) Third-person narrator
It is the narration that the one character who is the narrator tell about the other actors through his or her perception. Accordingly, there may be some bias towards the conflict of the story due to it is only one person perception.

(4) Objective point-of-view
With this point of view the director tries to neutralize the story and avoid bias; it also avoids a character’s emotions. It is commonly used to help the audience judge a story, and is also a common technique used news, film and, especially, documentary.

3) Shot size and angle
The director determines the Shot Size, such as long shot, medium shot and close-up, which can affect the intensity of a scene.

4) Lighting
This is also an important factor that supports setting the scene, as brightness, dullness and shadow can affect the emotions to be communicated.

5) Editing
This is another important communication factor for a television soap opera. It can be compared to the formation of sentences and paragraphs. The image and sound cannot achieve their full power without editing, as this helps control
the order of each scene so the audience can understand the narrative. Editing comprises five categories, as follows:

(1) Transition

Normally, the audience understands that the change from one scene to the next, as they create meaning through continuity and change in place and time. Accordingly, the tools include directions such as cut, fade, dissolve, wipe, and superimpose.

(2) Third meaning

Any editing creates further meaning to a scene. When two relevant scenes are edited and combined together, this creates a Third Meaning, or synergy, not conveyed by the two scenes. The third meaning is considered as the development of the narrative.

(3) Time and distance

“Time in a soap opera” is a concept very different from real time, as for a soap opera, this refers to the presentation of the recorded image and the time that the audience spends watching the sequence.

“Distance in a soap opera” is similar to the “time in a soap opera”, which is different from real distance. However, the distance in a soap opera will be communicated using a cut technique or transition.

(4) Pacing

Pacing is controlled by the length of a sequence appearing on screen. There are conditions that determine the length of a sequence. For example, some situations will be given a long on-air period to provide background using slowing pacing, while faster pacing will be used to create a sense of excitement.

(5) Other editing

Time and distance can be edited into a narrative through techniques such as flashbacks, flash-forwards, and mortgages.

6) Special effects

Special effects are not created through computer assistance, but by creating simulated conditions, like an explosion and frightening makeup for ghost characters.
2.4.2.2 Sound Image Communication

Sound is not only a composition, but also can enhance an image, adding to its importance, which will create a more elaborate message communicated through the ear as well as eye. There are different types of Sound Image, which are explained:

1) Voice

Voice includes the use of formal and informal speaking as well as gestures, which will have added impact on the Signification as the narrative continues. Voice can be classified into 2 forms, as follows:

(1) Dialogue is conversation between two or more characters.

(2) Narration is an off-camera character that describes situations occurring in the soap opera. The role of the narrator is to provide added information to the visual image.

2) Sound effects

Sound Effects are used to add feeling to the story being told.

3) Music

Music is used to stimulate emotion. At the same time, it helps give a pace, or tempo, to the narration, making it even easier for the audience to follow.

4) Silence

Silence is a powerful tool for creating Signification and capturing audience attention to the action of the television soap opera.

To summarize, this research, looks at Signification in TV soap operas, which is conveyed through both image and sound. The TV language is considered as a system of signs and symbols that conveys meaning through the use of techniques, including editing, camera angles, light and color that enhance the codes that allow the audience to understand the story. Moreover, visuals and sound together attract audience attention and arouse their emotions. Thus, Semiology is used to study the Signification of ghosts in TV soap operas and better understand the construction of meaning from the script of the narrative of the TV soap opera.
2.5 Social Construction of Reality

Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference between the real world and the world we learn about through the media. This is because the media brings what it selects of the external world and then broadcasts this to its audience. However, media will often modify, alter or adjust truths, creating differences between the real world and the media.

As a result, mass media can play a major role in creating Significations that are conveyed to society, offering the media’s interpretation, or reflection of the real world. Mass media, thus, connects people to have indirect experiences with every animate and inanimate phenomena in the world. The members of society can perceive and understand the situations in reality without direct mutual experience.

The communication of signification of a text requires encoding and decoding. The encoding is made by the sender, and the decoding is done by receiver. If the receiver decodes according to the sender’s code, this will lead to mutual understanding. Although the sender using a media tries to encode meanings, they can be interpreted differently. Moreover, the construction of different meanings can depend on a process known as Social Construction of Reality based on the concept that "Reality is not from nature, but it’s constructed as Social Reality”.

Kanchana Kaewthep (1998) explained that Social Construction of Reality according to the principles of phenomenology established by Alfred Schutz, a German philosopher, raised three concerns about reality:

1) How do the people make sense of the world?
2) How do the people construct, reconstruct, and deconstruct their daily life?
3) How can people act without thinking or questioning even knowns taken for granted?

Our daily life is not our private world, but is considered as inter-subjective as we learn with other people. The different experiences and interpretations can act as limitations that people create.

However, according to the Social Construction of Reality theory of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman (1966), the world is divided into two parts, the Real
World, which is the world we can perceive with or eyes, ears, nose, tongue, bod, and mind that includes the natural environment, human-made environment and our dreams.

The second is the World of Meaning, which evolves from our knowledge gained from the real world. Since humans cannot fully understand abstract feelings, like “love” in Africa and love in Thailand, people have created their own World of Meaning to define such concepts as “love”. Therefore, meaning is knowledge that we add more and more to, building a Stock of Knowledge that allows a person to identify their own emotions towards “love” so they know how to act towards their lover. Consequently, that routine eventually turns into “Social Reality”.

The World of Meaning is based on knowledge and experience derived from reality that is transformed into a Stock of Knowledge, which becomes a person’s Social Reality. This means that everything we know, socially and culturally, depends on acceptance of external reality and the ability to perceive and differentiate all we encounter.

Society is changing all the time. Therefore, it is necessary to find methods to emphasize our knowledge to create our social reality. In this research, “The Transformation of Meanings of Ghosts in Thai Soap Operas”, television is considered as a social tool to communicate a “reality” by presenting “ghost” characters that cannot be proven to exist, but appear in human-like form. The audience eventually absorbs this knowledge as their reality, at least temporarily. The concept above will help analyze meaning transformation in this research.

2.6 Post Structuralism and Meaning Deconstruction

2.6.1 Language and Post Structuralism

Post structuralism does not exist independently, as it is based on concepts as structuralism and semiology. However, the use of post structuralism is slightly different than the relationship between Signifier and Signified (Chairat Charoen-olan, 2011b). To better understand the research that focuses on post structuralism, we must look at the basic concepts discussed by Ferdinand de Saussure who realized that language was not just a representation of the real world as discussed by modern
philosophers. However, language has its own structure and system under the social acceptability. Therefore, language is a result of ‘Arbitrariness and Conventionality’, which are not independent like others have believed. Later, there was a turning point at time language was seen as social tool for negotiation, concentration and duplication based on the hidden power of discourse caused by bias and violence.

Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), who went further with the theory of “Sign” and “Signification” of Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes, realized that the meaning of Sign is not constant. Therefore, he introduced the idea of “Differance” to imply “differ” and “defer”, which meant words could have an infinite number of meanings. Signs create meaning by connecting one sign with another. Derrida explained that the Signifier and Signified were not the same as Saussure’s concept, who said a Sign does not have a clear meaning; it changes according to the Signifier cycle. Therefore, the Signified is not fixed in any Signifier form, but they each depend on the other. This eventually leads to the “Deconstruction Theory”.

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) suggested that language is a process of Signification. It has the power to create words, re-identify meanings and values according to persons and their societies. It can also emphasize and conceal social beliefs. Therefore, language does not offer meanings in itself, but they come from what is accepted and understood by the society that uses it. Language is not a communication method in itself, but provides the means to share ideas.

This concept also conforms to the concept of Jean-Francois Lyotard that a narration and the sending and receiving of knowledge were part of the language game. It is the process in which there are specific situations for sending-receiving knowledge, and there are rules and regulations for this in order to create acceptability and transform this knowledge into a narrative. It is also society, or social norms, that determines the kind of knowledge to be passed on. For knowledge to form consensus, it must have social legitimacy.

Chairat Charoensin-Olan (2004) explained that communicative science was not about experimentation or findings, but it dealt with narration, or metanarrative stories, which consist of many narrations. For a narration, science needed to create rules and regulations that were fair enough for scientific discourse. These rules and regulations determine scientific knowledge and the scientists the ability to act under
its rules. Therefore, scientific knowledge can be considered as a form of narration since it can only be told according to scientific rules and regulations. If not, then it cannot be considered scientific knowledge. Therefore, a scientist who is the narrator must prove that his narration is true by proving its correctness. However, it is the scientist who determines the rules and regulations of scientific knowledge.

According to language and post structuralism whether a narrative is referring to knowledge or reality, it is not pure as it occurs through creation and production, repeated to make it convincing. As a result, knowledge and reality of humans always have hidden power. This is why language is not neutral and pure, but it occurs through the mutual agreement to identify things. Language has its own functions. It cannot carry on a story on its own that reflects the ideas and the belief of a society, but it creates the world, thoughts, and beliefs that form the reality people adhere to.

2.6.2 Post Structuralism and Meaning Deconstruction

In the middle of the 20th century after World War II, well after the paradigm changed from religious to scientific, the postmodern period emerged that was a blend of modern culture occurring from advances in science and technology, economics and society, with science and technology having the most profound effects on lifestyle and perspectives.

Science had a great impact on knowledge and human vision, which means that humans began to depend even more on science for answers answers to all things, as people relied more on logic as the right way to determine universal truths, which can lead to happiness.

The Modern Age brought us new discoveries in science and technology, advancements in transportation, like trains, cars and aircraft, manufacturing medicine and communication technology, mass media, including printing, newspapers, radio and television., and telecommunication, from the telegraph to the telephone. In terms of economics, developments have been made to enhance lifestyles, as the major economic systems, capitalism and socialism, have evolved alongside manufacturing and industry.
This has been followed by the postmodern era, during which technology has developed in response to human needs. In short, this developed knowledge and systems has begun to dominate and overpower human beings.

Jameson (2002) stated that the progress of technology, which has been vital in postmodernity, is global communication. People's behavior today shows that they have become dependent on these advances. As a result, the internal value past signs has gradually decreased and left mostly external values, or it might be better to say that the relation between “internal” and “external” has disappeared, resulting in a lost connection with the past’s internal meanings, making people fill this gap external materials, or products, especially those that can connect a person to their missing cultural root. This conforms to capitalism that focuses on production in response to social needs and culture rather than just utility. At the same time, products that represent cultural identity through external image appear to be losing, or have lost, their historical or cultural importance. This has a profound impact on people's desire to consume according to their needs. Jameson called this “the cultural logic of late capitalism”.

Baudrillard (1995b) pointed out that postmodernity consumption is different from the previous era, saying that consumption is one of the mechanisms behind production. Consumption is an important process that leads to continuing production. This is why human desire is considered as a motivating tool for consumption. Therefore, production does not only produce goods, but also needs and desire, making people feel they are falling into a consumption cycle. Consumption represents the logic of duplication. It makes a production system expand to include controlling mentality, ethics and everyday ideology.

Tseëlon (1994) said that in the postmodern consumption society, objects of consumption are transformed from a use value to a sign value. The production system serves as a sign transformer, creating an economic exchange value where people buy to become an owner. Objects represent symbolic exchange where people buy to be the owner, not only for value use of a product, but to create identity or social standing.

Consumption infiltrates the daily life of individuals and has driven the lifestyle of a person according to the flow of materials, or products. People tell their story through the materials, or products, in their possession. Consumption has become
the operation of creation, values determination, self and signification. Infiltrated phenomena is what occurs in society, filling it with Simulacra, Simulation and Hyperreality.

To explain how contemporary social phenomena convey cultural value, Baudrillard suggested a theory about simulation models that he divided into three levels. The first is when the original model and simulation model are clearly separated. The second is when the original model and simulation model merge and cannot be separated. Finally, the third level is when the simulation model becomes the reality without any origin. This is known as Hyperreality.

Baudrillard (1995b) believed that media played an important role in creating Hyperreality, rather than reality, especially television and other types of media. The Internet is also included as it helps to spread news and information. The wide and rapid spread of news and information has made it much more of a necessity in contemporary society because people will become desocialised, or asocial, if they don’t know what is happening.

Baudrillard (1995a) talked about the roles of mass media in creating hyperreality, instead of reality, when he talked about the “Gulf War”. He said that for Americans, the first war between the USA and Iraq, which Americans knew about, was based on real-time television news reporting broadcasted with modern technology. At the same time, the presentation of news images from the Gulf War was similar to an action movie, and viewers felt engaged as if they were part of the scene. The Gulf War image turned into entertainment for some Americans. Meanwhile, the real war taking place in Kuwait and Iraq, was not broadcasted to Americans, so they had no real idea about this war and would never find out without the media. All in all, whatever people perceive or don’t perceive apart from television, Baudrillard believed that the Gulf war was not real for viewers.

2.6.3 Post Structuralism and Narration

Modern narration was based on the grand narrative or metanarrative, which means that the content would be about the battle between opposing forces, like goodness defeats evil and men are of a higher level than women. This concept is embedded in a conceptual framework, so that the narrations discussed above are
considered as duplications of literature, which suppresses any new ideas (otherness) apart from the metanarrative. The postmodernity concept towards narration has changed to focus on sub-narrations, or fragmentary narratives, that are not important.

According to Jean Baudrillard, Postmodernity is an age completely separate from the Modern Age. The Modern Age had been dominated by industrial capitalism, while the postmodernity has new technologies, creating many duplications of material and cultural products. These are so filled with the simulacrum, an image, making it difficult for people to identify what is real and what is not. Therefore, production during postmodernity tries to create a simulation of reality. Later, society turns to the “Hyperreal” due to unrestricted production. The definition of “reality” becomes the duplication that can be the as same as the origin. Therefore, the simulacrum is considered as reality. For example, a CD or film can be distributed or broadcasted worldwide at the same time, and there is no way to tell which is the original or a duplication.

Kanchana Keawthep (2001) also believed that postmodernity played an important role in narration, as it reduced a narration to a linear pattern, consisting of story origin, story continuance and story conclusion. These were the principles of the modern age narration, in the context of science, religion, the arts, literature or films, where everything has its origin, middle and a certain ending. However, postmodernity opposes this thinking. The rejection of linear narration affects lifestyle. The rejection of long-term relations, which were previously attributed to the former narration style, is no longer expected, like a lifetime marriage.

The cultural attributes of postmodernity cause an indistinct separation between the arts and lifestyles. There are no differences between high-level culture and social culture. There is acceptance of duplication, regardless of the original or producer’s wisdom. There are a combination of differences free of past rules and regulations, ignoring chronological order and pattern. Moreover, the postmodern narrative focuses more on emotion and feelings.

As a result, the post structuralism influences the deconstruction of the constructed definition from language structure. Due to the change of basic thought from “existing reality” to “no reality out there”, there is now only “constructed reality”. The post structuralism deconstructs the meanings for society and shows
that it is the social institutes that construct meaning through each form of language. Accordingly, the presentation of ghosts in TV soap operas can be considered as the production of language. It is this concept of deconstruction in post structuralism as a tool that has been applied to this research to find the construction of the meaning, roles and the adaptation of ghosts in TV soap operas.

2.7 Related Research

Sineeya Kraiwimon (2002) studied 20 popular Thai soap operas broadcasted during the primetime from 1992 to 1999. The finding showed that the popular soap operas used various methods to attract the audience, including plot, theme, conflict, character, setting, dialogue, editing technique and pacing, or tempo, as well as violence to create excitement and made the Thai soap operas popular consistently.

From the study of the context and narration techniques in Thai TV soap operas, the content was set in between non-fiction and fiction and conformed with the narrative paradigm based on chronological order. The content of the story will determine the direction of the narration.

Moreover, Prapon Tatiyaworakulwong (2010) studied and compared the levels of violence of Thai with Hollywood films by analyzing 30 films from five genres. The result revealed that the violent content in each genre was different. For example, in the action film, the protagonist and the antagonist fought violently for what they needed to accomplish. While in a romantic film, love was the factor leading to violence. Moreover, the researcher found that the production style of each director, capital investment and marketing were key factors affecting the violence in Thai and Hollywood films. Violence was based on personal experience, imagination and social problems. The majority of the audience could accept the violence in the films because they understood that violence is a part of most films.

Monsika Hengsuwan (2007) studied the words related to Thai ghosts in the Watsuankaew Community, Banglane sub-district, Bangyai district, Nonthaburi. She analyzed the meaning composition and interpreted the local people's vision about ghost as expressed through the meaning of the words for ghosts. The research was conducted by interviewing 15 persons of the Watsuankaew Community and revealed
that there were 59 words for ghost categories that represented 52 kinds of ghosts. From the analysis of meaning composition, the researcher concluded that the words for ghost can be divided into 10 categories, including form, state, goodness-badness, place and duty. The result showed that Thais call any supernatural thing a “ghost” based on human form and habits, like form, gender, age, need for residence and the good or bad behavior.

Wichuda Panklang (1996) studied and analysed the transmission of the meaning of ghost in Thai films about “Maenakprakhanhong” produced between 1978 and 1989 using the relation of House, Ghost and Temple in Thai society in terms of sign and film production techniques as the analysis framework. From the analysis, the presentation pattern of “ghost” was exactly according to the horror film genre in terms of plot. The composition of the films had slight changes in conformity with the era when it was produced as well as the filmmaker’s creativity. The relation of house, ghost and temple was important to the composition for social organization based on Buddhist myth. Consequently, the transmission of the definition of ‘ghost’ was done by a chronological narration using the camera as the narration recorder and other film techniques such as lighting, camera angles, image size, sound editing, voice and soundtrack to enhance the storytelling.

According to the above research, the meaning of ‘ghost’ can vary depending on the cultural context or social institute, which conveyed through duplications of social ideologies and beliefs that led to the convention of Thai ghosts. Going further, the research of Sakulwadee Sukanan (2010) studied the analysis of the genre of Thai ghost films. This research took a qualitative approach, focusing on textual analysis and use of genre through in-depth interviews in order to understand relationships between the Thai ghost film genre and filmmakers, audience and duplication of social ideologies. The result showed that the ghost genre was based on formulas such as convention and invention, which can be divided into seven categories, i.e. plot, character, theme, setting, sign, attractiveness and ideology. The genre of ghost films is related to Thai social ideology, film production and audience expectation.

40 stories were examined in all and showed that the ghost film industry had gone through many changes. In terms of narrative, the ghost narration at present is quite real and does not depend on ancient principles, beliefs and tales. Some of these films and programs also adopted the character of foreign ghosts into the narration. Most of the ghosts were female, appear anywhere at any time. In terms of intertextuality, there were various kinds of connection between past and present contexts, fiction and non-fiction, which would be mixed and matched. In terms of genre, there were combinations of genres in response to audience preferences.

These representations of female ghosts would be constructed according to male norms. At the same time, the female ghosts would be related to love, beauty, virginity, motherhood and city life as well as sexual ideology.

In addition, there is the research of Pungpis Theppatima (2003) about faith, and belief in spirits. Puengpit Theppatima studied the transition of the spirit concept into film by analyzing the content of eleven films related to spirits shown in Thailand from 1999 to June 2003. The result showed that Hollywood, Thai and Asian films followed similar concepts: a belief in God, goodness-evil, materialism, sacrifice, adherence, love and passion. The narration structures were based on character development and conflict.

Although the research of Pungpis Theppatima was conducted over ten years ago, the same narration structure is still seen in the Thai ghost films and soap operas of today such as conflict between ghosts and Buddhism and conflict portrayed through character. Mostly, a bad character is appointed as the ghost who had been bullied while alive, but after death, turned into a ghost seeking revenge or one fighting with a good character who represents Buddhism, like a monk. A monk usually has his role in teaching as well as defeating ghosts to emphasize that the goodness always defeats evil under the context of Thai Buddhism.

Either the plot or the relationships between characters can determine the meaning of what the story tries to communicate. In the research of Pungphis Theppatima (2003), who studied the Transmission of the Concept of Spirituality in Films, he found 11 Hollywood, Thai, and Asian films shown between 2001 and June 2003 communicated spiritual concept through conflicts and character development in aspects such as the belief and faith in gods or holy objects, the quest for truth or core
of life, the adherence to virtue or common sense, materialism in today’s society, sacrifice, love and lusts. In the study about Transnational Whispering of Contemporary Asian Horror by Adam Knee (2006), common key elements found included: 1) In most Asian contemporary horror films women were victimized, sad, distressed, and they often came back as a ghost to seek revenge or justice. 2) There were complicated relationships between a ghost and the one character that is haunted by the ghost. There was no random haunting in contemporary Asian horror films. 3) There was always a plot twist at the end. 4) Technologies became part of the communication process leading to specific values and ideology introduced through the stories.

Todsaporn Kornkit (2007) compared the horrification in 50 American, Korean, and Thai ghost films that were released between 1999 and 2008 and found that there were three main elements used in making the ghost film horrifying, especially Thai ghost films. The three elements include: 1) the ghost character – often appearing as a Thai traditional ghost that is redefined and interpreted differently and mixed with other cultures; 2) the code – divided into a general code and cultural code, which is mostly related to religion, beliefs, values, visions and lifestyles; 3) the relation between images and sounds – not limited by culture because image and sound are universal languages. The research also found three similar horrification techniques: 1) concealment - using the plot to cover investigation in which the truths remain secret until the end, 2) delusion - which misleads the audience to unexpected incidents by either confusing the characters or spoiling the situations and 3) reality – which is used to excite the audience with specific points of view.

The horrification in ghost films is considered as the construction of the meaning of ghost through narrative structure and symbols. Prachya Thongchoom (2015) studied the symbols of image and sound in Thai ghost films and found four types of sounds used in Thai ghost films: speech, sound effects, music and silence. These sounds influence communication with the audience and their drawing into the created world. Sounds are also part of the construction of “ghost-ness” through reconfirmation that the ghost is real, that the ghost represents power, that the ghost depicts each state of emotions, and that the ghost is an ‘otherness’ for humans. The construction of the meaning of ghost can be made through other symbolic levels as
well. When the media keep repeating a presentation, the meaning of ‘ghost’ in many aspects will eventually construct the representation of ghost images. Kris Kamnon (2009), who studied the representation of images through facial make-up signification for Thai television drama character, found that the make-up is needed to present the character of both the protagonists and antagonists, or villains, using artistic elements. The make-up of the characters reflects the real image of people in society nowadays through presentation that is repeatedly done by the media. Therefore, the media influences the representation of images that reflect real people. The make-up helps the characters fit their roles in the story and in this case, the characters will be constructed to be scarier using special effects such as badly disfigured face dark under eyes and red eyes.

Language is not only considered as a tool to describe the earth or represent objects, thoughts and beliefs, it creates worlds, thoughts, and identities. Therefore, meaning construction through mass communications enhances media’s ability to communicate and make something real, especially through TV soap operas. TV soap operas influence the establishment of knowledge and truth that is filled with values and ideologies that are carried through the different elements of the story. This construction process is the power relation that occurs in the text of TV soap operas. The construction of meaning results in the formation of a definition through comparison to opposing meanings, which is the concept of language point of view. As proved by Nirin Petrachai-anan’s (2007), who studied the construction of representation image of female ghosts, 3 different types of female ghosts were identified – the ghost waiting for their lover, the unwilling ghost and the mother ghost – all constructed with male norms. The stories are mostly about love, beauty, virginity, karma, motherhood and city lifestyle, all under the umbrella of sexual ideology.

Therefore, the construction of any value or ideology under the influence of stories does not happen solely from the narration, but also from the imagination of the director, screenwriter and producer. These people bring their imagination to life through the stories that become meaningful on the screen. This is seen in the research of Pimporn Soontharawiriaykul’s (2008) on ideological construction in 15 selected Thai television series broadcasted during the political crisis between September 2006
and December 2007. The research revealed that the TV stations influenced the TV soap operas. As ratings have become a key that decides what the story should be about, such as love, greed, anger and lust, as well as ease to understand, the creator’s, or producer’s vision and personal experience are passed on to the screenwriter who creates the contents based on these ideas and attitudes as well as those of the television station.

As discussed previously, the process of meaning construction consists of elements from both structural and symbolical levels. The construction of the meaning of ghost in a TV soap opera is not only constructed through symbolic images and sound, which consist of outstanding features of language in TV media, but also considered as the communication process through other language structures based on fiction, which consists of conflicts, rising action to climax and ends with resolution, all comprised in the narrative’s concentrated meaning. Since each composition has its own meaning, they work together to create an explanation of a meaning, here referred to as the meaning of ‘ghosts’.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research, the Transformation of Meanings of Ghosts in Thai Soap Operas, is a qualitative study. The method used in this research are documentary analysis, or textual analysis, based on the backgrounds of the beliefs in ghosts and textual analysis of soap operas related to ghosts. The data is presented in descriptive analysis and includes the following:

3.1 Population and Sample Used in the Research

The population of “Thai TV soap operas” is the topic of the study. The study was limited to only Thai TV soap operas that consist of 15-30 episodes broadcasted during primetime (20.30 – 22.30) on free TV (Channels 3, 5, and 7). The reason for choosing this period is because it has the most viewers.

The period of study is from 1987 to May 2014, because this is the time period when Thai TV soap operas were moved to be broadcasted during primetime starting at 20.30. Furthermore, this is period marks the beginning and rise of the ‘Golden Age’ of Thai TV soap operas as well as the downturn and then rise of the Thai economy. (Premsiri Reuthaichertcharoen, 2009).

The criteria and procedures for sample selection are as follows:

1) Reviewing all the titles of TV soap operas between 1987 and May 2014 from documents stored at the National Library of Thailand and newspapers, magazines, other paper resources that record the titles of TV soap operas aired during the identified time.

2) Selecting samples “ghost soap operas” by reviewing titles of TV soap operas aired during 1987 – May 2014 and their synopses. The selection was done by reading each synopsis of a TV ghost soap opera aired during the identified
period. The criteria is based on the term “Ghost” that refers to “any entity constructed to have supernatural power. It does not have to be scary, can be helpful or harmful, may have or not have form or shape, either reside in a human body or appear in form of character apart from being human, and is already dead”.

3) Shortlisting the sample of “ghost soap operas” that were initially selected under the above criteria, and then determining the soap operas that were a fictional serial of between 15-30 episodes and fell into certain sub-genres, including: comedy, detective, romantic, mystery, fantasy and soft science, excluding similar titles and those soap operas that were not available on DVD or VCD, as shown in the diagram below.

![Diagram of Genre of Thai Soap Opera](image)

**Figure 3.1** Genre of Thai Soap Opera

**Source:** Thiranan Anawajsiriwong, 2012.
Table 3.1 Genre of Thai TV Ghost Soap Operas from 1987 – May 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comedy</th>
<th>Detective</th>
<th>Romantic</th>
<th>Mystery</th>
<th>Fantasy</th>
<th>Soft Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999 Gerd Tae Chart</td>
<td>Pang Nai</td>
<td>1993 Phood Payabart</td>
<td>1991 Su Sarn Khon Pen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 Sapaisa Maeya</td>
<td>1996 Mae Nark Pranakorn</td>
<td>1996 Prakarang Sri Dam</td>
<td>1993 Buang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hean</td>
<td>1996 Prakarang Sri Dam</td>
<td>1994 Kasue</td>
<td>1994 Chao Nang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praw Saney</td>
<td>Ter</td>
<td>1997 Pop Phi Fah</td>
<td>1998 Phi Payabart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Ruenhow</td>
<td>1999 Mae Nark</td>
<td>2000 Pleng Phi Bok</td>
<td>2000 Pleng Phi Bok</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawhean</td>
<td>2001 Ruen Noppagao</td>
<td>2001 Tayard Asul</td>
<td>2001 Tayard Asul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003 Pornprom Aolaweng</td>
<td>2003 Hong Hoon</td>
<td>2003 Hong Hoon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004 Phood Phisawas</td>
<td>2003 Pred Wat Sutas</td>
<td>2003 Pred Wat Sutas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006 Moa Phi Cyber</td>
<td>2004 Taree Bungah</td>
<td>2004 Taree Bungah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007 Pikaew Nang Hong</td>
<td>2004 Pri Pratana</td>
<td>2004 Pri Pratana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008 Nimit Marn</td>
<td>2006 Chan Aey Chan Chao</td>
<td>2006 Chan Aey Chan Chao</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010 Jong Kol King Tien</td>
<td>2007 Poo Som Fao Sub</td>
<td>2007 Poo Som Fao Sub</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010 Wayupak Montra</td>
<td>2008 Heeblon Son Wiyarn</td>
<td>2008 Heeblon Son Wiyarn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012 Pang Sinayha</td>
<td>2009 Sarb Phoo Sa</td>
<td>2009 Sarb Phoo Sa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013 Pap Arthan</td>
<td>2009 Pop Phi Fah</td>
<td>2009 Pop Phi Fah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013 Ruen Kalong</td>
<td>2009 Mue Nang</td>
<td>2009 Mue Nang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014 Koom Nang Kruen</td>
<td>2010 Rong Ram Phi</td>
<td>2010 Rong Ram Phi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2011 Ngao Prai</td>
<td>2011 Ngao Prai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2012 Buang</td>
<td>2012 Buang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2013 Kan Sanayha</td>
<td>2013 Kan Sanayha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2014 Wieng Roi Dao</td>
<td>2014 Wieng Roi Dao</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2014 Susarn Khon Pen</td>
<td>2014 Susarn Khon Pen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 7          Total 3          Total 20         Total 23         Total 1          Total 1
Selected 2        Selected 1        Selected 3        Selected 3        Selected 1        Selected 1
4) Sorting the above sample by proportion, then making a final selection by using simple random sampling. Finally, twelve ghost soap operas were chosen as the sample for this study, as listed in the table below:

**Table 3.2** Twelve Ghost Soap Operas were Selected as the Sample for the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Broadcasted in</th>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Produced by</th>
<th>Name of Thai Ghost soap opera</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dara Video Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Parp Arthun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kantana Video Production Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Tha Yard Asul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dara Video Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Srisa Marn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TV Scene and Picture Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kantana Video Production Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Susarn Khon Pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kantana Video Production Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Phood Sao Proud Sanay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chonlumpi Production Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Susarn Phu Tesuan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Exact Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Rong Ram Phi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TV Scene and Picture Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Jong Kol King Tien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TV Scene and Picture Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Rak Boon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Podeekum Entertainment Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Ruen Kalong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Act Art Generation Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Wieng Roi Dao</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.2 Data Collection Tools**

**3.2.1 Textual Analysis**

This method was used to categorize data for analysis based on the previously mentioned criteria for studying the meaning of ghosts in Thai TV soap operas. The criteria for the narration analysis was derived from the works of scholars and specialists of communication and theatre: Vladimir Propp (2014), Jo Baker & Peter Wall (2008) and Thiran Anawajsiriwong (2012). While the criteria for textual
analysis was obtained from narrative compositions on ghost films as suggested by Kamchon Luiyapong (2009). The criteria for textual analysis in TV ghost soap operas are presented in detail below:

3.2.1.1 Narrative structure / features

Narrative structure is used to analyze the story chronologically in order to create audience understanding. The chosen narrative composition include: Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action and Ending.

3.2.1.2 Character typology

Character typology was used to analyze both physical and ethical characteristics of the ghost character, antagonist(s) and ghost’s helper as well as the conflict within the ghost’s mind and external contexts and characters’ consequences of action.

3.2.1.3 Theme

Themes is used to analyze what the audience can learn from the experience of the ghost characters in the TV soap operas which can serve as lessons on life.

3.2.1.4 Time and Setting

Time and setting reflect the presence of the ghost’s power in the world of humans as well as express the belief in ghosts in Thai society. Without these two elements, the story cannot progress.

3.2.1.5 Iconography

1) Physical iconology includes factual, environmental, interpretative, and symbolic iconology, which influence the link between imagination, emotions, feelings, continuity, definition construction, and definition perception of the audience, all communicated through variety compositional techniques such camera angles, size of shot, lighting, editing, and special effects.

2) Audio iconology is the use of sounds to emphasize image and atmosphere and make them more realistic or symbolic. There are 4 main types of sounds in the soap operas: speech, sound effects, music, and silence.
3.3 Data Collection

Data collection was divided into TV soap opera data and document data.

3.3.1 TV Soap Opera Data
The data about ghost soap operas was collected by watching a total of 12 TV soap operas recorded on VCD and DVD.

3.3.2 Document Data
There are two types of document data used in this research:
1) Synopsis and details about ghosts in television dramas broadcasted from 1987 to May 2014
2) News, articles, interviews, analysis, reviews of ghost soap operas and the belief of ghosts in Thai society published in news, magazines, and books in both Thai and foreign languages. This type of data was also collected from online resources, the National Library and university libraries.

3.4 Data Collecting Tools

The researcher is considered as one of the tools used to collect data through observation and recording in order to collect accurate data. After collecting the data, it was, investigated, recorded, duplicated and categorized by groups.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data concerning ghost soap operas was then analyzed for the construction of the meaning of ghosts by applying the concepts and theories on narrative structures in TV soap operas as well as post structuralism in the analysis of the transformation of the meanings of ghosts.
3.6 Conceptual Framework

![Conceptual Framework Diagram](image)

**Figure 3.2** Conceptual Framework of The Transformation of Meanings of Ghosts in Thai Television Soap Operas

3.7 Data Presentation

After developing a framework to analyze the transformation of ghosts in Thai TV ghost soap operas, results will be presented through a descriptive analysis based on the construction of the meaning of ghosts through TV soap opera narratives and the redefinition of ghosts. The presentation also includes research results and discussion as well as recommendations for future researches, respectively.

The research The Transformation of Meanings of Ghosts in Thai Soap Operas which can be divided into three parts, as follows:
Part 1 The analysis of the narration in TV ghost soap operas. Narrative composition is analyzed according to Narratology, which focuses on story and structure. These results are presented Chapter 4.

Part 2 The analysis of the construction of definition in the context/discourse level and redefinition of ghosts in TV ghost soap opera. This part will study and analyze the narration in TV ghost soap operas in detail based on the results from Chapter 4. Details will be presented in Chapter 5.

Part 3 The discussion and conclusion of the research. The part also includes recommendations for further research. Details are presented in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 4

NARRATION IN THAI TV GHOST SOAP OPERA

The research “The Transformation of meanings of Ghosts in Thai Soap Operas” aims to study and analyze the narration in TV soap opera, the construction of ghosts’ meaning and the transformation of ghost.

Therefore, the narration is considered as an important factor that allows the audience to understand the ghost definition in TV soap opera. The narration consists of Narrative Structure, the relation in the story: chronological cause-effect, problem-resolve, Characters and the existents of characters and setting, theme, and iconography. Details are as follows:

4.1 Story

The story consists of situations and turning points that are chronologically arranged with the help of the characters and fundamental composition of the story. There were twelve ghost soap operas chosen for the analysis. The synopsis of each story follows:
4.1.1 Parp Arthun
The Author: Sritong Ladawan
TV Scriptwriter: Lulinart
Produced by Dara Video Co., Ltd.
Broadcasted in 1991
Channel 7

Figure 4.1 Thai TV Ghost Soap Opera, Parp Arthun

Synopsis: Chedtha bought an ancient mansion, the property of the family of A-nongwadee’s mother. Chedtha meant to renovate the building, but A-nongwadee, the last heiress of the family, opposed his idea. She tried to persuade Chedtha by asking him to spend the night at the mansion. Khun Prayong, the ancestor ghost from the portrait made them recall their past lives and realize they were part of a love triangle between Chao Khun (Chedtha), Khun Prayong and Mae Orn (A-nongwadee) in the past.
4.1.2 Tha Yard Asul

The Author: Tri Apirum
TV Scriptwriter: Thiranan
Produced by Kantana Video Production Co., Ltd.
Broadcasted in 1992
Channel 5

![Image of Tha Yard Asul]

**Figure 4.2** Thai TV Ghost Soap Opera, Tha Yard Asul

Synopsis: Khun Yai Worranaard, an elegant lady who looked like she was only 40 years when she was actually in her 80s, came to live with her niece, Warint (Oui). Oui was to become the heiress of Tha Yard Asul. Khun Yai Worranaard tried every way to make Warint the heiress of Tha Yard Asul. When strange things occurred in the house, it was only the Buddhist nun, Sang Boon, who was willing to subjugate the monster (Asul). She was certain that it was only the Sacred Silver Dagger that could be used to defeat the monster by Oui’s boyfriend.
4.1.3 Srisa Marn
The Author: Jintawee Wiwath
TV Scriptwriter: Lulinart
Produced by Dara Video Co.,Ltd.
Broadcasted in 1993
Channel 7

Figure 4.3 Thai TV Ghost Soap Opera, Srisa Marn

Synopsis: Pilantha Wichienpat (Phee), a fine lady with strong psychic powers is in a car accident in which she is decapitated. She was able to pick up her head and brought it home to Piti, her biological uncle, a famous scientist and surgeon. Uncle Piti was able to attach her head back to her body and save some of the scientific solution. Luckily, Phee found out that the only way to preserve her body was drinking fresh blood. Finally, Phee demanded that her Uncle Piti conduct an operation in which he would switch her brain with her cousin’s, in order to live on with her cousin’s boyfriend whom she admired.
4.1.4 Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai

The Author: Krung Y. Chart

TV Scriptwriter: Lalita Chantasartkomol and Ratchanee Goldrick

Produced by TV Scene and Picture Co., Ltd.

Broadcasted in 1999

Channel 3

![Figure 4.4](image-url)

Figure 4.4 Thai TV Ghost Soap Opera, Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai

Synopsis: Anon, a family man was unfortunately killed in a robbery. Meanwhile, Anon helped Mutitha, a beautiful lady who was an insurance agent facing problems. It turned out that Mutitha was able to communicate with Anon Ghost, so Anon asked for her help to take care of his family. When Anon’s soul went to heaven, his good deeds granted him an angel status. He was given a personal remote control, which he used to help Mutitha many times.
4.1.5 Susarn Khon Pen

The Author: Pradith Kalajaruek
TV Scriptwriter: Kemkwao
Produced by Kantana Video Production Co., Ltd.
Broadcasted in 2002
Channel 7

Figure 4.5 Thai TV Ghost Soap Opera, Susarn Khon Pen

Synopsis: Laan Tom, a millionaire, was sick with an unidentified disease. She stopped breathing, but managed to come back to life. One day, Laan Tom was in a car accident and lost conscious. The doctor said that she was dead and only her niece, Ausa, did not believe this. Ausa sought a doctor who was the father of Tharind, her boyfriend, to cure Laan Tom. The doctor used an ancient ritual together with acupuncture to wake Laan Tom up. However, as Chu Cheep wanted to live with Rod Sukhon, he planned to kill Laan Tom and succeeded. Laan Tom was very mad and haunted both Chu Cheep and Rod Sukhon in order for them to repent.
4.1.6 Phood Sao Proud Sanay

The Author: Ngamta
TV Scriptwriter: Benjawan Olannithikul
Produced by Kantana Video Production Co., Ltd.
Broadcasted in 2008
Channel 7

Figure 4.6 Thai TV Ghost soap opera, Phood Sao Proud Sanay

Synopsis: Nisa dreamed of becoming an actress, but unfortunately lost her life. Then, she was caught by a camera and became known as the holy Chao Mae Sabai Thong. Nisa next was chosen to play this role while no one knew that she was a ghost. She changed her name to Nonny, and in order to appear in human form, she needed to use her power to help villagers who worshipped her at the shrine. However, Nisa decided to leave the world to be reborn against Chinothai’s wishes. 30 years passed, and Chinothai had become the owner of a soap opera production company that was remaking the Chao Mae Sabai Thong soap opera. Finally, he met the 18-year-old girl Nisa whom he had been waiting for.
4.1.7 Susarn Phu Tesuan

The Author: Jintawee Wiwath
TV Scriptwriter: Pranpramool
Produced by Chonlumpi Production Co.,Ltd.
Broadcasted in 2009
Channel 3

Figure 4.7 Thai TV Ghost Soap Opera, Susarn Phu Tesuan

Synopsis: Every time that Nilpatra wore the necklace, “Tripatrasul Necklace”, she acted strange. Meanwhile, a mysterious billionaire named Ackhee appeared together with his secretary, Peri, and tried to get close to Nilpatra. They informed Nilpatra that she was cursed and needed to be cured in the Akoralai Kingdom. On their way to this place, Nilpatra was kidnapped by Kalajal, a mysterious character, who meant to kill her. However, Kalajak found out that Nilpatra was not the same as Nilpat, who was greedy as well as the lover of Phu Tesuan, or Ackhee. Actually, Phu Tesuan was going to conduct the resurrection ritual with Nilpatra.
4.1.8 Rong Ram Phi

The Author: A. Attajinda
TV Scriptwriter: Alakorn
Produced by Exact Co.Ltd.
Broadcasted in 2010
Channel 5

Figure 4.8 Thai TV Ghost Soap Opera, Rong Ram Phi

Synopsis: Luang Naruebalbureerak, an executioner, was fond of Saraphee, but she hated Khun Luang so much and resisted sleeping with him. Since Khun Luang loved her so much, he did not force her, but he locked her up instead. Pan, one of Khun Luang’s slaves, pitied her, so he helped her escape. Khun Luang went out to find both of them but got seriously injured. He left his final instructions to Perm, ordering him not to conduct any funeral, but pretend to bury his corpse in 7 abandoned cemeteries, before hiding it at his house in Banglamung. He also gave this house to Saraphee and Pan in his will to seek revenge on them both. However, the power of Chiang San Buddha brought into the house prevented Khun Luang from accomplishing this. His soul was then locked in a secret chamber for 10 years.
4.1.9 Jong Kol King Tien
The Author: Keawkao
TV Scriptwriter: Eaklikit
Produced by TV Scene and Picture Co.,Ltd.
Broadcasted in 2010
Channel 3

Figure 4.9 Thai TV Ghost soap opera, Jong Kol King Tien

Synopsis: Tien Kanya, a young lady who suffered from an illness, inherited a huge fortune. She lived with Sol, a boy whom her father had adopted. Tien Kanya met with Up-phan and fell in love with him. They both decided to live together. Tien Kanya also found out before she died that Up-phan was the nephew of Lamom and that his true intention was to use up all her money, so Up-phan pushed her down the stairs. She was taken to the hospital and died there. Then, her soul entered Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body, an aristocratic lady from the North, who was in a car accident and brought to the hospital as well. Tien Kanya woke up in Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body, whose personality was completely different from her own. Then, Tien Kanya used this opportunity to find out about Up-phan.
4.1.10 Rak Boon

The Author: Chomanee
TV Scriptwriter: Eaklikit
Produced by TV Scene and Picture Co,Ltd.
Broadcasted in 2012
Channel 3

Figure 4.10 Thai TV Ghost Soap Opera, Rak Boon

Synopsis: Jetiya, a part-time embalmer of Niralai Company, received the Rak Boon Box from Uncle Tawee. The box had its secret that if the possessor of the box did 3 good deeds, the person would be granted a wish. The conditions were that the deeds must be done within one month; otherwise, the possessor’s life would be taken and they would be unable to dispose of the box unless they found a new possessor. While the box was in her possession, she had to help the dead all the time. So, she decided that she would stop asking for any wishes from the box. Finally, Jetiya made a wish for the box to be destroyed, leading the box to send out Pran, an evil spirit in human form created from all the sins and desires of human kind. Pran then attacked Jetiya when she asked for the box to be destroyed.
4.1.11 Ruen Kalong
The Author: Lainum
TV Scriptwriter: Lainum
Produced by Podeekum Entertainment Co., Ltd.
Broadcasted in 2013
Channel 7

Synopsis: Kalong, the prettiest girl in the village, was in love with Mai, but her mother, Mae Kloi, did not want Mai to be her son-in-law because of his poverty. Mai then wanted to get rich, so he entered a boxing tournament. During Mai’s absence, Chote tried to rape Kalong, but she resisted and fought back. Chote ordered his followers to murder Kalong and drown her at the lotus pond. Her body then remained hidden there since that day. The spirit of Kalong finally married Mai, and they both lived together as a normal couple.
4.1.12 Wieng Roi Dao

The Author: Binlaway
TV Scriptwriter: Sorarat Jirabowornwisuth
Produced by Act Art Generation Co, Ltd.
Broadcasted in 2014
Channel 3

Figure 4.12 Thai TV Ghost Soap Opera, Wieng Roi Dao

Synopsis: After Dilok and Chansai, the foster parents of Roidao in England, passed away in a car accident, Roidao was told by their lawyer to go back to Thailand to be present at the reading of the will of Pakorn, her biological father. Roidao was disdained by the wives of Pakorn as well as their children and Damrong, her grandfather, because Pakorn loved her mother, his fourth wife, the most. The ghost Wieng Kaew then came to Roidao and asked for her help. The ghost told her how she suffered from magical confinement. Roidao felt sorry for her and eventually removed a magical black cloth, thus releasing Wieng Kaew. Afterwards, the ghost was almost able to fulfill her revenge.
4.2 Narratives Structure / Features

Narrative Structure / Features is an important composition of television soap operas. It is used to create order of each situation in the story, which then allows the audience to understand the story from beginning to end. There are five levels of narrative structure, as follows:

4.2.1 Exposition

The beginning of the story, which must capture the audience’s attention to keep watching. There are various styles of exposition such as introducing characters and introducing conflicts. It is not necessary that the story be narrated from the beginning, as it could start from the middle or end, depending on the narrative style.

The types of exposition used in the twelve Thai soap operas are as follows:

Table 4.1 Exposition in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot Exposition</th>
<th>Thai TV soap opera</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introducing character and place</td>
<td>Jong Kol King Tien</td>
<td>The story begins with the scene of Chao Bua Tien, an 85-years-old lady telling her life story to Ko Yha, her nephew. She told him about the incredible things that happened to her life and the story of an elixir that prevented her from aging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parp Arthun</td>
<td>The story begins with the scene of the ancient mansion of Anongwadee’s family ancestor on sale. The mansion contained portraits of the family ancestors believed to haunt the mansion to protect the property. However, a young man, Chedtha, didn’t believe this. Therefore, Anongwadee challenged him to spend a night in the mansion to prove the existent of the ancestor ghosts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Srisa Marn</td>
<td>The story begins with a group of thieves pretending to be headless ghosts. The newspaper reported that the headless ghosts were rampaging all over. At the same time, Pilantha, a lady with strong psychic ability, went out for a Halloween Party without knowing that she would soon become the true headless ghost.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.1 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot Exposition</th>
<th>Thai TV soap opera</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Introducing conflict</td>
<td>Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai</td>
<td>The story begins with Anon who was robbed and murdered after receiving a paycheck from his advertising firm. The paycheck was intended for the final down payment of his house. Anon became a stray ghost wandering around because he worried about his family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wieng Roi Dao</td>
<td>The story begins with Meida (Roi Dao), a lady who received an eye transplant after an accident, was able to see some unusual things around her, so she tried to seek the truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susarn Khon Pen</td>
<td>The story begins with Khun Nai Laan Tom having an unidentified disease. She often stopped breathing, but she was able to come back to life each time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rak Boon</td>
<td>The story begins with Uncle Tawee who encountered a dead man accidentally brought back to life by the power of Rak Boon Box r. The dead man pleaded with Uncle Tawee to help him find his murderer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susarn Phu Tesuan</td>
<td>The story begins with the love triangle tragedy from the “Akoralai Era”. The queen of King Phu Tesuan, Nilapat was killed by the warrior, Kalajak. King Phutesuan was then brought back to life after a long period of time by Theptripatrasul, and he decided to find Nilapat. Meanwhile, Kalajak burned himself in a ritual in order to become immortal when he decided to hunt down the others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reun Kalong</td>
<td>The story begins telling of the forbidden love of Kalong and “Mai”, her faithful lover. Kalong was the most beautiful lady in the village and was desired by the son of the village tyrant supported by Kalong’s own mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tha Yard Asul</td>
<td>The story begins with the dream of Oui, a niece of Khun Yai Worranard, about the dreadful topknot boy. At the same time, her mother was telling her that her grandmother, Khun Yai Worranard, was going to live with them. Oui had no idea that her dream was an omen that she would soon become the heir of Tha Yard Asul, just like her grandmother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Introducing rituals/belief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 4.1 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot Exposition</th>
<th>Thai TV soap opera</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Introducing rituals/belief</td>
<td><strong>Rong Ram Phi</strong></td>
<td>The story begins with the faithful servant of Khun Luang digging up the body of Khun Luang after it was buried in seven abandon cemeteries, believing that this would empower the ghost of Khun Luang. The body was taken to a house in Bang Lamung where the spirit would await taking revenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Phood Sao Proud Sanay</strong></td>
<td>The story begins with the romantic legend of Chao Mae Sabai Thong being told from generation to generation for more than 100 years. Although, Cha Mae Sabai Thong had been dead for ages, people still paid respect and prayed at her small shrine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the analysis of narrative structure, the plot exposition is the first step to appear in the television soap opera, which can be classified, as follows:

4.2.1.1 **Exposition by Introducing Character / Places**

The story begins with the introduction of places or characters related to the story. It could be an important place or character that will gradually entice audience attention, so they will keep watching the story. For example, the opening scene of the TV soap opera Parp Arthan shows the ancient mansion that is to be demolished. In this mansion, there are pictures of family ancestors believed to still wander around the mansion as ghosts.

**Figure 4.13** Exposition by Introducing Character / Places in Parp Arthan
In Jong Kol King Tien, character introduction is also used in the exposition. The story begins with a flashback of Chao Bua Tien, or Tien Kanya in the body of Chao Bua Kam Kaew, who is telling her miracle story to her favorite grandchild.

Figure 4.14 Exposition by Introducing Character / Places in Jong Kol King Tien

There are also other soap operas that used character introduction for the exposition such as Srisa Marn that introduces the Headless ghost at the start of the story. Although, it was actually a thief disguised as a ghost, this eventually leads to the real Headless ghost Pilantha, a beautiful lady with special psychic powers. Pilantha is a self-confident girl with strong determination, but unfortunately this leads to her doom. She is in a car accident that actually causes her decapitation. However, she is able to pick up her head and bring it home to her scientist uncle to help put her back together. Pilantha then became the real Headless Ghost instead of the fake ghost that was rampaging the village. She had no life, but she was able to stay because of her psychic powers.

Figure 4.15 Exposition by Introducing Character / Places in Srisa Marn
4.2.1.2 Exposition by Introducing Conflict or a Clue

A narrative will nearly always lead to conflict. This will gradually drive the audience to become more curious and follow the story. This method usually exposes all the mysteries of the story, by introducing some of the major conflicts at the beginning. Moreover, humor may be employed to reduce the degree of fear created by the story.

For example, the soap opera “Rak Boon” begins with the scene that has “Uncle Tawee” handing over the “Rak Boon Box” and then having a dead man rise up and ask for his help to find his murderer. While the ghost following Uncle Tawee created fear, it also appeared to be funny, as the ghost meant no harm even though Uncle Tawee was too scared to understand the ghost. This then created the sense of fear for the audience in the first scene, though it gradually decreased as the scene played out.

![Figure 4.16](image)

**Figure 4.16** Exposition by Introducing Conflict or a Clue in Rak Boon

Susan Khon Pen is another soap opera that used conflict as an introduction for the exposition. The drama begins with Khun Nai Laan Tom being sick with an unidentified disease. She then passed out and stopped breathing as if she was dead. This action would continue, and she would always manage to come back to life.
Meanwhile, Wieng Roi Dao begins with a conflict when Meida receives eye transplants from her foster sister, Roi Dao. She then begins to see strange things, like water forming in the shape of a human and cannot be sure whether her abnormal vision was caused by the surgery or some other mystery.

Figure 4.17  Exposition by Introducing Conflict or a Clue in Susarn Khon Pen

Figure 4.18  Exposition by Introducing Conflict or a Clue in Wieng Roi Dao
The soap opera Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai begins with a conflict as well. Anon, the head of his family, was robbed and murdered. The stolen money was intended to for the final down payment of a house he wanted to give to his family as a present. This narrative makes the audience curious to know how Anon’s family will survive after his loss and whether Anon’s soul will stay and protect his family or not.

**Figure 4.19** Exposition by Introducing Conflict or a Clue in Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nai

4.2.1.3 Exposition by Introducing Ritual or Belief

This method is about using people’s beliefs as the opening of a story to create audience curiosity about how the introduced ritual or belief relate to the story. One TV ghost soap opera that clearly begins with this method is Tha Yard Asul. The story begins with the dream of Oui about a topknot boy doll (Centipede doll which is a symbol of the Tha Yard Asul inheritance), as Oui was supposed to become the heiress of Tha Yard Asul from Khun Yai Worranard.
Apart from Oui’s dream, the story next has Khun Yai Worranard inherit the Tha Yard Asul from Khun Yai Sup in a ritual according to the belief from the “Phraya Chaleang Era”, using the Centipede doll as the centerpiece of the inheritance ritual.

Moreover, the soap opera Rong Ram Phi begins with a ritual over the corpse of Khun Luang Naruebalbureerak being exhumed after burial in seven abandoned cemeteries. These actions were taken because of the belief that this will
empower the spirit over corpses buried in just one cemetery. The ritual was conducted so Khun Luang can seek revenge on those he could avenge as human.

Figure 4.22 Exposition by Introducing the Ritual in Rong Ram Phi

Another soap opera that used ritual and belief at the beginning is Phood Sao Proud Sanay. The story begins with the legendary Chao Mae Sabai Thong who was disappointed in love and committed suicide by hanging herself from a Banyan tree. This story had been told for centuries, and the villagers built a small shrine under the Banyan tree to worship Chao Mae Sabai Thong. Nisa, a beautiful lady and big dreamer, came to the shrine to pray for the blessing of Chao Mae Sabai Thong to help her become a famous actress.
From the analysis of plot exposition as the first step of a television soap opera, this method appears to help the audience better understand the story. It shows the relationship between humans and a ghost, as depicted by the characters. In some soap operas, humans and ghosts are shown helping each other such as in Rak Boon and Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai. Apart from the relationship between humans and ghosts, the meanings for a ghost are found to be constructed in three different ways.

1) The ghost must contain special abilities in either spirit or human form. For example, in the soap opera Srisa Marn, the character Pilantha had a strong psychic ability since she was three years old. Her power became so strong that she could not be killed. She continued to live through her psychic powers. Another example is in the drama Jong Kol King Tien in which the soul of Tien Kanya resided in Chao Bua Kam Kaew. By drinking an elixir, Tien Kanya can live in a person’s body for a long period of time. Meanwhile, in Parp Arthun, the spirit of Khun Prayong, using her psychic ability, allowed Chedtha, A-nongwadee and other characters to recall their previous lives.
2) Ghost must encounter severe tragedy. Before turning into a ghost, the characters have usually been harmed by a person, which causes them to become a ghost. Therefore, the ghost feels outrage whether by love or hatred. For example, in the soap opera Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai, Anon was robbed and murdered. He became a stray ghost because of his concern towards his poor family and so tried to find a way to help them. In addition, in Ruen Kalong, Kalong could not love the one who wanted to be her lover, and this led to her doom. Drowned in a lotus pond, she transformed into a ghost before consummating the relationship.

3) Ghost must become powerful with supernatural abilities through rituals or beliefs that have been passed down from generation to generation. For example, in Tha Yard Asul, there was a ritual showing in which the soul of a centipede took the form of a virgin. The ritual was conducted in order to create a monster to seek revenge. In short, the ritual empowered the spirit to be stronger than any other spirit. This supports the belief that a ghost will have the power to help humans if they worship it properly. This can be seen in Phood Sao Proud Sanay where Chao Mae Sabai Thong is worshipped so that prayers will be answered.

Therefore, plot exposition reveals the definition of ghosts as well as the transformation of a human into a ghost with special abilities. However, the next step that will lead to conflict for a ghost character will appear in the next step, rising action.

4.2.2 Rising Action

Rising action refers to the building of a narrative. The conflict becomes more and more intense to maintain audience attention. Even though the ghost in a story contains special abilities, it can still appear to be related to a person. During Rising Action, the forms of relationship in this study can be described as follows:
### Table 4.2 Rising Action in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rising Action</th>
<th>Thai TV soap opera</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Human turns into ghost</strong></td>
<td>Srira Marn</td>
<td>After Pilantha was decapitated in a car accident, her uncle “Doctor Piti” managed to reattach her head. Pilantha’s body appeared to be to normal, but only because of Pilantha’s psychic ability. She actually had no life. Her only requirement to appear human was to consume human blood to survive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phood Sao Proud Sanay</td>
<td>Nisa was bullied by a group of teenagers. Unfortunately, her body caught on fire by accident. She died and turned into a ghost. However, she became lucky as she was chosen to be the leading actress as no one knew that she was a ghost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ruen Kalong</td>
<td>Kalong learned the truth that she was already dead. However, her strong and consistent love turned her spirit into human form allowing her to be with her lover as if she was human.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susan Khon Pen</td>
<td>Chu Cheep finally succeeded in murdering Laan Tom who then turned into a ghost that resided at Susan Khon Pen. Laan Tom wanted to punish Chu Cheep, so she kidnapped Chu Cheep to stay with her at Susan Khon Pen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jong Kol King Tien</td>
<td>Tien Kanya was poisoned by Ap-pan, her lover. She was saddened and accidentally fell down the stairs losing her life. However, her soul went into Chao Bua Kam Kaew body who encountered an accident and was brought to the hospital. She continued to live on as Chao Bua Kam Kaew awaiting for the revenge on Ap-pan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Haunted ghosts: fulfill the incomplete mission</strong></td>
<td>Rong Ram Phi</td>
<td>Khan Luang Naruebalbureerak came back as a powerful ghost for the revenge on Pan and Saraphee, his ultimate targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tha Yard Asul</td>
<td>The Monster (Asul) had been residing in Khun Yai Worrnanard for quite a period of time. It was then the high time that Asul must find the heiress to inherit the power of monster soul. Oui, was the only target here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising Action</td>
<td>Thai TV soap opera</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Haunted ghosts: fulfill the incomplete mission.</td>
<td>Parp Arthun</td>
<td>The spirit of Khun Prayong resided in the portrait of the ancient mansion came out to demand for her lover by making Chedtha and Anongwadee recalled their previous life and found out about their love triangle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susan Phe Tesuan</td>
<td>King Phu Tesuan returned to life using another human form to find the spiritual mind of Nilpat, his greatest love with determination to resurrect her life once again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Haunted ghosts: ghosts and human are in turn helping each other.</td>
<td>Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai</td>
<td>Anon Ghost was able to contact with Mutitha and asked her to take care of his family. Both helped each other, especially when Mutitha was bother by her ex-lover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wieng Roi Dao</td>
<td>Meida found out that she received the eye transplantation from her foster sister, Roi Dao. She was then able to see the spirit of a lady, but didn’t know who she is. Consequently, she came back to Thailand to find out the truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rak Boon</td>
<td>Jetiya was in charge of Rak Boon Box. She asked the box for a favor to help her mother from illness. However, Jetiya must help the ghosts in return.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the analysis of the narrative structure, rising action are moments when a major ethical event in the ghost soap opera occur, in other words, when the ghosts appear on screen. However, the reaction towards these encounters may varied depending on the Rising Action, as follows:

4.2.2.1 Human Turns into Ghost.

From the analysis of plot exposition, the meaning of ghost is portrayed through the relationships between humans and ghosts through the ghost’s cause of death. The character who was human at the beginning will turn into ghost at this stage, and the audience will learn the cause of death and see the transformation.
Most characters that turn into a ghost are murdered, but they are unwilling to die. Therefore, the conflict will lead to the actions of these ghosts.

For example, Nisa from Phood Sao Proud Sanay, was bullied and died in a fire. Kalong in Ruen Kalong who was lured and drowned in a lotus pond. Meanwhile, Khun Nai Laan Tom from Susan Khon Pen was murdered by Chu Cheep, her husband. Only Pilantha, who was a hot-tempered lady in Srisa Marn, was killed in a car accident in which she was decapitated and eventually became the Headless ghost.

Rising action does not only show the narrative’s evolution through the plot exposition, it also expands the emotions that the story attempts to convey. Each character has their own fate and doom to be experienced. This leads to the mental conflict of each character, because they are unwilling to die. The ghosts’ reaction and behavior will depend on their death. For example, in the soap opera Susan Khon Pen, when Khun Nai was human she was gentle, kind and sympathetic. However, after her death, the ghost of Khun Nai learned that Chu Cheep was having an affair with Sukhon, her servant, and they both were her murderers. It hurt her because they both were persons she cared about. As a consequence, the ghost Khun Nai Laan Tom became aggressive and keen for revenge on them both.
Similarly, the character Kalong in Ruen Kalong was lured by the son of the village chief. He wanted to rape her, but she fought back and was drowned in the lotus pond. When the sorcerer tried to expel the soul of Kalong, she turned into an aggressive ghost rampaging all over the village.
Figure 4.26 Human Turns into Ghost: Life after Death of Kalong

4.2.2.2 Haunted Ghost: Fulfill its Incomplete Mission.

This rising action is different from when a human turns into ghost even though the character does not want to, but because they were murdered, they want to seek revenge. However, a “ghost fulfilling its incomplete mission” refers to a ghost that regrets not accomplishing their goal when they were human. Consequently, they try to find a way to fulfill their wishes. This could refer to revenge or achieving a challenge. Since they could not complete their tasks while still alive, they need supernatural powers to fulfill their quests.

For example, in the soap opera “Rong Tam Phi”, Khun Luang was enraged at Pan and Saraphee, but he could not avenge them while he was alive. Therefore, he made a plan with his servant to have his body, after his death, buried in seven abandoned cemeteries and then placed at the house in Banglamung which Khun Luang left to Pan and Saraphee in his will. Consequently, the ghost of Khun Luang had the chance to seek revenge while living in this house. In short, his action had been planned since before his death.

In the soap opera “Tha Yard Asul”, Asul Khon successfully trained with magic while he was alive, and then had his soul reside in the centipede doll to pass on his soul to the daughter of Phraya Chaleang whom he fell in love with. He was then to avenge Phraya Chaleang by passing his soul on to every heiress in each generation of Phaya Chaleang. Asul Khon’s action was also planned before his death.

Figure 4.27 Rising Action: Asul Khon’s Action is Planned Due to His Vengeance
4.2.2.3 Haunted Ghost: Ghost and Human Help Each Other.

This variation is based on love and friendship. In the soap opera “Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai”, when Anon turned into a ghost, he protected Mutitha from harm at the exact place where he was killed. This created a special bond between the two, allowing only Mutitha to see Anon. Therefore, Anon asked Mutitha to look after his family. Meanwhile, Anon also helped protect Mutitha from her ex-boyfriend. They both in turn helped each other, creating a relationship between their two worlds.

Figure 4.28 Rising Action: Anon and Mutitha were Helping Each Other
in Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nai

There is also the belief that ghosts and humans can only benefit each other, but not develop a friendship. The Rising Action will then show how the characters will begin to investigate a conflict not yet exposed. For example, in the soap opera “Rak Boon”, Jetiya was required to help ghosts find the truth regarding their death because of her promise to the Rak Boon Box in exchange for saving her mother from chronic renal failure. However, Jetiya alone could not help all the ghosts as they wished. Consequently, she asked for the help of a friend who was a policeman. Jetiya, her friend and the ghosts helped each other. Jetiya could see
and understand the ghosts because of the Rak Boon Box, while her friend used his investigative skills to help Jetiya find the truth. In short, this soap opera shows the how humans and ghosts can help each other in addition to their relationship with social institutions.

Figure 4.29 Rising Action: Jetiya Helps all the Ghosts as They Wished in Rak Boon

In addition, there is the manipulative relationship in which one charaxted is used by another. This appeared in “Wieng Roi Dao”, when Meida tried to find out the truth about Wieng Kaew’s death because she believed this was what bothered Wieng Kaew’s soul. However, the truth was that Wieng Kaew wanted to take revenge on those who were mean to her when she was alive. Wieng Kaew knew everything, including the fact that Meida was not her biological daughter. Then, when
Meida received the eye transplants from Roi Dao, her biological daughter, so she and Meida was able to contact each other. Meida then learned she was being manipulated so the ghost of Wieng Kaew could take revenge while Meida only wanted to help the ghost.

Figure 4.30 Rising Action: Meida Tried to Help Wieng Kaew Ghost in Wieng Roi Dao

The analysis of rising action reveals that humans and ghosts are continually interacting as they try to complete their tasks. The ghost characters are the result of human actions. They will be aggressive and try to harm humans if they were treated
badly by humans. On the other hand, if the ghosts were treated well, they will be nice and keen to help humans.

4.2.3 Climax

Climax refers to the rise of conflict to the breaking point where the truth will be partially or completely exposed. Both the ghost and human characters will be forced to make a decision that is unpredictable, as explained below:

Table 4.3 Climax in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climax</th>
<th>Thai TV soap opera</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ghosts hidden agenda exposed</td>
<td>Wieng Roi Dao</td>
<td>Meida (Roi Dao) learned that Wieng Kaew died because of the three wives of Pakorn. She also learned the truth that Wieng Kaew wanted the three wives to die just like her. It turns out that Meida wanted to protect the three wives and prevent the ghost of Wieng Kaew from committing further sins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parp Arthun</td>
<td>Chedtha disappeared without anyone knowing that he was kidnapped by the ghost of Khun Prayong in order to force Chedtha to live with her. Otherwise, Chedtha would be locked in a dungeon along with her skeleton forever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susarn Khon Pen</td>
<td>Chu Cheep disappeared as she was kidnapped by the ghost of Khun Nai Laan Tom who wanted Chu Cheep to live with her in the cemetery. Chu Cheep could not prevent her wish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rong Ram Phi</td>
<td>Khun Luang had hidden the spirit of Padthama (the daughter of Saraphee whom Khun Luang was angered by). Everyone was trying to help her, but there was only one person who could defeat Khun Luang. Mayuree who was destined to be her protector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rak Boon</td>
<td>Jetiya wanted to help the ghosts without receiving anything in return, which was in contrast to Pran, an immortal created through the desires of the Rak Boon Box. Therefore, Jetiya, who represented goodness, and Pran, evil, must fight each other in a battle that may cost her life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climax</th>
<th>Thai TV soap opera</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ghosts hidden agenda exposed</td>
<td>Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai</td>
<td>The ghost of Anon had always been looking after his family after his death. However, the time had come that Anon must leave the world behind; he then had to decide whether to stay and look after his family or continue on his own path.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The identity of ghosts exposed</td>
<td>Phood Sao Proud Sanay</td>
<td>It was time for Nisa to tell the truth that she was dead. Although her dream of being an actress had not yet been accomplished, her time on earth was over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tha Yard Asul</td>
<td>The inheritance of Khun Yai Worranard was stopped because everyone learned that Khun Yai Worranard was not human and was possessed by an evil monster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Srisa Marn</td>
<td>Pilantha wanted to have Wilaree’s boyfriend as her own. She then used her psychic power to force her uncle to do an operation replacing her brain into Wilaree’s head, leading everyone to learn that Pilantha had die long ago, but kept on living by using her psychic powers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ruen Kalong</td>
<td>Mai, Kalong’s boyfriend learned that Kalong was already dead. Everyone around him tried to fight him while he tried to live with Kalong. Eventually, he knew that it was impossible that a ghost and human can live together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jong Kol King Tien</td>
<td>While Tien Kanya in the form of Chao Bua Kam Kaew asked for righteousness from her ex-lover, Chao Bua’s soul came to claim back her body. However, Chao Bua’s soul could not return to her own body, and Tien Kanya’s soul could not escape as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susarn Phu Tesuan</td>
<td>King Phu Tesuan had successfully brought Nilapat back to Akoralai, allowing everyone to know his true identity. Phu Tesuan wanted to resurrect Nilapat’s soul to live with him eternally, but Nilpat was not Phu Tesuan’s lover.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the analysis of narrative structure, the climax refers to the rising conflict’s peak, or breaking point. Consequently, some truth is revealed at this stage. It is also the stage when the ghost or the human characters have to make a decision. The truth revealed in the climax can be divided into two categories, as follows:

4.2.3.1 Ghost’s Intention is Revealed.

In this category, the human character already knows that a ghost is around and haunting them, but they do not know what is the ghost’s intention. Therefore, when the story reaches this stage, the ghost reveals its true intention and eventually takes a final action towards the human characters. For example, in the soap opera “Parp Arthun”, Chedtha knew that Khun Prayong was a spirit with the ability to help him recall his previous life. Khun Prayong’s intention was to have Chedtha remember their love in a previous life without knowing that it also helps Chedtha realize his love towards A-nongwadee (Orn), his present girlfriend. As a result, Chedtha tries to avoid Khun Prayong. Khun Prayong has no choice and decides to kidnap Chedtha and force him to stay with her as human and ghost. If he refuses, then Chedtha will be locked in a dungeon together with her ashes and skeleton forever, just like what she did to Khun Luang.

Figure 4.31 Love Lriangles, Chedtha, Khun Prayong and Anonwadee in Parp Arthan
4.2.3.2 Ghost’s Identity is Revealed.

In this category, human do not know that the person they are interacting with is actually a ghost. The truth is revealed at the climax where the ghost has no choice but to reveal the truth. After learning the truth, either the human or ghost characters try to do something to solve their problem. For example, in “Srisa Marn”, Pilantha had been using her psychic power to control her body and live as a human until she met Sakkarn, Wilaree’s boyfriend. She then wanted to take Sakkarn as hers and so planned an operation to replace her own brain in Wilaree’s head. However, everyone except Uncle Piti and Uncle Phon learned her true identity and tried to stop her. In the end, it was Uncle Phon, Pilantha’s favorite servant that successfully destroyed her plan because he did not want Pilantha to commit more crimes.

**Figure 4.32** Ghost’s Identity is Revealed in Srisa Marn

From the analysis of the meanings for ghost in the climax stage, the meanings are exposed through encounters between humans and the ghosts to overpower each other. From plot exposition and rising action, ghosts are shown to contain supernatural powers which can be beneficial or harmful to humans. However, when it comes to the climax, the ghosts who are still unable to get what they want, take further action, while the human characters can no longer endure this. Therefore, each must fight for power. Only one can survive because, ultimately, humans and ghosts cannot live together. Nevertheless, the results of the story are not yet revealed as to who, or what, will defeat or succumb to the other’s power.
### 4.2.4 Falling Action

Falling Action refers to the situation after the climax when all the problems and conflicts are solved, but it is still not the end of the story.

**Table 4.4 Falling Action in Thai Soap Opera**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Falling Action</th>
<th>Thai TV soap opera</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ghosts are unable to get what they want: Ghosts are subdued</td>
<td>Srisa Marn</td>
<td>Pilantha failed to replace her brain into Wilaree’s head. Thus her brain was destroyed by Sakkarn with the help of Uncle Phon. Uncle Piti, the doctor, was shot, while Uncle Phon killed himself, leaving behind an empty laboratory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tha Yard Asul</td>
<td>The inheritance of the Asul heiress is lost. Asul was avenged by the spirits that he killed. Finally, Khun Yai Worrnanard was released.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susarn Phu Tesuan</td>
<td>King Phu Tesuan failed to resurrect the soul of Nilapat. He was stopped by Kalajak and Terd Narong and was buried alive under the Akoralai. Meanwhile, Nilapat and Terd Narong resumed their love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jong Kol King Tien (Chao Bua Kam Kaew)</td>
<td>Chao Bua could not return to her own body because she needed to learn about sacrifice. On the other hand, the soul of Tien Kanya could stay in Chao Bua in order to do good deeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rong Ram Phi</td>
<td>The sword that Khun Luang used to execute many persons was later used to destroy Khun Luang and his power. At the same time, Khun Luang learned to forgive before his soul left the world of mortals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ghosts are unable to get what they want: Ghosts surrender</td>
<td>Wieng Roi Dao</td>
<td>Wieng Kaew repented after listening to Phra Pakorn preach. She let Meida cremate her corpse so she could finally rest in peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ruen Kalong</td>
<td>Kalong came to her sense after being taught by a monk on pilgrimage. Kalong learned the true meaning of happiness and eventually released her lover.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Falling Action</th>
<th>Thai TV soap opera</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Ghosts are unable to get what they want:</td>
<td>Parp Arthun</td>
<td>Grandfather Glub told the secret behind the portrait placed where Khun Prayong hid Chedtha and Chao Khun in the previous life. Anongwadee broke into the place and saved Chedtha, while Grandfather Glub burned the Khun Prayong portrait.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghosts surrender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai</td>
<td></td>
<td>The ghost of Anon finally decided to leave and let Pong, who sincerely loved his wife, take care of his family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susarn Khon Pen</td>
<td></td>
<td>Laan Tom punished Chu Cheep and Rod Sukhon to show how hurt she was knowing that they were cheating on her. Then, Laan Tom said farewell to her niece, Ausa, and told her to cremate her corpse, so she can finally rest in peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phood Sao Proud Sanay</td>
<td></td>
<td>It was time for the soul of Nisa to leave the mortal world and give up what she wanted to do as a human.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ghosts get what they want.</td>
<td>Jong Kol King Tien</td>
<td>Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s grandmother allowed Tien Kanya to continually reside in Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body because of Tien Kanya’s goodness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tien Kanya)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rak Boon (The Ghosts)</td>
<td></td>
<td>The ghosts who asked for Jetiya’s help were content to learn who killed them through her assistance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the analysis of the narrative structure, falling action refers to the situation after the crisis and major conflict have been solved, but it is not the ending of the story. Falling action can be described in detail, as follows:

4.2.4.1 Ghost Do Not Get What They Want.

At this stage, there are ghosts that are unable to complete their goal. Consequently, their reaction towards their disappointment can lead to two actions, as follows:
1) Ghosts are subjugated, because they are unwilling to give up their goals. These subjugated ghosts will be strong and powerful, but are still unable to overcome their human adversaries. While angry, they still fail and are eventually subjugated. For example, in “Tha Yard Asul”, the Asul Khon in Khun Yai Worrnanard did not give up the inheritance of the Asul heiress, although this will harm many innocent people. Therefore, pure love was used to release the soul of Khun Yai Worrnanard and the Sacred Silver Dagger, which represented Buddhist virtues, to destroy the Asul Khon. Finally, the Asul Khon was avenged by all the souls and spirit he killed.

![Figure 4.33 Asul Khon was Revenge by all the Souls that He Killed in Tha Yard Asul](image)

2) Ghost surrenders. This is the final action of the ghosts since they have tried to do everything they could. These ghosts were once nice, kind and reasonable human. Their conflicts were usually about love; so, in the end, they surrender. The factors that lead to their surrender will often include Buddhist teachings or a lover’s opinion. For example, in “Ruen Kalong”, when everyone,
including Mai, learned that Kalong was a ghost, it was impossible for Mai and Kalong to live together. However, Kalong tried every way to live with Mai without realizing that love is about sacrifice. Kalong only came to her senses when she listened to a monk’s teachings and Mai’s opinion. In the end, Kalong let go of her desire and left the mortal world.

Figure 4.34 Kalong, Finally Let Go of the Blindness by Monk in Ruen Kalong

Whether the ghosts are subjugated or surrender, they are overcome by the following factors.

1) Buddhism Monk and Symbols

There are various levels of monks’ attitudes toward ghosts. In the researched soap operas, it was found that monks might not directly subjugate the ghosts but use Buddhist teachings to calm and discipline the aggressive and vindictive ghosts. However, Buddhist symbols would be used to scare the ghosts, like an image of the Buddha and or sacred weapon such as the Sacred Silver Dagger used to subjugate the evil monster in “Tha Yard Asul”.

2) Sorcerer’s Rituals and Weapons
Apart from Buddhist representatives, the weapons and rituals of sorcerers, such as pots, knives, holy thread, holy water and holy rice, are employed in the television soap operas. In “Ruen Kalong”, a sorcerer was brought to subjugate the ghost of Kalong. This was also the case in “Wieng Roidao” where all the wives who planned to kill Wieng Kaew hired a sorcerer to rid them of Wieng Kaew.

3) Science

Science does not refer to any scientific weapon, but it refers to the use of science to subjugate a ghost. For example, in “Srisa Marn”, the headless ghost, Khun Pii, could not be subjugated by Buddhist teachings and survived with the help of science. The only thing that can put an end to Khun Pii is to stop the scientific technology she depends on. Although, Khun Pii has psychic power, her ability was dependent on science.

4.2.4.2 Ghosts Get What They Want.

This category shows that through kindness towards others others, the ghosts can achieve their goal. For example, in “Jong Kol King Tien”, the soul of Tien Kanya could stay in Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body because she was a good person and always thought of others, which was in contrast to Chao Bua Kam Kaew herself, who did everything for her own sake. The same time, Jetiya, in “Rak Boon”, helped the spirits calm in their restless minds by finding the truth.

From the analysis of falling action, it was found that if the ghosts’ requirements and actions were for the good of humankind, then the ghosts would get what they wanted. However, if the ghosts acted selfishly for themselves, while powerful, they would still not be able to accomplish their tasks, like an act of revenge. The lesson is that in the mortal world, righteousness will triumph and the ghosts will have to leave the human realm.
4.2.5 Ending

Ending refers to the culmination of the story, which can conclude differently. The ending is considered very important in narrative structure, as it should make the audience feel like they have participated in the narrative.

Table 4.5 Ending in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ending</th>
<th>Thai TV soap opera</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The story ends with all the conflicts resolved</td>
<td>Parp Arthun</td>
<td>Grandfather Glub burned the portrait of the great grandmother, Khun Prayong, who then left and gave Chedth a ring to give to Anongwadee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wieng Roi Dao</td>
<td>The ghost of Wieng Kaew let go of her rage and allowed Meida to cremate her corpse so she can finally rest in peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rong Ram Phi</td>
<td>The heirs of Pan and Saraphee cremated Khun Luang’s body and scattered the ashes. Khun Luang’s soul then left to atone for his sins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ruen Kalong</td>
<td>Mai brought Kalong’s body from under the lotus pond and cremated it according to tradition. This allowed Kalong’s soul to leave for good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jong Kol King Tien</td>
<td>Tien Kanya resided in Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body till she became old. At the same time, Chao Bua Kam Kaew repented and became a better soul. She reincarnated and met Tien Kanya in Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body once again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.5 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ending</th>
<th>Thai TV soap opera</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gerd Tae Chard</td>
<td>Anon reincarnated as the son of Khate and Mutitha, once his good friend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pang Nhai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phood Sao Proud Sanay</td>
<td>Nisa reincarnated as a human after 18 years. She was then chosen to play the role of Chao Mae Sabai Thong once again.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susarn Khon Pen</td>
<td>After Chu Cheep and Rod Sukhon received their deserved punishment, Rod Sukhon passed away, while Chu Cheep was taken to a mental hospital; Laan Tom’s soul was finally at peace and allowed Ausa, her niece, to cremate her body.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The story ends leaving the audience curiosity</td>
<td>Srisa Marn</td>
<td>After Doctor Piti was caught, Uncle Phon was killed and Pilantha’s brain was destroyed. The ending portrayed the scene in the deserted laboratory where a computer screen fallen on the floor shows Pilantha asking, “Where is everyone? I’m still alive!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tha Yard Asul</td>
<td></td>
<td>The remaining heirs of Khun Yai Worranard together gave alms to Buddhist monks. However, the final scene showed the centipede doll of Khun Yai Worranard with the evil laugh of Asul in Khun Yai Worranard’s body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susarn Phutesuan</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Theptripatrasul Necklace was found once again with its power intact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rak Boon</td>
<td></td>
<td>After Pran was subjugated, Jetiya can once again live in the mortal world with special powers to see and help souls and spirits from their sorrow. The final scene shows the latest dead soul sent to Jetiya for help, Uncle Pisai.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the study of narrative structure above, it is found that the ending can be divided into two categories, when everything is resolved or when the audience is left wondering, or curious, as explained below:

4.2.5.1 Ending with Everything Resolved

This will be a happy ending for the ghost soap opera regardless of the tragedy that occurred in the story, like with “Ruen Kalong”. Kalong was killed before she could live with her lover, Mai, but in the end, Kalong finally yielded and let go of
her love so she could find peace. Thus, while the story may encounter tragedy, sorrow and evil, at the end, all understand each other and agree to end any conflict. Therefore, everything, at the end, is resolved.

Figure 4.36 Kalong Let Go of the Blindness and Left to Another World

This often achieved through the use of cremation as a tool to allow the soul to leave the world peacefully. When there is no body, the soul can no longer linger in the mortal world. The cremation thus depicts that the time has come for the soul to leave to pay for their sins and then reincarnate.

Reincarnation in the mortal world often occurs as well. This allows the ghosts to continue their mission begun in their previous life or fix the wrongs left unresolved. For example, in the soap operas “Phood Sao Proud Sanay” and “Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai”, the reincarnated souls were able to fulfill their wishes as humans once again. This kind of story is often found in comedy ghost soap operas.
4.2.5.2 Ending that Leaves the Audience Curious

The type of ending has a mysterious conclusion that leaves the audience wondering, or curious about what would happen next. It mostly happens with ghost characters that are very powerful and very hard to subjugate. For example, in “Srisa Marn”, the character Pilantha was indeed strong and could use her psychic power to
force others to act as she commanded. Although, her body was destroyed at the end, the final scene shows her psychic mind still alive, unwilling to die.

Figure 4.39 The End which Leaves Curiosity in Srisa Marn

Moreover, in “Susarn Phu Tesuan”, King Phu Tesuan failed to reincarnate Nilpat and was subjugated, while Terd Narong and Nilpat got married and lived together as before. However, at the end of the story, the Thetripatrasul Necklace, the source of all evil power, which was supposed to be destroyed in the subjugation of King Phu Tesuan was once again found.

Figure 4.40 The Thetripatrasul necklace was once again found in Susarn Phu Taesuan

From the analysis of the ending of narratives, it can be seen that is used to depict the end of ghosts in the mortal world. It shows that no matter how strong and powerful the ghosts are, they cannot continue to dwell on earth, whether good or bad.
The ending in TV soap operas may appear to be happy, but only for the human characters; the ghosts end up sad. In spite of their effort to survive, they cannot live in the mortal world where they do not belong.

4.3 Character Typology

Character typology refers to the characters and their, including build, face and personality. In the study of the transformation of meanings of ghost, the ghost or ghosts are the lead characters in the narratives. From the study of the twelve soap operas, the ghost characters were all once human. Therefore, this study covered their characteristics in both human and ghost form.

4.3.1 Ghost Character

Thai soap operas present various dimensions of ghost characters such as demographic (gender, age, and economic/education background), physical, and ethical characteristics as well as background/cause of death, conflict and subjugation. These are related to human characteristics, which have led to the character becoming a ghost. Analysis in detail follows:

1) “Parp Arthun”: Khun Prayong, a high ranking lady who was determined, confident and loyal to her loved one. She had been waiting to meet with her love once again and hoped they would live together regardless of being spirit and human. The ghost of Khun Prayong was able to hypnotize and recall their previous life to enable her lover and whoever was related to their life to remember their love. Chedtha, the victim, finally fell for Khun Prayong because she had chosen only good memories for him to remember.
2) “Tha Yard Asul”: Khon (in Khun Yai Worranard’s body) was a villager who loved the daughter of Chao Phraya. When Chao Phraya found out, he had Khon whipped almost to death. Khon then practiced black magic and replaced his soul into a centipede doll to control the body and soul of the heiress of Chao Phraya. To continue his revenge, the soul was passed on from generation to generation, and Khun Yai Worranard was the last soul to be possessed.

3) “Srisa Marn”: Pilantha, the Headless Ghost had strong psychic powers. She was able to move just like a human. The only difference was that she needed to consume fresh human blood to exist. She was also able to hover around or even move things by her mind. She could even demand others act as she wanted.
4) “Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai”: Anon, a generous family man was robbed and killed. He became a stray ghost. Only Mutitha was able to see him. Anon then followed Mutitha to ask for her help looking after his family. His goodness earned him a rank in heaven with a special remote control that had magical powers.

5) “Susarn Khon Pen”: Laan Tom, a millionaire who was faithful to her love, was betrayed by her husband and then suffered from an unidentified disease that made her appear dead. Her sickness allowed her husband to plot a plan to kill her.
to gain her fortunes. After Laan Tom died, her soul haunted her husband to punish him and make him feel remorse.

Figure 4.45 Ghost Character: Laan Tom in Susarn Khon Pen

6) “Susarn Phu Tesuan”: Phu Tesuan was loyal to his love and seeking her for 5000 years. Phu Tesuan had psychic and supernatural powers that made him more powerful and stronger than any man.

Figure 4.46 Ghost Character: Phu Tesuan in Susarn Phu Tesuan
7) “Rong Ram Phi”: Khun Luang Naruebalbureerak, a merciless executioner, did not understand the meaning of “forgiveness” due to a past conflict that caused his feelings of love to turn into hatred and vengeance. His soul was bound to rage and determined to seek revenge. Khun Luang was able to possess a human body and his black magic gave him great power. However, Khun Luang still succumbed to the power of Buddhism.

![Figure 4.47 Ghost Character: Khun Luang Naruebalbureerak in Rong Ram Phi](image)

8) “Phood Sao Proud Sanay”: Nisa was a beautiful lady struggling to survive and become a talented actress. Unfortunately, she lost her life too soon. However, she was luckily chosen for the role of Chao Mae Sabai Thong without anyone knowing that she was already dead.

![Figure 4.48 Ghost Character: Nisa in Phood Sao Proud Sanay](image)
9) “Jong Kol King Tien”: Tien Kanya was a kind lady, but very weak. She fell in love with a selfish man. Tien Kanya suffered from betrayal and pain which eventually caused her death. Her soul then resided in the body of Chao Bua Kam Kaew whose personality and appearance were completely different from Tien Kanya. However, it was Tien Kanya’s goodness that allowed her to stay in Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body in order to keep on doing good deeds.

![Figure 4.49](image1.jpg) Ghost Character: Tien Kanya in Jong Kol King Tien

10) “Jong Kol King Tien”: Chao Bua Kam Kaew, a royal from the North, was a spoiled lady, a, avant-garde playgirl. Her boldness led to her doom as she was seriously injured in a car accident. Her soul then left her and Tien Kanya’s soul entered it. Chao Bua Kaw Kaew then became a stray ghost, wandering around, unable to return to her own body.

![Figure 4.50](image2.jpg) Ghost Character: Chao Bua Kam Kaew in Jong Kol King Tien
11) “Rak Boon”: Other ghost characters in the story appeared differently depending on Jetiya’s situation. It was due to the power of the Rak Boon Box that brought Jetiya to help these ghost characters find out about their death and leave the world in peace.

Figure 4.51 Ghost Character: The other Ghost Characters in Rak Boon

12) “Ruen Kalong”: Kalong was the prettiest in her village. She was in love with Mai. Mai also loved and was faithful to her. The only obstacle to their love was death. Kalong was murdered by drowning. Due to her love, she was able to live on as if she was human.

Figure 4.52 Ghost Character: Kalong in Ruen Kalong
13) “Wieng Kaew”: The fourth wife of Pakorn was bullied by the other wives who planned to murder her by hanging and drowning. Moreover, they kept her soul confined in a ritual which drove the ghost of Wieng Kaew to become enraged. She then made use of the eyes of Roidao, to show the past when she had been mistreated and bullied. When Roidao removed the magical cover releasing Wieng Kaew’s soul, Wieng Kaew’s vengeance began.

![Image of Wieng Kaew](image.png)

**Figure 4.53** Ghost Character: Wieng Kaew in Wieng Roidao

### 4.3.2 Demographic Characteristics

#### 4.3.2.1 Gender

The research revealed that seven soap operas had female ghosts as the main character, while five had male ghosts. The female ghosts are seen to have great power, for example, in Jong Kol King Tien. The ghost of Chao Bua Kam Kaew cannot return to her own body because of Chao Ya Bualawong, the Ancestor Ghost. Chao Ya Bualawong was a great lady when she was alive and was well respected by everyone, so she was chosen to take an elixir (applicable for women only) and live a long life to continue her good deeds. When she passed away, she became the powerful Ancestor Ghost who could control other people’s lives. She allowed Tien Kanya to stay in Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body because Tien Kanya was a good person and always thought of others.
Female power also clearly appears in the period soap opera, Parp Arthun, which portrayed Khun Prayong, an aristocratic lady who lived during the reign of King Rama 5. She was quite modern and confident as well as determined to overpower people. She used her power to control the wife of the man she loved when she lived. When she transformed into the Ancestor Ghost, she still used her power to control her descendants and recall their past lives at her command.

In the same time, the power of Khun Prayong can be interpreted in two ways. First is the female power, while the second is the resistance of power towards gender ideology and social institution. Khun Prayong secretly had a sexual relationship with Chao Khun, who was then called “Khun Luang”, a resident in the mansion. Due to her high status and Thai culture of being reserved, she cannot tell anyone about her secret relationship.

Afterwards, when Chao Khun was sent to work upcountry, he later returned with a wife. Although Khun Prayong was his first wife, their marriage was not official, so she tried to control Chao Khun and thishe wife. She was able to use her power because she was modern and accepted Western culture. She believed that men and women are equal and that only she can be the only wife of her man. This is proof of resistance of Thai gender ideology where men are always above women.
The belief that men are above women also appears in “Tha Yard Asul” in which Khun Yai Worrarard and her female ancestor were possessed and manipulated by a male monster named Asul Khon who was willing to pass on his power to her descendants. In other words, Asul Khon was the male representative that desired and tried to overcome women. While Asul Khon manipulated the heiress of Phraya Chaleang, the heiresses would stay young and beautiful no matter how old she was. This shows that men are able to control females in Thai society.
Furthermore, resistance towards gender ideology appears in most ghost soap operas. Women are weak and are pestered by men when they are alive, but when they turn into a ghost, they become strong and able to compete with men.

4.3.2.2 Age

This research found that the age of ghost characters in the twelve soap operas varied, especially in “Rak Boon”, in which the ghosts were of different ages, demonstrating that a human can become a ghost at any age.
The Various Age of Ghost Character Appeared in Rak Boon

However, most of the ghost characters appear to be working age, as it is this period when people encounter many problems in their lives, whether they be related to work, family, lover, money, etc. Another reason that ghost soap operas chose to portray ghosts of working age is because it is the age when people have many responsibilities, and if they do not succeed, they can be easily disappointed. However, people will struggle to find a way to accomplish their dream. Therefore, it is the perfect age for ghosts to be portrayed as it relates to the real world.

4.3.2.3 Social Class / Status

The research revealed that social status of the ghost characters plays an important role in a narrative. For instance, in the soap opera “Ruen Kalong”, the ghost
character Kalong was just a poor villager. So, she was unable to solve the love relationship between herself as a ghost and Mai. Although, she received help from her religious friends and a Buddhist monk, she was still unable to find peace, even after Mai entered the monkhood in dedication to Kalong. Then, there is, the ghost of Wieng Kaew, once a working girl, she cannot let go of her rage. She sought revenge that led to the loss of many lives. No one could stop her, not even herself. It was only the teaching about karma by the Buddhist monk that stopped her and released her soul. Both Kalong and Wieng Kaew were commoners and considered to be of lower status, which was not the case for the Ancestor Khun Prayong Ghost, who was an aristocratic in “Parp Arthun”. Khun Prayong was able finally control her rage, due to her being well educated.

Figure 4.58  Kalong Listened to the Preaching from Buddhist Monk and Let Her Go

Figure 4.59  Wieng Kaew Listened to the Preaching from Pra Prakorn, Buddhist Monk
4.3.2.4 Physical Characteristic

This includes the character being portrayed as a ghost. Physical characteristics clearly show the difference between ghost and human form as well as type of ghost. The portrayal of each ghost will depend on the imagination and creativity of the production team. The physical characteristics found in this study are as follows:

1) Otherness

This condition a ghost soap opera creates for its audience is to show that ghosts are different, even though they may be human-like. Ghosts can somehow associate with humans, but they still contain the ‘Otherness’ condition, because ghosts do not live in the same realm as mortals. This ‘Otherness’ of ghost characters in Thai soap operas will vary according to the creators, but can still be divided into three types, as follows:

(1) Normal Human Form

This is when ghosts appear in human form but their expression remains different than human. For example, in “Srisa Marn”, Pilantha used her psychic power to control her body movement to appear human. However, her power only allowed her to walk slowly and unsteadily. Another example is Tien Kanya whose soul accidentally resided in Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body. She was able to use Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body as if it was hers, but still her personality was completely different from Chao Bua Kam Kaew, which everyone noticed and then knew this was not Chao Bua Kam Kaew.

![Figure 4.60 Physical Characteristic of Pilantha in Srisa Marn](image-url)
Moreover, the physical appearance of ghosts in normal human form can show the ‘Otherness’ through weaknesses such as fear of sunlight, cold hands, no perspiration or concern towards Buddhism. For example, Asul Khon in Khun Yai Worrnanard’s body was nervous and unstable when getting close to Buddhism.

(2) Dreadful Form

This includes ghosts in a completely different form from human. In many soap operas, ghost characters have horrifying make up. For example, in “Ruen Kalong”, the Kalong ghost appeared as human when she was with her lover, but she appeared in a dreadful form when she was pestered by the sorcerer.
At times, the ghosts appear in an unclear, misty form, in contrast to the above two forms, but still this can be very frightening. For example, in the soap operas “Susarn Khon Pen” and “Wieng Roidao”, the ghosts of Laan Tom and Wieng Kaew will appear as a light mist at the beginning of their dramas. As the stories get darker, the ghosts become more aggressive and appear more vivid, just like humans but more terrifying.

Figure 4.64 Physical Characteristic: Mist Form of Wieng Kaew in Wieng Roi Dao
2) Categorizing Ghosts

To make ghosts more terrifying can depend on the social context that is continually evolving. As a result, the director must create ghosts that fit the social context of the story, while still maintaining the Thainess of the ghost character. TV soap operas portray ghosts as Thai, Foreign or Local ghosts.

In most Thai soap operas, the ghosts fit Thai beliefs, like the ghosts of Mae Nak Phra Kha-nhong, Kra Sue, and Pop. However, in the chosen soap operas for this research, foreign ghosts, in other words Westernized ghosts, are more dominant. For example, Khun Phee, the Headless Ghost in “Srisa Marn”
was able to bring her head back home using psychic power, and then she continued to live as normal person, which is quite the same as in Hollywood-style zombie films. The ghost of Anon in “Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai” was like a typical Thai ghost, but was enhanced with special high-tech effects. He used a magic remote control to perform his supernatural abilities. Moreover, in “Jong Kol King Tien”, there were traces of the beliefs of ancestor ghosts having greater power than a spiritual leader.

Furthermore, there are other issues related to ghost characters in terms of ghost demographics and physical characteristics that are important in defining the ghost character. The following are some of these significant issues:

4.3.2.5 Background / Cause of Death

Background is used to show the origin of the ghost, which may be the reason leading to it being a good or evil ghost. In most TV ghost soap operas, the good ghosts are made to appear weak as well as terrified. Ghosts may not be evil from the start, but their past may drive them towards it. Therefore, these ghosts often receive sympathy and help from human characters in the soap opera.

1) Murder

Ghosts of persons murdered are mostly found in recent ghost soap operas. The cause of death is mostly about social issues or jealousy. Therefore, this kind of ghost wants to take revenge and haunt whoever is the murderer. The most important thing is that most evil ghosts will have supporters to help them accomplish their mission. For example, Wieng Kaew, in “Wieng Roi Dao”, was to be killed by the wives of Pakorn; therefore, she became determined to take revenge on the wives. Her supporter was Meida, the girl who received transplanted eyes from Wieng Kaew’s daughter.
2) Accident

An accident is unpredictable and mostly occurs because of carelessness. For example, Pilantha, in “Srisa Marn”, was killed in a car accident. She became a headless ghost because of her hot-temper. As she was unwilling to die, she used her psychic power to pick up her head and bring it home for her doctor to reattach it, so she could live like a normal person.
3) Suicide

This is a form of escape for those who want to run away from their problems, which in soap operas include love, betrayal, and disappointment. The ghosts are likely to be ferocious if they commit suicide since they were hurt by others. From the twelve researched soap operas, “Rong Ram Phi” was the only soap opera with a ghost character that committed a ritual suicide to empower himself and seek revenge.

![Figure 4.69](image)

**Figure 4.69** Khun Luangnaruebalbureerak Committed a Ritual Suicide in order to Empower himself in Rong Ram Phi

From the analysis of background / cause of death, this study found that human characters who fight with the power of ghosts and know the final deed of the ghost characters before their death were involved in the death of the ghost character in the past. So, the ghosts will haunt these human characters. The character may be able to solve the conflict with the evil ghosts who want them dead as well. However, human power may not be enough to solve everything in time. So, the human characters must be ready to face with whatever will come in the future. Since, no one knows how things will develop in the rest of the soap opera, it is assumed that mortals will triumph.

4.3.2.6 Ethical Characteristics

These help show the intention of the ghosts, whether good or bad. In other words, ghosts always intend to take action. Having good and evil ghosts show that their power still remains Thai culture. The lesson taught is that if humans are mean, even towards ghosts, then others, even ghosts, can cause trouble. Although
punishment is now available according to the law, there is still much injustice, demonstrating proving that the laws and their enforcement do not always work. As a result, a reason for using ghosts in a narrative is to encourage people to behave morally. Ethical characteristics can be divided into two categories:

1) Good Ghosts

It is quite apparent that these ghosts were once good and sincere persons, so after they died, their spirits remain good and like to help their friends and lovers. They might appear to be scary to others, but it is not their intention to harm anyone. For example, in the soap opera “Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai”, Anon, a good family man was robbed and killed. He became a stray, wandering ghost that wanted to look after his family. He hoped to contact someone to ask them to take care of his family. He finally met Mutitha and asked for her help. However, his sudden appearance scared Mutitha. Then, she gradually relaxed and they relied on each other. Eventually, they became good friends despite their differences.

![Figure 4.70](image1.png)  Anon and Mutitha are Become a Good Friend in Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nai
Similarly, in “Phood Sao Proud Sanay”, Nisa, a young, determined and sincere lady accidentally died in a fire. She also accidentally became Chao Mae Sabai Thong and had to help the villagers to gain enough merit to appear in human form to continue to pursue her dream. Ghosts that help those who are good rather than the bad are described in Thai as, “protectors”

![Image](image1.jpg)

**Figure 4.71** Nisa, Chao Mae Sabai Thong Helped People in Phood Sao Proud Sanay

2) Evil Ghosts

These ghosts usually are very angry. They may have been a bad person filled with hatred and seeking revenge since they were alive. Consequently, they intend to harm others, especially those persons they had conflicts with when they were alive. They want revenge regardless if it is right or wrong. They interfere in people’s daily live and manipulate things. For example, in “Tha Yard Asul”, when the Asul Khon was human, he was deprived his love due to his lower social status. He was abused by Phraya Chaleang, so he was filled with hatred. When he finished his black magic course, he transformed into an evil monster residing in the body of the heiress of Phraya Chaleang to seek his revenge. He would kill whoever tried to oppose his succession as heiress. In short, he became a true evil monster killing people for enjoyment.
However, evil ghosts could have once been a good person, but they changed after being abused. Their minds become filled with vengeance towards whoever harmed them. For example, in “Wieng Roi Dao”, Wieng Kaew was the victim of a love tragedy arranged by the three wives of Pakorn. She was murdered by drowning. Then, her soul was confined and so remained in the mortal world. This drove Wieng Kaew’s spirit to accumulate anger over 25 years. She waited for the day her daughter would return to free her soul, when she could seek her revenge; thus, the nice but poor lady turned into an evil ghost.
Figure 4.73  Wieng Kaew, who was the Victim of the Love Tragedy in Wieng Roi Dao

Figure 4.74  Wieng Kaew Want to Take Revenge whoever is the Murderer in Wieng Roi Dao

From the analysis of ethical characteristics, this research found that whatever a ghost’s intention, it is the result of a past action. In other words, background and cause of death play important roles in forming a ghost’s intentions based on human values.

4.3.2.6 Weapon of Subjugation

Ghosts have an “otherness” that make them different from humans. Thus, they cannot live among humans either. In other words, ghosts must be eliminated. Although, the ghosts may contain supernatural powers that can overcome humans easily, their powers are limited under some belief or outside force. As a consequence, people try to find special ways to subjugate and eliminate the ghosts possibly by one of the following:
1) Religious of Priest’ Weapon

Based on the belief that “goodness (Dharma) will triumph over evil”, weapons will sometimes be used together with rituals, as appeared in “Rong Ram Phi”. Buddha images were used to calm the ghost of Khun Luang Naruebalbureerak. Moreover, there is the belief in Thai culture that ghosts are scared of Buddhism as depicted in the ghost soap operas “Parp Arthun”, “Wieng Roi Dao”, and “Susarn Phu Tesuan”.

Apart from the use of Buddhist symbols such as Buddha images, there is the use of religious teaching to subjugate ghosts as depicted in “Ruen Kalong” and “Wieng Roi Dao”. The monk will preach or recite sutras that can calm an enraged mind. The teachings, though, will not directly destroy or subjugate the ghosts like black magic.

Figure 4.75 Priest or Religious’ Weapon in Thai Ghost Soap Opera
2) Sorcerer’s Rituals and Weapons

Belief in ghosts, demons, and devils has continued from the past to the present, and Thai TV soap operas reflect this superstition through a sorcerer’s rituals such as an exorcism or ghost subjugation or weapons that can include a magic bowl, knife, holy thread, holy water or holy rice. There can also be weapons like the Slaughter Sword of Khun Luang Naruebalbureerak in the soap opera “Rong Ram Phi” used to slaughter many persons whose souls were then confined to this sword. Thus, the sword is full of evil. At the end, this sword was used to take revenge on its owner, Khun Luang Naruebalbureerak, whose soul was defeated by this sword.

![Sorcerer’s Rituals and Weapons](image)

**Figure 4.76** Sorcerer’s Rituals and Weapons in Thai ghost soap opera

3) Nature

Thai ghosts are usually defeated by sorcery or a holy weapon, like holy water or holy rice. However, as Western beliefs entered Thai culture, ghosts adopted Western characteristics and began to fear natural phenomena such as sunlight, just like vampires. This was the case with the character Khun Luang Naruebalbureerak in “Rong Ram Phi”. In a scene where he was going to kill, sunlight suddenly appeared and his body instantly vanished. This also happened with the ghost of Nonny in “Phood Sao Proud Sanay” which could not appear in solid form in the
daytime. She also needed to acquire merit to make her translucent body become solid, and if the merit decreased, her body would fade.

Figure 4.77  Nisa Needed Huge amount of Merits to make Her Translucent Body Became more Solid in Phood Sao Proud Sanay

4) Karma

Karma is based on the belief “all living beings are subject to their own actions”. So a person who commits a sin and becomes a ghost will have to remain on earth to balance its karma. In many Thai TV soap operas, the person who will help release these ghosts are true Buddhists, and the ghosts, regardless of how evil they are, can become good after realizing the law of Karma. For example, in “Rak Boon”, the murdered ghosts asked Jetiya to “find the truth” about who killed them. Once Jetiya found out, the person was punished according to the Laws of Karma.

There are ghosts who must remain in the mortal world in order to make merit to balance their karma such as in the soap operas “Parp Arthun”, “Susan Phu Tesuan”, “Tha Yard Asul”, and “Rong Ram Phi”. No matter how the ghosts try to resist, in the end they cannot avoid the Laws of Karma.
5) Self-Realization

Ghosts may be released from the mortal world through self-realization or completion of their mission. In “Susarn Khon Pen”, the ghost of Khun Nai Laan Tom tried to teach Chu Cheep, her husband, to be ashamed of his sins. When her mission was done, she finally let go and left the mortal world. The ghost of Nisa in “Phood Sao Proud Sanay” always wanted to become a professional actress, so when she died, she took a chance to be an actress. When she finally realized her dream, she let go and left for another realm.

![Figure 4.78 Nisa were Back to be a Human by Recarnation in Phood Sao Proud Sanay](image)

6) Inheritable / Invulnerable

Some ghosts are inheritable or invulnerable. They live among humans but in the “Otherness” condition. These ghosts may be subjugated, but they are not defeated. They remain to challenge the laws of nature. In “Srisa Marn”, the Headless Ghost, Pliantha, was able to exist on no matter how many times she was
exercised, left to decay, or soaked in acid. Her soul remained even when her mortal remain were destroyed. Pilantha still appeared in the final scene on the computer screen saying, “Where is everyone? Pii is still alive!” In “Tha Yard Asul”, the picture of the centipede doll of Asul Khon, who was subjugated by the souls of people he had killed of the Sacred Silver Dagger, appeared in the final scene with a picture of Khun Yai Worrangard with her dreadful laugh to depict that the monster was still alive.

4.3.3 Psychographic Characteristic

The human character related or having a relation with ghost can be portrayed in different ways. Apart from demographic characteristic, the human characters can be considered as either good, helping the ghost, or bad, opposing the ghost. The following explains these character types in more detail:

4.3.3.1 Good Person

This refers to a person who does not have any bad intention towards ghosts before or after encountering the ghosts. They, or course, will eventually link to the ghosts; however, no matter how good the person is, if the relationship with ghost is bad, they can be killed.

Ghosts, for the most part, are considered frightening, especially because of their “Otherness”, to show they are different than humans. Moreover, ghosts are likely to use their power to scare, haunt or interfere in people’s lives. Still, there will be some humans who sympathize with these ghosts, often because a character realizes how the ghosts were mistreated while still human, and this is what caused them to turn evil as found in the soap opera, “Wieng Roi Dao”.
The good characters in ghost soap operas always help the ghosts to fulfill their wishes because of their incapability. Ghosts have their limits. They cannot communicate openly with all people. They cannot appear in human form, and they cannot leave to reincarnate by their own. Therefore, when ghosts are helped by good persons, they will also protect these persons, which is expressed by the Thai phase, “Ghost protect the kind one.”

Figure 4.79 Meida Helps Wieng Kaew to Fulfil Her Wishes in Wieng Roi Dao

Figure 4.80 Jetiya Helps all the Ghosts as They Wished in Rak Boon
Characters who do not have bad intentions toward ghosts before or after knowing the ghosts as described in more detail below:

The good persons who helps ghosts.

1) This actually includes characters that have good relations with ghost characters as well as the few who may not have good relations with ghosts due to their involvement in the ghosts’ death. The latter may not have meant to be involved in the death but may have been a witness. They are usually scared of ghosts at first and try to run away, but over time, they understand the ghost characters and try to help them find the truth or a means to leave the mortal world in peace such as the soap opera “Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai”.

![Image of characters from soap opera](image1.jpg)

Figure 4.81  Anon and Mutitha are Become a Good Friend in Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nai

2) The Good Persons Who are Victims

This includes characters who never have relations with the ghost characters but become victims while trying to connect with these spirits. Although, their relationships are good at first, a good character can always easily become victim such as in the soap opera “Wieng Roi Dao”.

![Image of characters from soap opera](image2.jpg)
4.3.3.2 Enemy/Opposition

This classification comprises characters considered evil (Villains) as well as characters that think differently than the ghosts, like Buddhist monks and, nuns, shamans, sorcerers or fortunetellers. Moreover, good and bad characters as well as social institutions can also be considered as the opposition.

Monks or prophets

From the research, the ghosts’ opposition can play different kinds of roles. The role of the Buddhist monk in the twelve soap operas is portrayed differently. In some soap operas, a monk helps calm characters, while in some soap operas, the monk uses Buddhist teachings to make the ghosts feel remorse. There are no monks who directly subjugate ghosts. The subjugation role is given to a sorcerer specializing in black magic. However, sorcerers are not able to dispose of ghosts in any of the soap operas examined. In the end, the use of Buddhism, Law of Karma and righteousness are the key factors in releasing ghosts from the mortal world.

1) Science
Ghosts have been created from the "faith", which is in contrast to science that only adheres to the concept of cause and effect. Therefore, these two concepts can never meet in a ghost soap opera. In this research, there is only one soap opera that does not relate to Buddhism belief, “Srisa Marn”, which is the story about a girl with special psychic power. After her death, she was able to use her psychic power to continue to live in her body like a human. In this story, the world’s number one scientist was helping his niece who had special psychic ability to develop a new technology that can make her live eternally, which defies the laws of nature. Again, in “Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai”, technology is used to develop a new power for the ghost. This is quite different to other soap operas where ghosts gain power after their death. However, in “Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai”, they ghosts must register online; then, they will be granted the remote control with special power.

Science also appears during the ending of “Tha Yard Asul”, when the best friend of Khun Yai Worranard, a scientist, tries to use every scientific method to subjugate the evil monster in the body of Khun Yai Worranard. However, he was killed instead. Thus, it can be inferred that black magic, or superstition, is more powerful than science.

2) Good Person / Bad Person

Although ghosts are considered to have the “Otherness” condition and be villains, what appears in most of the ghost soap operas reviewed is that some of the supporting human and ghost characters are worse than the lead ghost character. These villains either a person or group that will try to pester the lead ghost character beginning before its death. For example, in “Wieng Roi Dao”, Wieng Kaew was bullied by the wives of Khun Pakorn and was eventually hanged by them. In “Ruen Kalong”, Kalong was harassed by the son of the village chief and his followers. They were going to rape her, but her resistance led to her death by drowing. There are also characters more vicious than the lead ghost character such as Chu Cheep and Rod Sukhon in the soap opera “Susarn Khon Pen” where Khun Nai Laan Tom had been trying, since still alive, to teach them the Law of Karma and remorse. However, they both still heartlessly killed Khun Nai Laan Tom. In “Sao Proud Sanay”, Nisa, or Nonny Phut, was accidentally killed but still worked to become an admired actress as this was her dream. Even though she tried very hard, she was
betrayed by her best friend, in death as in life. Ultimately, the lead ghost characters will take revenge on those who hurt them. This reflects the idea that “as you sow, so shall you reap”. Finally, the lead ghost characters will eventually feel remorse towards their own deeds and leave the world according to the Law of Karma.

**Figure 4.83** Chu Cheep and Rod Sukhon in Susarn Khon Pen.

There is also the good character who is neglected by the lead ghost character and harmed unintentionally. For example, in “Parp Arthun”, the great grandmother ghost, Khun Prayong, hoped to live with Chao Khun as in the past. She did not realize that love between humans and ghosts was not possible. She did not realize that her attempt to possess Chao Khun, or Chedtha, in the present time hurt other people. Thus, Chedtha did not tolerate Khun Prayong’s actions, leading Khun Prayong to lock up Chedtha and prevent their souls from being reunited. This is very similar to what happens in “Susarn Phu Tesuan”. In this soap opera, King Phu Tesuan tried to find his lover from the past in the present time. He was going to conduct a resurrection ritual to revive his lover’s soul so they could live together once again. All in all, lead ghost characters harm good people as well as bad because they seem them opposing their ultimate desires.

3) Social Institutions
The main reason that social institutions are considered as ghost opposition to ghosts is because social institutions usually identify social status, while ghost are considered in the “Otherness” condition. From this study, it was found that the police is an institution considered the biggest opposition to ghosts. In many soap operas, police officers get involved in an investigation with the main character such as in “Srisa Marn”, “Susarn Khon Pen”, “Rong Ram Phi”, “Ruen Kalong”, and “Rak Boon”.

**Figure 4.84** Police Officers Always Get Involved in the Investigation in Rong Ram Phi

**Figure 4.85** Police Officers Get Involved in the Investigation in Susarn Khon Pen
Figure 4.86 Police Officers Always Get Involved in the Investigation in Srisa Marn

Moreover, institutions represented include the conventional medical doctor, like in “Susarn Khon Pen” where he opposed the ghost of Khun Nai Laan Tom since he did not believe Khun Nai Laan Tom was ill. This character was used in contrast to the traditional healer, or shaman, who was able to bring Khun Nai Laan Tom back to life once again.

Figure 4.87 The Conventional Medicine Doctor in Susarn Khon Pen

Finally, a social institution as opposing ghosts is the media. In “Phood Sao Proud Sanay”, the media released news about Chao Mae Sabai Thong being a fraud, which caused a decrease in the number of people worshiping Chao Mae Sabai Thong. Nisa, who pretended to be Chao Mae Sabai Thong, then earned less merit and was not able to appear in a solid form, which affected her acting career and led to her almost being exposed for what she was.
4.4 Theme

Theme refers to the main thought or concept that the producer wants to present in soap operas. Theme can be found by interpreting each part of the narrative structure, including story title, characters’ names, values, language and symbols. The themes of the 12 soap operas can be divided into three levels according to each soap opera’s main objective: 1) to be emotionally effected, 2) to be intellectually effected, and 3) to be mentally effected. The TV ghost soap operas consist of situations and both human and ghost character behavior. The story will be portrayed through the three levels of the objectives listed above. However, whatever is portrayed will be interpreted from a human point of view of the audience, whether it be self-remorse, faith, imagination, or understanding at each level. Thus, the beliefs portrayed through TV ghost soap operas are constructed through a human point of view.

The role of television soap operas is to entertain as well as satisfy the audience’s emotional needs. The ghost characters in these dramas can satisfy the emotional needs as follows:

4.4.1 Ghosts are Dreadful

The society where people truly believe in the existence of ghosts, even though there is no proof, uses imagination to interpret a ghost’s appearance and characteristics. From a human point of view, ghosts are dead persons and so must be in some way different from humans. They are feared and thus must be made to appear
scary. The audience will understand they will be scared when they choose to watch a ghost soap opera. They understand that ghosts contain supernatural powers that can be frightening. The dreadfulness of these ghosts will differ depending on each person’s point of view. These ghosts’ dreadful characteristics can be divided into two categories as follows:

4.4.1.1 Point of View of Characters Scared of Ghosts

Those who are scared of ghosts are affected by beliefs embedded in their sub-conscious, probably through individual experience. These interpretations of ghost characters in TV soap operas usually make them “powerful” and dreadful. For example, in “Reun Kalong”, no one knew that Kalong was a ghost and had been living with Mai, her boyfriend. Once the truth was revealed, the villagers were suddenly scared of Kalong and changed their behavior towards her.

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 4.89** The Villager Suddenly Scared of Kalong in Ruen Kalong

In “Rong Ram Phi”, there were scenes where ghosts appear completely different from the humans they haunted. Their strange appearance causes human characters to be even more afraid of them. Their supernatural powers make them
unpredictable as to when and where they will appear or harm human characters. This unpredictable makes people even more afraid.

![Image of ghosts]

**Figure 4.90** The Unpredictable Ability of Ghosts Make People Scared in Rong Ram

4.4.1.2 Point of View of Characters not Scared of Ghosts

This includes characters who are initially not afraid of ghosts or do not believe in them until they see the ghosts. At the beginning of the dramas, these characters are presented to represent the new generation, successful persons who only believe in something that can be proved. Thus, they do not believe in ghosts. However, these characters will gradually accept the presence of ghosts after encountering them, proving that ghosts exist. For example, in “Parp Arthun”, Chedtha did not believe that the Singha Montri Mansion was haunted nor that ghosts existed. Therefore, he accepted the challenge of A-nongwadee, an heiress of the Singha Montri family, to spend a night in this mansion to prove whether Anongwadee’s Ancestor Ghost still resided in the mansion to protect its descendants.
4.4.2 Ghosts are Embedded with Rage

Apart from being dreadful, ghosts are often depicted full of rage. Their actions can harm the human characters from a little to a severe level. Not only do their actions reflect their hidden conflicts, but also make the audience feel sympathy or anger towards the ghosts. In “Susarn Khon Pen”, Khun Nai Laan Tom was a kind lady when she was alive, but when she found out that she was murdered by her husband, Chu Cheep, and his mistress, Rod Sukhon, she was deeply hurt. The feeling of being betrayed by the person whom she trusted most made her very angry. Therefore, Khun Nai Laan Tom turned into an evil ghost and began to haunt both Chu Cheep and Rod Sukhon to punish them.
Meanwhile, Kalong was lured to be raped by the son of the village chief and was drowned because she would not succumb. When the evil son hired a sorcerer to subjugate Kalong’s soul, she turned into an evil ghost and fought back.

**Figure 4.93** Life after Real Death of Khun Nai Laan Tom in Susarn Khon Pen

**Figure 4.94** Kalong Turned into the Evil Ghost and Fight Back a Sorcerer
4.4.3 Ghosts Create Love and Friendship

In these situations, the ghost character leads the audience to recall good memories and friendships. Because the ghost and human characters have to help each other, a relationship develops. For example, in “Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai”, when Anon turned into a ghost, he helped Mutitha who happened to be bullied at the place he was killed. Once they both knew each other, Anon was able to ask Mutitha to look after his family since he could not contact anyone. Meanwhile, Mutitha was protected by Anon from her ex-boyfriend. So they both relied on each other, creating a sense of love and friendship between their two worlds.

Figure 4.95 Mutitha and Anon were Helped Each Other in Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nai

Moreover, love and friendship between a ghost and human is found in “Phood Sao Proud Sanay”. Nisa was a young fine girl who always dreamt of becoming a famous actress but passed away prematurely. Then, she was accidentally chosen as the lead actress in the soap opera, Chao Mae Sabai Thong, after she died and became a ghost. While filming the soap opera, she fell in love with a young actor, as no one knew she was a ghost. Later, when the truth was revealed, Nisa had to leave to mortal world and reincarnate. She once again met with the young man who was
then the producer of the Chao Mae Sabai Thong soap opera. Nisa was chosen as Chao Mae Sabai Thong and reunited with her love once again.

Figure 4.96  Nisa had to Leave and Reincarnated in Phood Sao Proud Sanay

**4.4.4 Ghosts Truly Exist**

The belief in ghosts has been passed from generation to generation based on or individual experiences as well as faith in the unknown. Thus, the ghost soap operas create ghosts based on current beliefs and imagination. Ghosts are often created to appear completely different from humans now using modern techniques and technologies. This makes them much more realistic on the television screen. This can then lead to people once more believing that the ghosts in past legends do exist. Moreover, people will use their knowledge to analyze the origin and existence of ghosts.
Figure 4.97  The Various Ghost Characters in Rak Boon

Figure 4.98  The Ghost Character, Wieng Kaew in Wieng Roi Dao
In these narratives, a ghost is a person who died and cannot leave the mortal world because there is something left undone. This then gives the audience an idea that they should be aware of death and learn to be prepare for it because no one can avoid death in the end.

4.4.5 Ghosts are Considered as “Otherness”

The way ghosts are portrayed helps the audience distinguish the difference between the human and ghost characters. The ghost world is not the same as the mortal world. So, while ghosts may connect to humans in some dimension, they retain their “otherness” that makes them different from humans. For example, in “Phood Sao Proud Sanay”, Nisa, or Nonny, cannot appear in a solid form, especially at noon, without earning merit. Her body will begin to fade and disappear if the merit is used up. If she earns enough merits, she will be able to appear in solid form and can perform in the Chao Mae Sabai Thong soap opera.
Figure 4.100 The Ghost Character, Nisa in Phood Sao Proud Sanay

Pilantha, in “Srisa Marn” used her psychic ability to move. However, the movement was quite strange, not at all human, and she cannot eat like a person, either. Her body was kept from decaying by the help of an elixir and human blood.

Figure 4.101 The Ghost Character, Pilantha in Srisa Marn
This “otherness” can clearly separate the ghosts from humans in these television dramas. For instance, the ghosts of Laan Tom, in “Susarn Khon Pen” and Wieng Kaew, in “Wieng Roi Dao” would appear as misty souls at the beginning of their stories. Then, when the dramas become more intense and the ghosts more vicious, they eventually appear in solid form but with frightening make-up and costuming. Moreover, the ghosts’ powers also indicate their otherness, or difference from humans.

**Figure 4.102** The Ghost Character, Khun Nai Laan Tom in Susarn Khon Pen

**Figure 4.103** The Ghost Character, Wieng Kaew in Wieng Roi Dao
4.4.6 Ghosts are Powerful

There are special techniques used in TV soap operas to show ghosts have supernatural powers such as flying, vanishing, and appearing in dreadful form. These are used to convince human characters that the ghosts cannot be controlled. In the dramas, ghosts are powerful and can either protect or harm human characters. For example, in “Susarn Phu Tesuan”, King Phutesuan was able to rise from his decayed body through the power of Goddess Tripatrasul in order to look for and resurrect his beloved. Although, Phu Tesuan looked human, his power and strength were greater than any human.

![Figure 4.104](image)

**Figure 4.104**

King Phutesuan were Greater and Powerful than any Human in Susarn Putesuan

Another example is from “Tha Yard Asul”, during which the power of Asul Khon was transferred to the human form of Khun Yai Worrnanard, who used it to suppress her ageing. Moreover, the power of Asul Khon could also overpower a person’s mind or even kill using black magic.
However, it is their supernatural powers that make ghost characters so frightening. Focusing on cause and effect, a ghost’s power can be either beneficial or harmful. These powers can be restricted by the Law of Karma. In other words, if there is a cause there will be an effect, that is, “as you sow, so shall you reap”. When ghosts try to violate the natural Law of Karma, they do this from their own standpoint, to terrorize or seek revenge. There will be conflicts that cause ghosts to live on in the mortal world in order to complete their tasks. Nevertheless, in Thai culture, the mortal world is based on the Law of karma, so regardless of their actions, ghosts cannot be released from their own Karma nor remain in the mortal world forever, since they do not truly belong.
4.5 Iconography

Apart from the narrative of TV soap operas, the methods used to transform ideas and beliefs in ghost into signs depend upon different techniques of symbol creation. There are two types of techniques – visual and auditory - that make Thai ghost soap operas more realistic and horrifying:

4.5.1 Visual Symbols

Communication through the use of symbols conveys information that must be interpreted by the receiver. These symbols have an impact on the audience in regards to a transmission of a narrative through their perception of meaning. Furthermore, scene selection is significant when shooting a soap opera, as it is associated with the use of camera to draw audience attention and convey meaning to them. This is why the creator must consider several compositions before selecting a scene. The details of visual symbols which are commonly found in Thai ghost soap operas on TV are as follows:

4.5.1.1 Camera Angels

In most Thai soap operas, the camera is not only set directly in front of the actors/actresses, but they will be placed at different angles throughout the story. The more angles used, the more interesting the story can be. The angles have to be in coherence with the narration. This is to change and create several perspectives in order to hold audience attention, disclose or conceal plot or character, change the point of view, describe settings, and emphasize emotions. Because most ghost soap operas create horror as well as surprise, the angles are set according to the viewpoint of the audience, characters, an object or action. This allows the audience to see the characters from various points of view. There are three types of camera angles, as described below:

1) Objective Camera Angle

This is regarded as the angle from the viewers’ perspective so they can observe the characters and action as if they are behind the camera. The shots are seen through the eyes of the cameraman, but are sometimes shot candidly to create
a sense like the character is being peeked on. This angle is found in every Thai ghost soap opera on television.

Figure 4.106 Objective Camera Angle in Wieng Roi Dao
Figure 4.107 Objective Camera Angle in Rak Boon
2) Subjective camera angle

This is explained as a personal angle, as if the audience has become part of the scene, for example, when an actor turns to face the camera to say something to him or herself or the audience. Described as an eye-to-eye relationship, it is also found in every soap opera and can be sub-classified, as below:

(1) Audience

This form places the audience in the scene, for example, when the audience was drawn close to the ghost in “Rak Boon” when Jetiya dreamed...
of Chote, who was murdered and asked for help to find his killer. In this scene, the audience was brought so they felt they were facing the ghost, just like Jetiya.

![Subjective Camera Angle: Audience angle in Rak Boon](image1)

**Figure 4.109** Subjective Camera Angle: Audience angle in Rak Boon

(2) Actors / Actresses

This is when the audience viewpoint is changed so they are seeing the action through the eyes of the actors. Again, in “Rak Boon”, as an example, when Jetiya dreamed of Chote, the view of audience was shifted to the view of Jetiya herself. What the audience perceived was that Chote was reaching out his hands to them. In fact, Chote was reaching his hands towards Jetiya, but the audience was made to believe that Chote was towards them, or the camera.

![Subjective Camera Angle: Actors/Actress in Rak Boon](image2)

**Figure 4.110** Subjective Camera Angle: Actors/Actress in Rak Boon
3) Point of View

Point of view is considered a camera angle that allows the audience to observe a situation and understand the behavior of each character through the eyes of a single character or group. For this reason, point of view, or standpoint, is significant when it comes to a narrative as it can influence and have an impact on the emotions of the audience.

Point of view angles are usually taken in close or moderately close range to enable the audience to clearly see facial expressions. It is also used when the audience is expected to be involved in the story. There are three types of points of views, or perspectives, as follows:

(1) First-Person Narrator

This is when a main character narrates the story on his / her own. This can communicate fear to the audience by changing their position from communicating with the audience to more direct participation audience. As a result, the audience will experience the same feelings as the character. For example, in “Srisa Marn”, Pilantha used her power to carry her head home. The audience experienced a feeling to the doctor who saw Pilantha standing headless before him.

Figure 4.111 First-Person Narrator Point of View in Srisa Marn

(2) Omniscient Point of View

This can be described as narration without limitations. The audience is given insight into every character, situation and setting. They can travel through time, flashback to the past and flash-forward into the future and can
even explore the dreams of each character. This kind of narration is commonly applied in most Thai soap operas, including Thai ghost soap operas. When a Thai ghost soap opera provides an omniscient point of view, the audience can see all events, but they cannot control any of them. This is because this view keeps the audience away from participation. They see helpless characters in a trapped situation, but they cannot help them. For example, in the scene of “Rak Boon” where Jetiya felt something was under her dining table, the audience saw a baby ghost sitting beneath the table, but Jetiya did not. This view caused the audience to become excited and curious as to whether Jetiya would see the ghost and how terrified she would be after seeing it.

![Figure 4.112](image_url)  
**Figure 4.112** Omniscient Point of View in Rak Boon

(3) Third-Person Narrator  
This occurs when the narrator speaks of other characters or events that he/she experienced or was involved in. The audience is aroused as they are made to feel as though they were close to the event). For instance, a scene where the camera captures a person and a ghost facing each other can make the audience feel more part of the event. In “Rong Ram Phi”, the Bang Lamung Hotel guests were frightened by a ghost who was a slave of Luang Naruebalbureerak.
4.5.1.2 Size of Shot

Watching soap operas on TV has some limitations because the screen is flat and has no depth or movement. This is why a camera is important to determine the shot size angle, providing the audience with different viewpoints such as long shot, medium shot and close-up. It is not an easy task to determine the size of a shot, as each shot must connect with those it follows and leads to. Two types of shots are discussed below:

1) Close up / CU

This shot focuses on a character’s head, or facial area, to provide precise details such as wrinkles and tears as well as the expression of their eyes. Because eye expression can be so important, it will determine the movement of the image composition on either side of the frame. The close-up, or CU, is often used to increase the sense of horror and fear of the audience. For instance, in “Ruen Kalong”, when the ghost of Kalong was angry, the close-up technique was applied to increase horror as well as surprise and fear of Kalong after she learned she had died when her body was found in the lotus pond.
Figure 4.114 Close up Shot was Applied to Convey Extreme Fierce and Dreadfulness in Ruen Kalong

Figure 4.115 Close up Shot Used to Depict the Feeling of Surprise and Fear in Ruen Kalong.
Furthermore, close-ups are used in scenes where greater continuity is required to illustrate the superior power of ghosts over human beings. Each close-up is used to convey the sense of power. For instance, in “Susarn Phu Tesuan”, the supernatural power of Peiree, Phu Tesuan’s loyal servant, supernatural power was communicated through her eyes as she hypnotized human characters to put them under her control.

**Figure 4.116** Close up Shot and Extreme Close up Shot in Susarn Putasuan
2) Extreme close-up (ECU)

This moves in to focus on a part of a character’s body such as eyes, lips, hands or feet. Enlarged on the screen, the audience can see minute details. This can arouse emotions further while telling a story. The ECU is applied to intensify a frightening look or horrifying scene as well as an intimacy between the audience and characters.

**Figure 4.117** Extreme Close up Shot to Convey Fierce in Susarn Khon Pen

**Figure 4.118** Extreme Close up Shot Used to Depict the Feeling of Fear in Wieng Roi Dao.
This technique is found most in Thai ghost soap operas because the distance of both ECU and CU conveys the feelings of characters in the scene. When a human character was haunted by a ghost, the purpose is to convey the fearfulness of ghosts and different surprised look of each character. However, the human characters are generally petrified after encountering the ghost. Ghosts can be represented in many ways, but it is commonly depicted as a dreadful ghost with fierce look on the face to make it even more terrifying.
4.5.1.3 Lighting

Lighting is a significant factor that enhances image composition because light and shadow can arouse feelings in the audience. For example, a blackout in a scene signifies mystery. In comedy soap operas, it is common to use very bright light as an over reaction. In a soap opera, natural light is often used when shooting; it can come from various sources, neon bulbs, candles, streetlights and, of course, sunlight. Ghost soap operas often set scenes in dark or dim light to evoke a sense of mystery or horror. Additionally, the light from a lower corner in a scene is usually used to convey that the ghosts are strange, lifeless creatures.

Figure 4.121 Lighting in Rong Ram Phi
4.5.1.4 Editing

Editing is done by cutting and pasting shots to tell a story. This process is partially planned in advance before the actual shooting. There are factors to consider as each shot will be integrated with the other using such techniques as a normal cut, dissolve, fade in and fade out and wiping. Starting from 2003, it is
common for ghost soap operas to cut shots short, and quickly to evoke a feeling of surprise in scenes where the director and editor wants the audience to feel fear. This is similar to the editing scenes of ghost movies but different from the soap operas produced earlier. For instance, in “Ruen Kalong”, the shots are combined very quickly to represent Kalong’s movement from one place to another and convey that Kalong, despite the fact she is in human form and nobody realizes the truth, she is long dead. The fast movement of Kalong also reminds the audience of the fact that Kalong is a ghost and different from ordinary people.

![Figure 4.124 Editing in Ruen Kalong](image)

4.5.1.5 Special Effects

Special effects are effects not created using a computer screen, like simulation models, rain, snow, thunder, explosions, and flooding that occur during the shooting. They also include robots and make-up. Special effects commonly associated with ghost soap operas are the ghost characters’ make-up to create a terrifying look. For example, in “Susarn Khon Pen”, the make-up on the dead body of Khun Nai Laan Tom made the body appear rotten. In “Tha Yard Asul”, special effects
were used when Khun Yai Worranard no longer had her magical power to give her eternal youth. The audience saw her age to be eighty.

Figure 4.125 Special Effects which is not Created on the Computer in Susarn Khon Pen

Figure 4.126 Special Effects which is not Created on the Computer in Tha Yard Asul
Apart from the using special make-up on the actors/actresses, in ghost soap operas, special effects are now frequently used to demonstrate the power of ghosts through modern technology, computer graphics visual effects. Visual effects are created on a computer. After the completion of shooting, for example using a green screen, special effects are added to complete the image and action.

**Figure 4.127** Special Effects which is Created on the Computer in Rak Boon
Figure 4.128 Special Effects which is Created on the Computer in Wieng Roi Dao

Figure 4.129 Special Effects which is Created on the Computer in Tha Yard Asul
Figure 4.130 Special Effects which is Created on the Computer in Srisa Marn

Figure 4.131 Special Effects which is Created on the Computer in Susarn Putesuan
All the special techniques mentioned above appear more frequently in today’s ghost soap operas because these techniques enhance their narratives with body-spirit transformation, flying, disappearance and action. Ghosts can also be much more terrifying by applying these techniques.

4.5.2 Audio Symbol

Sound conveys meanings that can enhance the shots and atmosphere of ghost soap operas and make them more realistic. A sound can stimulate more imagination in viewers rather than just seeing an image. Normally, the sounds used in soap operas can be divided into 4 types.

4.5.2.1 Speech

Speech includes the words and paralanguage of each character, particularly ghosts with deep, hoarse, slow and cold voices as well as harsh laughter. The production of this sound may created by the actors/actresses themselves or with the aid of electronic devices. For example, in “Tha Yard Asul”, Asul Khon, who possessed the body of Khun Yai Worrnanard, had a very harsh laugh, quite different from ordinary people.

4.5.2.2 Sound Effects, which can be divided as follows:

1) Natural Sound

   Natural sound includes lightning flashes, thunder and wind. This effect is applied to many ghost soap operas, for example when a ghost is furious as in “Parp Arthun”, “Srisa Marn”, and “Susarn Khon Pen”. Furthermore, several ghost soap operas use the sound of a howling dog before the appearance of a ghost, as in “Rong Ram Phi”, “Parp Arthun” and “Phut Sao Proud Sanay”. In “Rong Ram Phi”, there was a sound of dragging feet and the walking stick of Khun Luang used to signal his appearance and create terror in the viewers.

2) Artificial Sound

   Artificial sound, unlike natural sound, is the result of human actions or objects. Generally speaking, it can be either the sound from a recording or electronic devices. In “Tha Yard Asul”, there was an artificial sound that was as terrifying as the roar of a monster, which was used when Khun Yai Worrnanard was thinking or attacking others.
4.5.2.3 Music, which can be divided as follows:

1) Score

The score, like the Thai classical music played in “Rong Ram Phi”, is used to reflect the period of the story and portray the characteristics of each character. A Score rhythm can be fast and slow. A fast rhythm was used to convey the anger of Khun Luang, while the slow rhythm was played in normal situations. Additionally, the use of Thai classical music was found in “Parp Arthun” while presenting the past, and the same music is played throughout the story as a reminder and to depict scenes of the past or past lives of the characters. In “Ruen Kalong”, the score use a flute to signal the narrative has moved into the past. Rhythms are then used to evoke various emotions of the characters.

2) Original Soundtrack

Original Soundtrack in a soap operas, there are usually 1-2 original soundtracks explaining the thoughts of the song. Each song portrays the feelings of one character to the others or the events happening in their lives. This enables the audience to deeply understand each character and evoke various emotions like the character or feel involved in the story such as fear, excitement, mystery, love, sympathy and sorrow. The soundtrack is also the conclusion of the soap opera. By listening to the soundtrack, it allows the audience to briefly understand the story and its tone.

4.5.2.4 Silent

In soap operas, silence, whether the characters are moving or standing still, triggers anticipation of what will happen next. The audience will start to picture the next scene with suspicion and excitement. Shortly after, there will usually be a loud sound followed by the appearance of ghosts, thrilling or scaring the audience. Both visual and auditory symbols have significance in conveying the meaning of ghost soap operas as they make the story more interesting and meaningful as they evoke different feelings in the audience.

4.5.3 Setting: Time and Place

Time and place refer to the setting, which form the most important composition of a TV soap opera. Situations and characters cannot proceed without
time and place, as they help to define the production. In the analysis of the meanings of ghost, specific time and place are quite important for ghost soap opera chosen for analysis, as they strongly reflect Thai culture and beliefs in ghosts.

4.5.3.1 Time: Time can also be divided into two classifications:

1) Daytime and Night Time

Normally, people believe that ghosts only appear at night time, but in TV ghost soap opera nowadays, ghosts appear both in daytime and at night as seen in all the ghost soap operas analyzed. Only their appearance may be different. For example, some ghosts appear in mist form and some reside in a human body. Moreover, a ghost’s appearance in daytime may be slightly different, for example, a ghost’s power may be affected by sunlight. In “Phood Sao Proud Sanay”, Nisa had to earn merit to appear in the day or night. Once she acquired enough merit, she would appear and act just like a human.

Figure 4.132 Ghosts’ Appearing in Day Time in Phood Sao Proud Sanay
Similarly, in “Tha Yard Asul”, Asul Khon entered Khun Yai Worranard’s body in order to live as human and carry on as the heiress of Asul. Therefore, Asul Khon was able to appear and live among humans in during the day and night in Khun Yai Worranard’s body.

Figure 4.133  Ghosts’ Appearing in Day Time in Tha Yard Asul

Figure 4.134  Ghosts’ Appearing in Night Time in Tha Yard Asul
The use of a human body also helps ghosts escape some restrictions. For example, in “Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai”, Anon wanted to take his wife to a hospital to deliver their child, but his misty state prevented him from doing so. Then, Anon decided to reside in Mutitha’s body to help his wife.

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 4.135** Ghosts’ Appearing in Day Time in Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nai

The reason why ghosts now appear in soap operas in the daytime is due to the change in lifestyles. People now work at night as well as during the day. Things happen around the clock. So, ghosts are no longer restricted to the nighttime as before and can appear anytime to fulfill their needs.


This technique is used to present a soap opera in various dimensions. It also lets the audience learn how a narrative is connected between past and present. For example, in “Parp Arthun and Susarn Phu Tesuan”, the story switches between the past and present, with actually two parallel narratives taking place throughout the story. It is like watching two soap operas simultaneously. The ending in the past and the ending in the present may be different, but they are connected due to the characters or settings that exist both in the past and present.
Figure 4.136 Past Time – Present Time Narration in Parp Arthan

Figure 4.137 Past Time – Present Time Narration in Susarn Putesuan
At the same time, the flashback and flash-forward also appear in many of the researched soap operas, namely, “Wieng Roi Dao”, “Tha Yard Asul”, “Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai”, and “Rong Ram Phi”. The use of flashback is mostly to explain the origin of a main character. For example, in “Wieng Roi Dao”, a flashback showed how Wieng Kaew was bullied and never fought back until she was framed and murdered; then, she turned into a ghost and sought revenge.

**Figure 4.138** Past Time – Present Time Narration in Wieng Roi Dao

In TV ghost soap opera “Rong Ram Phi”, Khun Luang Naruebalbureerak, an executioner who fell in love with Saraphee, forced Saraphee to sleep with him, but Pan, one of Khun Luang’s servants took pity on her and helped her escape. While Khun Luang tried to chase them, he fell from a cliff and was badly injured. He then became enraged with both Pan and Saraphee and decided to commit
a ritual suicide in order to turn into a ferocious ghost to haunt them and their descendants.

Figure 4.140 Past Time – Present Time Narration in Rong Ram Phi

Moreover, there are soap operas that begin with the ending of the story and then flashback to the past. For example, in “Jong Kol King Tien”, the story begins with Chao Bua Tien, or Tien Kanya in Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body, telling the incredible story of what happened to Chao Bua Kam Kaew and herself to her favorite grandchild. Meanwhile, other soap operas are presented in chronological order. Switching time frames helps convey the characteristics of characters, as those who believe in Karma feel that the present is the result of past actions.
Meanwhile, the other soap operas are presented in chronological orders. Anyhow, the switching of time setting will reflect the characteristic of people nowadays who believe that the present time is the result of past action and the past may not be as precious to remember as it may fill with sorrow and bitterness. All in all, it is the narrative method that helps make the story become more interesting.

4.5.3.2 Place

Place can be divided into three categories, as follows:

1) A Restricted or Non-Restricted Area.

According to ancient Thai belief, ghosts often appear in rural areas such as the ghosts Pop and Krasu. They are can reside in a place related to death such as an old cemetery or home as seen in “Rong Ram Phi”. All the action took place in Naruebalbureerak Mansion, so the ghost of Khun Luang, as well as his power, were restricted to the mansion. Moreover, his power was restrained by Buddhist faith. When the Buddhist statue, "Chiang San", was brought into the house, Khun Luang's area was confined to a hidden room where he kept his corpse.
In “Wieng Roi Dao”, Wieng Kaew was restricted to the small "Wieng Roi Dao House", made for her and her daughter land ocated within the area of the mansion. So when Wieng Kaew was killed, her soul was confined to this small house until she was released by Roi Dao.
**Figure 4.143** The Appearance in Restricted Area and Non-Restricted Area in Wieng Roi Dao
2) Rural Area and Urban Areas

The appearance of ghosts in rural areas according to ancient Thai beliefs can be found in a house, neighborhood, temple or place of death. For example, in “Ruen Kalong”, Kalong, who was drowned, as human always stayed at her house, rice field, lotus pond, or temple. After her death, her power of love gave her a solid human body so she continued to go to the same places.

Over time, ghosts in this modern era are able to appear virtually anywhere. Ghosts have become more urban and appear in a mist or solid form. For instance, the ghost Anon in “Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai”, was a city-like ghost, since he lived in the city where new technologies are found. Therefore his appearance varied more than that of Kalong, a village ghost.
Figure 4.145 The Appearance in Rural Area and City Area in Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nai

3) Places in the Past and Present.

Ghosts can appear in any place that exists in the past or place present together with human characters. They are seen to be able to cross into the world of living. In other words, ghosts the past did not have such supernatural abilities as those now. In “Parp Arthun”, the ghost of Khun Prayong was able to appear in the
past and present, but she could only use her power to control humans when she appeared in the present.

**Figure 4.146** The Appearance in the Place in the Past and in the Present in Parp Arthan

From the research of television Thai ghost soap operas, it seems that ghosts in traditional Thai soap operas may succumb to some restrictions such as time of day. Moreover, they are often restricted to an area related to death. However, the ghosts that exist in contemporary time can appear anywhere. Consequently, past beliefs must be adjusted fit changes in society. Therefore, the ghosts in present time have more power than those of the past. They can go anywhere they want, and not worry about dangerous areas such as a temple. Furthermore, the contemporary ghosts are shown to be able to haunt anyone, anywhere and anytime.
CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS OF CONSTRUCTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF MEANINGS OF GHOSTS IN THAI TV SOAP OPERAS

The analysis of the narrative composition according to narratology focusing on the story and structure discussed in Chapter 4 leads to the analysis of the construction and transformation of meanings of ghosts in television soap operas based on the narratives structure and presentation style, which now follows.

5.1 Construction of Meaning in Context and Structure

5.1.1 The Construction of the Meaning of Ghosts through Genre

Television soap operas are considered as an entertainment that has been popular among the Thai populace for nearly 50 years. Watching soap operas helps people to relax as well as inspires them. Therefore, when soap operas are combined with the mysterious tales such as ghost stories, these TV soap operas appear to become even more popular as seen in the broadcasting schedule of ghost soap operas up till present time (See Table 5.1). As a result, the ghost genre in TV soap operas, which is about mystery, excitement and horror, has kept its popularity all this time. At the same time, this genre leads to the construction of meaning of ghosts. Therefore, ghost characters are created differently, depending on imagination. All in all, the genre is important to the producer who uses it to convey meanings of ghosts in accordance with their own and the audiences’ expectations.
Genre is a French word referring to characteristics; here, is used to categorize soap opera stories. The ghost soap opera is considered a fictional television drama in serial format. There are around 15-30 episodes telling a continuing narrative.

![Genre Diagram]

**Figure 5.1** Thai Soap Opera’s Genre

**Source:** Thiran Anawajsiriwong, 2012.

Studying the synopses of twelve soap operas, all are categorized in the ghost genre since the lead and or supporting characters are ghosts., while the narratives are about ghosts, souls, magic, supernatural powers with some form of dimensional connection between the ghosts and humans, which is considered exciting, terrifying or dreadful. Moreover, after watching these twelve soap operas, it was found that they were more a combination of genres as seen in the story, plot, mood and format. Details are as follows:
Table 5.1 The Combination of Genre in Ghost Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thai soap opera</th>
<th>Detective</th>
<th>Drama</th>
<th>Sci-Fi</th>
<th>Fantasy</th>
<th>Romantic</th>
<th>Comedy</th>
<th>Period</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tha Yard Asul</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srisa Marn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai</td>
<td>✓ , ✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susarn Khon Pen</td>
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<tr>
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<td>✓ ✓</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruen Kalong</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wieng Roi Dao</td>
<td>✓ ✓ , ✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From the above table, the combination of genres in Thai ghost soap operas is related to ghosts, monsters, souls, magic, mystery, horror and the dimensional connection between ghosts and humans. Apart from being scary, the narrative of ghost story can also be considered a drama, romantic, detective and/or action to make the story more interesting and arouse audience appeal. Genre can determine the theme, mood and tone of a story as well as its construction. For example, in a soap opera that combines comedy, the ghosts will appear to be humanlike in both appearance and manner, being nice and helpful. Furthermore, these ghosts will not have supernatural power that help or harm humans. The ghosts in this combined genre can only float or have simple power that can be used to help humans. Therefore, the audience for a ghost comedy will feel that the ghosts are kind, friendly and not dangerous.
Comedy and ghost genres can be combined with other genres as well, such as a romantic-horror ghost soap opera. In this genre, the ghosts will appear human when they are in love, but when they are threatened by an exorcist or villain who wants to destroy their love, the ghosts will appear to be horrific. Meanwhile, comedy will be used to reduce the tension of the story as well as fear in the audience.

There are other several combinations of genres that Thai soap operas have adopted, some from Western culture. The West is known for its series and movies about crime and investigation, which can be applied to Thai soap operas that deal with finding out the mysteries or secrets behind a ghost character. This curiosity leads to the combined ghost-detective genre in Thai ghost soap operas. From the research, there were seven soap operas in which police characters served as investigators in finding the truth, while in other soap operas, the lead characters did this themselves.

It can be said that genre helps direct the audience towards the content, storyline and character of the ghosts in Thai soap operas. It also helps to draw audience attention develop emotion which eventually leads to the understanding of the soap opera content. Moreover, the combination of genres helps arouse audience emotion as well as understanding of the characters’ emotions, as part of the construction of meaning of ghosts. The emotions that occur in ghost soap operas are as follows:

5.1.1.1 Fear

Fear is a major emotion found in the ghost soap opera genre. Belief in ghosts will cause the audience to feel fear. Fear is an emotion that is inseparable from TV ghost soap operas. The word “ghost” always comes up with fear throughout Thai history. The audience realizes that when they choose to watch a ghost soap opera, fear is awaiting and unpredictable because they all believe that ghosts represent otherness. They are different from humans and can have supernatural power that can harm humans. Therefore, when ghosts are created as a character in a ghost soap opera, the belief will make the audience fear the ghost even more. Overall, ghosts are almost always scary to humans, regardless their appearance.
5.1.1.2 Humor

Humor is an emotion that occurs when adding comedy, jokes or a funny prank to the ghost soap opera, whether it be between ghosts and humans, or humans and humans. Humor helps draw audience attention and reduce the degree of horror of the tale. There are several types of humor that can be added to the ghost soap opera depending on the story’s objectives. Normally, one character in the story will serve as the comedian.

5.1.1.3 Mystery / Excitement

Mystery and excitement are constructed in ghost soap operas to emphasize that ghosts cannot be clearly identified (blur) and there is no concrete proof to explain about ghosts. Therefore, people are always looking for the truth about ghosts. Ghosts are always related to conflicts that need to be investigated and solved. This increase the appeal for audiences solve the mystery since they are curious to know the truth about the characters and situations in the story.

5.1.1.4 Love and Friendship

These two emotions cause the audience to feel the relationship between lovers or friends that occurs most often between a ghost and a human. However, whether love or friendship, the audience will assume that the relationship will never work out. This is due to the belief that ghosts cannot live together with humans, so the ghost will be eliminated or disappear at the end.

As a result, there are combinations of genres that lead to various kinds of format and mood. These different genres will relate to the concept of each story. At the same time, they help to guide the development of the ghost characters, their appearance and inner mind, to create audience appeal, which leads to better understanding of the narrative. However, the various combinations do not completely alter the definition of ghost. They only create more diversity of emotions and feelings in the audience while watching a ghost soap opera. In short, the ghost definition is constructed through the narrative structure of the TV ghost soap opera.
Figure 5.2 The Narrative Structure of Thai Ghosts Soap Opera

1. Exposition
   - Ghost must contain special abilities.
   - Ghost must encounter with severe tragedy
   - Ghost must be made to be powerful with supernatural abilities

From the diagram of the narratives structure of TV ghost soap opera (Figure 5.2), plot exposition is used to introduce the audience to the story. In TV soap operas, a longer period of time is often used to introduce the story than in films. Therefore, most ghost soap operas in which the ghost is the leading character will begin with the character being human. Then, the character is killed, murdered or bullied, finally transforming into a ghost. In the plot exposition, it was found that the way the ghosts are created makes them become unnaturally different from humans. For example, ghosts will contain supernatural powers. These powers can be obtained when the character is still human and then maintained after death. Furthermore, other special characteristics that appear at the beginning of the story will make the audience realize that the ghost characters are different from humans since they float, fly, disappear or hypnotize

3. Climax
   Ghost hidden agenda is exposed

2. Rising action
   Human turns into ghost

4. Falling action
   Ghosts are unable to get or get what they want

5. Ending
   Ghost will lose its power and will be eliminated from this world.
   - In case of ghosts are invulnerable and undefeatable, the ghosts must have adopted themselves
Plot exposition also constructs the meaning of the ghost which can come from a severe tragedy. In most television ghost soap operas, a person is hurt, harmed or bullied by a person and then, eventually, becomes a ghost. This is done to create conflict as the victims will be enraged and want to seek revenge. Therefore, people often see ghosts as the victims who linger on earth to seek revenge or fulfill a dream not accomplished while they were still human.

A ghost is definitely different than a human. Human perspective is limited to this world, but a ghost’s perspective is beyond human limits. Therefore, ghosts can learn and experience things beyond human imagination. Humans will believe that ghosts are more powerful than humans. Consequently, ghosts are often introduced through rituals at the beginning of a story to empower them to appear greater than humans. Since humans cannot compete with ghosts, ghosts are sacred and can either help or harm humankind. Apart from tales, there are rituals that can make ghosts appear as a symbol of evil. All in all, the introduction of the ritual that empowers ghosts is considered as the first composition that leads to creating a meaning for ghosts as they are transformed from being human to being a ghost with powers.

After the introduction, the story will proceed towards rising action, which reveals the relationships between ghosts and humans. In other words, this is when the human characters will face the ghosts, but they may not realize that the characters are actually ghosts. The story could be about a ghost and human helping each other as friends or loved ones. These relations are actually similar to human relations, because ghosts were once human and still remain in the mortal world. However, ghost characters are created through imagination. Ghost stories cannot be proved, leaving people curious to know the truth.

During the plot exposition and rising action, ghosts have supernatural powers that do good or bad. However, at the climax, the ghost will be unable to obtain what they want and become more aggressive, so the human characters will no longer be able to tolerate the ghosts’ behavior. Each has to struggle to survive, so they both must confront each other. Only one can survive, and because ghosts are considered to have the “otherness” condition, they ultimately cannot live together with humans and will have to leave the mortal realm. Still, the climax is only about the confrontation, so whoever triumphs will be revealed later.
After the confrontation between the humans and ghosts in climax stage, the story moves to the stage where power is transferred. This stage is called falling action. Although, ghosts are more powerful than humans, they are unable to fulfill their vengeance, because only humans are righteousness in the mortal human world. Despite supernatural power, ghosts are unable to defeat humans. Ghosts will lose their power and be eliminated from this world. The ending stage will emphasize the elimination of the ghosts from the mortal world. Whether good or bad, these ghosts cannot keep on residing in the same place as humans.

In case ghosts appear invulnerable or undefeatable, they must adapt to live until humans find a way to defeat them. In the ending stage, there might be a clue leaving some doubt in the audience even after the end of the story. This leads to another construction of the meaning of ghosts that they are impossible to defeat. This type of ending usually occurs in soap operas where the ghost characters are extremely powerful, cruel and invulnerable.

5.1.2 Character Typology

Thai soap operas present different characteristics of ghost characters such as demographic, physical and mental as well as background/cause of death, conflict, subjugation and human thought and behavior. These are the factors that define ghosts in a human perspective. The construction of the meaning of ghosts through character typology can be constructed from three main following factors, as follows:

5.1.2.1 Construction of the Meaning of Ghosts through Appearance

Since ghosts are related to humans, their transformation will remain close to human. Their gender, age, social status and physical appearance will be similar to human. The difference is their special power that may let them alter their physical appearance such as a distorted face, dark or red eyes, the ability to vanish, float, fly, move things or hypnotize. These abilities are presented using special techniques such as computer graphics, make-up, costumes and sound to emphasize that these ghosts are no longer human.

5.1.2.2 Construction of the Meaning of Ghosts through Mental Characteristics
This is used to show whether the ghosts are good or evil. For the construction of the meaning of ghosts, it seems that being a good or bad ghost depends on the character’s past and cause of death. If it was an evil past, then the ghosts are likely to be evil, since their hearts are filled with hatred and rage. If it the ghost was originally a good person who met with a tragic death, it will usually start as a good ghost. This can be considered as another meaning of ghosts as good ghosts will help humans as is reflected in the Thai phrase, “ghosts protect the kind one”. Thus, opposite to this, bad ghosts will harm and haunt humankind, just to get even or get what they want. It can be said that ghosts have their own hidden agendas. Therefore, the reason that there are soap operas presenting both good and evil ghosts is to emphasize that the belief in ghosts still exists in Thai society. The construction of the good and bad ghosts helps the audience understand that if a person does good things, then good things will return to the person. If the person choses bad ways, then bad things will happen to this person as well, which reflects the Laws of Karma.

5.1.2.3 Construction of the Meaning of Ghosts through Opposition

People believe that ghosts are dead persons who now exist in an ‘otherness’ condition and should not live in the same world with humans. Consequently, Thai soap operas will have humans try to find ways to subjugate and eliminate the ghosts.

5.1.3 Theme

Thai TV ghost soap operas consist of situations, human and ghost characters. The producers want to present narratives that can be interpreted according to a point of view that will make the audience think, believe, imagine and understand the concept behind the story. Therefore, the definitions of ghosts are constructed through the reflection of a point of view at three levels: construction of the meanings of ghosts at the emotional level, intellectual level and mental level.
5.1.3.1 Construction of the Meanings of Ghosts at the Emotional Level

The meanings of ghosts will mainly be constructed through fear because society has chosen to believe that ghosts exist in spite of any proof. Thus, ghosts are formed through thought and imagination and refer to the dead; therefore, ghosts create fear.

5.1.3.2 Construction of the Meanings of Ghosts at the Intellectual Level

In Thai society, belief in ghosts has been passed from generation to generation. Therefore, TV ghost soap operas create different content and characters based on these beliefs. Technique used in creating TV ghost soap operas help the audience imagine the existence of ghosts as well as their ‘otherness’. Audiences will then use their intellectual abilities to learn why the ghosts in the narratives do not leave the world, but chose to stay and wander among humans. It may be due to the fact that the ghosts were unable to achieve their goal while alive or that they made mistakes in their human life which they want to fix as a ghost. The TV ghost soap operas are thought to create the final moment of the ghost characters, so that viewers will learn how to deal with it and prepare for the ending of their life, since everyone will eventually die.

5.1.3.3 Construction of the Meanings of Ghosts at the Mental Level

Apart from scaring the audience, the origin of ghost dramas that appear on television can benefit people in other ways. For example, ghosts are still controlled by the Laws of Karma, which is a strong belief in Thai culture. The Laws of Karma are based on cause and effect, the result of a person’s action. If the person does good then they will receive good, “As you sow, so shall you reap.” What happens to the ghosts who violate the Laws of Karma and seek revenge creates the conflict that allows the ghosts to exist longer in the mortal world. However, these ghost characters cannot overcome the fact that they are still residing in the mortal world where humans still rule. Therefore, the ghosts will be confined to the cycle of karma, unable to leave and rest in peace. Instead, they will be hunted, subjugated and eliminated from this world by humans who are also ruled by the Laws of Karma cycle. All told, the ghosts serve as symbols of suffering, as they suffer from desire and needs and choose to neglect their reality. If the audience is able to absorb and understand this fact,
then they will realize that being a ghost can lead to finding out the greatest meaning of life.

Although, the objectives of each soap opera can be divided into three levels: emotional, intellectual and mental, while the theme cannot be divided it must be perceived, considered and understood. When the audience watches a soap opera, they become emotionally involved, especially in a ghost soap opera. The audience will first begin to fear, then sadden and eventually follow the love and friendship portrayed, which will depend on the genre of each soap opera. When emotion is aroused, it will drive the audience to pay closer attention to find out the reason for the action. This leads the audience to become intellectually involved. This level gives the audience an opportunity to learn and connect with their own experiences and realize that this may happen in their real life, so they should be prepared. Once the audience is able to understand the deep meaning of the story and understand the theme, then they will be able to understand life beyond human satisfaction.

5.1.4 Ideology and Values about Ghosts

The belief that ghosts truly exist, are horrifying, have the ‘otherness’ condition and contain supernatural powers is all from a human perspective. In spite of changes in Thai society, belief in ghosts still exists. As a result, the same themes are repeatedly presented to emphasize the meanings of ghosts from a human perspective, which is that no one wants to live with ghosts and ghosts do not deserve to live with humans. Ghosts are restricted to certain places, so humans can find ways to eliminate them from this world. Moreover, television soap operas are considered the most powerful media to adopt this personal belief based on ideology and values. Therefore, TV ghost soap operas are produced to emphasize a belief in ghosts hidden in people’s minds. This ideology is not hidden in “the creativity of TV soap operas’ language” or “invention”, but it is reproduced through “the structure of the dead language” or the “convention” of TV soap operas.

All twelve soap operas have harmoniously implanted the belief in ghosts within the story. Although, the ghost story is considered absurd and cannot be proved, the ghost soap opera has played its role in maintaining the belief in ghosts in Thai society. Both the acting and special techniques help the story become more realistic.
To be able to see ghosts existing on a TV screen emphasizes the belief in the existence of ghosts in reality. Whether they can be seen, felt or touched will depend on the imagination of the producer and audience, and the relation between what is perceived and imagined is the same.

Each soap opera has its role in reflecting ideologies. The ideologies that relate to belief in can be described, as follows:

5.1.4.1 Ghosts are Dreadful.
Not only do people believe that ghosts exist, they also believe that ghosts are different from humans. The difference can be defined from cause of death, physical appearance, power or abilities that do not apply to humans. The belief in a ghost’s dreadfulness will depend on an individual.

5.1.4.2 Ghosts are considered to have an ‘Otherness’ Condition.
The belief in ghosts is communicated through a ghost character that lets the audience identify and separate humans and ghosts. Although, humans find that ghosts are somehow similar to humans, they know that they are not human. At the same time a ghost has an identity that is does not belong to the mortal world. Even though ghosts can communicate with humans, they are still considered to have the ‘otherness’ condition, which makes them different from humans.

5.1.4.3 Ghosts are Related to Human.
It was found that ghost characters can be able to associate with people. The meaning of ghosts in terms of ghost soap operas refers to the dead. Still, ghosts can relate to humans in aspects such as love and friendship. Ghosts want to find out the truth because they were unable to know the truth before their death. They can be bound by something that prevents them from leaving the mortal. Ghosts can be funny, like humans. However, the way their relationships will be portrayed will depend on their intentions. As a result, there are will be good and bad ghosts in soap operas to show that ghosts can still circulate in Thai society. If the ghost is bad, then it will be punished according to the Laws of Karma, which are considered fair for both humans and ghosts. To be a good or bad ghost also reflects the character of the person when they were alive. In the mortal world, if a person does bad, then that person will be punished according to the law. However, if the law is unjust, there is still the Law of Karma that will punish the bad person.
5.1.4.4 Ghosts Contain Power but it is Limited.

Thai society believes that ghosts possess powers that humans do not have such as vanishing and transforming into dreadful form. However, the power of the ghosts is limited and still remains under Law of Karma. Despite this limited power, ghosts are still considered dreadful and do not deserve to exist alongside humans. Therefore, ghosts need to be eliminated from the mortal world. Although, it is not easy to defy ghosts, humans must try to find a way to eliminate them from this world so humans can live peacefully.

The belief in ghosts has existed in Thai culture for a very long time. Still, there has been some transformation on the meaning of ghosts in TV ghost soap operas to conform with developing. Therefore, contemporary ghost soap operas have also enhanced ghosts’ abilities. For example, ghosts are able to wander anywhere without the restrictions of place or time. In spite of these changes, the themes that represent ideologies remain the same as meanings expand. Therefore, the construction of the meanings of ghosts that appear in soap operas can be divided into two types. The first is constructed, reproduced and developed based on social values and ideologies. The second is transformed according to individual beliefs, which are different than long-standing beliefs of Thai society. It was found that the beliefs in ghosts carry social meaning as reproduced in “the convention of soap operas”. In the 12 ghost soap operas examined, belief in ghosts integrated into the narratives despite the fact that these beliefs are seen as superstitious and irrational as well as old fashioned.

Some characteristics related to ghosts in TV ghost soap operas appear to change according to narrative compositions. The meanings of ghosts have been expanded and transformed. If this transformation continues, more changes to values and ideologies will be seen. The table below describes the construction of the meanings of ghosts from the narrative composition of the 12 television soap operas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ghosts’ meaning from the narrative in Thai soap operas</th>
<th>Parp Arthun</th>
<th>Tha Yard Asul</th>
<th>Sriya Man</th>
<th>Gard Tae Chart</th>
<th>Pang Nai</th>
<th>Susarn Khun Pen</th>
<th>Phood Soo</th>
<th>Pound Samay</th>
<th>Susarn</th>
<th>Paesaan</th>
<th>Rong Ram Phi</th>
<th>Jong Kol King</th>
<th>Tren</th>
<th>Rak Boon</th>
<th>Ruon Khong</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Ghosts exist in the society.</td>
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<td>Ghosts are special and different from humans.</td>
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<td>Ghosts contain power and abilities that could help or harm humankind.</td>
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<td>Ghosts usually suffer from their tragic death</td>
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<td>Ghosts are related to human in both good and bad ways.</td>
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<td>Ghosts are considered to have the ‘otherness’ condition and cannot live among human.</td>
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<td>Ghosts are unpredictable.</td>
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<td>Ghosts can be anyone, any gender, any age and any social class.</td>
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<td>Ghosts are not accepted by any social institution.</td>
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<td>Ghosts must be disposed of.</td>
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<td>Ghosts delude themselves in their power and humans must warn them.</td>
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<td>Ghosts can be immortal, but in different form.</td>
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<td>Ghosts have personal abilities.</td>
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<td>Ghosts rely on humans to find out the truth.</td>
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<td>Ghosts can live among humankind.</td>
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<td>Ghosts exploit human for their own benefit.</td>
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</table>
Table 5.3 The Transformation of the Meaning of Ghosts through TV Soap Opera Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The ghosts’ meaning that appears repeatedly</th>
<th>The ghosts’ meaning that is transformed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Ghosts exist in the society.</td>
<td>- Ghosts do not have personal abilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ghosts are special and different from human.</td>
<td>- Ghosts rely on human to find out the truth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ghosts contain power and abilities that could help or harm humankind.</td>
<td>- Ghosts can live among humankind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ghosts usually suffer from their tragic death</td>
<td>- Ghosts exploit human for their own benefit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ghosts are dreadful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ghosts are related to human in both good and bad ways.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ghosts are considered to have the ‘otherness’ condition and cannot live among humans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ghosts are unpredictable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ghosts can be anyone, any gender, any age and any social class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ghosts are not accepted by any social institution.</td>
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<td>- Ghosts must be disposed of.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ghosts delude themselves in their power and humans must warn them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ghosts can be immortal, but in different form.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Convention**

**Invention**

From the above table, the right side is the ghost’s meaning that appeared repeatedly. This part is constructed, reproduced and developed in “the convention of soap operas” into social values and ideologies to carry the social meaning. On the other side of the table, is transformed according to the individual beliefs which destroy long-standing beliefs of the society. These new ghosts’ meaning is a result of the changing language structure, which can be described as “the creation of soap opera language,” thus being referred to as ‘the invention.’ It is to gradually replace the old beliefs with the new one by using various kind of compositions and method of narration through discourse.
5.2 The Transformation of Ghosts in TV Soap Opera through Discourse

When focusing on “transformation”, it has been found that whatever can be transformed means that something has been changed or altered from its original state. Regardless of how far the change is, it still relies on the previous meaning. This also applies to TV ghost soap operas in which the meanings of ghost are transformed through various compositions and method, as follows:

5.2.1 Use of Intertextuality

At present, there is no such thing as an original idea. A text is not unique, but will always lead to other texts. The meanings of ghosts can be constructed from the content and emotions of other soap operas, comprise structure, character and scene. For example, in the ghost soap opera, “Phood Sao Proud Sanay”, there were scenes that describe people running from and hiding from the ghost. This reminds the audience of a scene where a character runs away from a ghost and hides inside a storage jar in the faous,10-episode series, “Baan Phi Pop”.

Moreover, the ghost characters in TV ghost soap operas also relate to other soap operas, like “Reun Kalong”. This soap opera presents the theme of love between a human and a ghost, which is similar to the highest grossing film “Mae Nak Phra Khanhong” released in 2013. This was only seven months before the soap opera, “Reun Kalong” went on air. The two stories are related in terms of the characters “Kalong – Mae Nak” and “Pi Mak – Mai (Kalong’s lover)”, who were living together without knowing that their lovers were ghosts. Moreover, the humor of other characters found in” Reun Kalong” also similar to Pi Mak’s friend in “Pi Mak Phra Khanong”.

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5.2.2 Use of Pastiche

Pastiche refers to the technique that mixes images, sound or other media effects. There are four types of pastiche used in TV soap operas: the pastiche of other media, the pastiche of other stories, the pastiche of other structures and the pastiche of genres. For example, in “Phood Sao Proud Sanay”, the ghost and comedy genres are combined as seen in the scene where Nisa and her followers run from the ghost of Pop. While escaping they were asked questions about the Pop by the ghost itself. Their answers satisfied Pop, so the ghost did not harm them. The scene simply used the special technique to simulate the setting scene of the “Fan Pan Tae” TV show with Nisa being a show contestant, while the ghost of Pop Ghost is the host. This soap opera actually employed two types of Pastiche, of other media and other genres.
5.2.3 Used of Nostalgia

Thai soap operas are mostly about social values and stereotypes of people in the past that have almost disappeared nowadays. Therefore, the characters are created in TV soap operas to complete what is missing through dialogue, themes and soundtrack. For example, in the period soap operas, “Parp Arthun” and “Rong Ram Phi”, and the half-period soap opera, “Susarn Phu Tesuan”, the stories referred to the past of the present characters to show how they lived in a past life. These techniques allow the audience to experience the past, which is not possible in real life. The soap opera “Reun Kalong”, which is set about 100 years does this. The story took place in a farming village and was made to fit the era through music and background sounds.
5.2.4 Used of Discontinuity

In this case, a story is narrated in short sequences using flashback and disconnected scenes. However, some of the details that the audience may receive from the periodic narrations will clarify things to make it easier for the audience to follow the story, for example, in the soap opera, “Parp Arthun”, the narrative switches back and forth between the past and present.
5.2.5 Reproduction of TV Ghost Soap Operas

The truth is that there are no originals; all stories are being reproduced and transformed to meet with current trends. For instance, there are many ghost soap operas that are more terrifying remakes of previous versions. Although, in the reproduction of the TV ghost soap operas, the story and characteristic of the characters are changed somewhat, the basis meanings of the ghosts remain the same, dreadfulness, disgust, power and Otherness.
Figure 5.7 Reproduction of Dreadfulness, Disgust, Power and Otherness in TV Ghost Soap Operas

5.2.6 Implosion of Meaning

The story of each ghost soap opera is different with each story having its own culture. When combined, a new story is created and meaning can be transformed, leading to a constant expansion of new meanings. For example, the ghosts in ancient Thai belief were considered as protectors. If people paid respect to the ghosts, then the people would be rewarded. On the other hand, the meaning of ghosts includes superstition. As a result, ghosts evolved so good ghosts adapted other human traits that are not always virtuous.

5.2.7 Hyperreal

Hyperreal refers to a new condition where there is no arguing between what is real or not real. In TV ghost soap operas, there is no definite line that separates reality and imagination. Ghosts are created from one’s imagination, which is called “the truth beyond the truth”.
5.28 Simulation

Ghost soap operas enable an audience to experience and feel emotionally involved in situations without paying attention to the reality of the things. Therefore, ghost soap operas basically simulate real experience for the audience, both directly and indirectly, through problem solving and lifestyle.

Meaning is considered as knowledge perceived through the real world. The meanings of ghosts in TV soap operas are constructed through narratives broadcasted to the public through the language of television. Therefore, the meanings of ghosts meaning refer to any object, as ghosts have never been proven to exist. All in all, the meanings of ghosts in TV soap operas are constructed from Thai beliefs through narrative composition that eventually conveys the meanings of ghost on the TV screen.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Conclusion

The research “The Transformation of Meanings of Ghosts in Thai Soap Opera” aims to study and analyze the narration in TV soap opera, the construction of ghosts’ meaning and the transformation of ghost meaning. The conclusions of results are as follows:

6.1.1 Narratives Structure / Features

Table 6.1 The Conclusion of Plot Exposition in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narratives Structure</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plot exposition</td>
<td>1. Introducing character and place</td>
<td>The story begins the important place or important character which will gradually draw the audience attention to keep watching the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Introducing conflicts</td>
<td>This will gradually drive the audience emotion to become more curious about the conflict and to follow the story to the see if it is relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Introducing rituals/belief</td>
<td>It is about using the people beliefs as an opening of the story to draw the audience attention to see how related to story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6.2 The Conclusion of Racing Action in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narratives Structure</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Racing action</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Human turns into ghost</td>
<td>The relation shown here is about the cause of death or the death. The character who was human at the beginning will turn into ghost at this stage.</td>
<td>From the analysis of the rising action, it reveals that Human and ghosts are continually related not only by having human turned into ghost, but also by having human fulfilled their incomplete missions. The ghost characters are the result of human actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Haunted ghost: Fulfill the incomplete mission.</td>
<td>The character does not want to become a ghost, but they died and some were murdered. Therefore, they were aggressive and seek for vengeance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Haunted ghost: Ghost and human are in turn helping each other</td>
<td>The relationship between human and ghost become a love relationship and friendship.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6.3 The Conclusion of Climax in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narratives Structure</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Climax</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ghosts hidden agenda is exposed.</td>
<td>Human already knows that ghost is around and haunting them, but they do not know what is the ghost’s intention.</td>
<td>From the analysis of ghosts’ meaning in the climax stage, ghosts’ meaning is found through the encounter between human and ghost in order to overpower each other. Only one can survive and another must be destroyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The true identity of ghosts is exposed.</td>
<td>Human do not know that the person they are interactive with is actually a ghost. The truth is revealed here at the climax where the ghosts have no choice but to reveal the truth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 6.4 The Conclusion of Falling Action in Thai Soap Opera**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narratives Structure</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Falling action</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ghosts are unable to get what they want: Ghosts are being subjugated.</td>
<td>Ghosts are not willing to give up their goals. These subjugated ghosts will be strong and powerful which should easily overcome human but could not.</td>
<td>From the analysis of falling action, it is found that the power will be switching its core differently. If the ghosts’ requirements and actions were for the good for humankind, then the ghosts will get what they want. However, if the ghosts were to act for themselves, though they are powerful, still they will not get what they want such as the act of revenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ghosts are unable to get what they want: Ghosts surrender.</td>
<td>It is the final re-action of ghosts since they have done everything they could. This type of ghosts were once a nice, kind and reasonable human.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ghosts get what they want.</td>
<td>It shows that whatever action is done for kindness, for goodness, for others not for themselves, will allow one to get what they want.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6.5 The Conclusion of Ending in Thai Soap Opera**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narratives Structure</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ending</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The story ends with all the conflicts are solved.</td>
<td>The happy ending ghost soap opera regardless of the tragedy that occurred in the story.</td>
<td>From the analysis of ending, ending is used to depict the end of ghosts in human world. It shows that no matter how strong and powerful the ghosts are, they cannot keep dwelling on earth, both the good ghosts and the bad ghosts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The story ends leaving curiosuty.</td>
<td>The mystery ending which make the audience curious to know. It mostly happens with the immortal ghost characters who are very powerful and strong not a translucent ghosts and very hard to be subjugated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.2 Character Typology

**Table 6.6 Demographic Characteristic of Ghosts in Thai Soap Opera**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character typology</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic characteristic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td>This shows the thought about ghost gender power.</td>
<td>From the analysis of the demographic characteristic of ghost, is used to depict the ghosts related to human. Including human action and their thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>Age of ghosts appeared in the soap opera which shows that people related to ghosts and can become a ghost in any ages.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social class / Status</td>
<td>Social status of the ghost characters plays an important role on the thought process, problem solving and problem ending which are vary depending on the social status.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6.7 Physical Characteristic of Ghosts in Thai Soap Opera**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character typology</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical characteristic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Otherness</td>
<td>The condition that ghost soap opera creates for the audience to understand that ghosts are different. It can be divided into normal human form, dreadful form and spirit form.</td>
<td>The appearance that allows people to understand as a ghost. Physical characteristic will clearly state the different between ghost and human and also about the type of ghosts. The Otherness of ghosts’ character in Thai soap opera are varied as it is portrayed by human imagination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Categorizing ghosts</td>
<td>TV soap operas portray the ghost categories according to context as Thai Ghosts, Foreigner Ghosts and Local Ghosts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6.8 Background / Cause of Death of Ghosts in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character typology</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background / cause of death</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Murder</td>
<td>Human was murdered and become to ghost. This kind of ghosts want to take revenge and haunt whoever is the murderer.</td>
<td>From the analysis of background / cause of death, its show the origin of the ghost which may be the reason leading the ghost to be a good or evil ghost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Accident</td>
<td>Human was killed in accident. It is unpredictable and mostly occurred from carelessness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Suicide</td>
<td>The ghosts are likely to be ferocious if they commit suicide since they are hurt by others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6.9 Mental Characteristic of Ghosts in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character typology</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental characteristic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Good ghosts</td>
<td>Their characters are quite apparent that they were once a good person, when they died their spirits remain good and like to help their friends and lovers.</td>
<td>From the analysis of mental characteristic, background and the cause of death play an important role in the ghosts’ intention. Nevertheless, regardless of good or bad, it is found that ghosts always have their intentions related to human.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Evil ghosts</td>
<td>It usually refers to the ghosts with greatest anger. They may be the bad person who are full with anger, hatred and revenge since they were alive. They meant to pay back and kill regardless of right or wrong.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6.10 Subjugations’ Weapon of Ghosts in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character typology</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subjugations’ weapon</strong></td>
<td>The subjugations’ weapon reflects the human thought about ghosts as well.</td>
<td>From the analysis of subjugations’ weapon, ghosts are considered to be “otherness” that made them different from human. Consequence, people try to find these special ways to subjugate and expel ghosts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Priest or Religious’ Weapon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sorcerer’s Rituals and Weapons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Karma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-realization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Inheritable / Invulnerable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6.11 The Human Character in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character typology</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The human character</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Good person</td>
<td>It refers to the person who do not have any bad intention towards ghosts both before and after knowing the ghosts.</td>
<td>From the analysis of human character, there will be some human beings who sympathize with these kind of ghosts or subjugate them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Enemy / opposition</td>
<td>It will be consider from both the opposition who are the evil characters (Villains) and the characters who think different from the ghosts. These can refers to priests and religious person such as Buddhist monk, nun, Maha and prophets such as seer and fortuneteller.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.12 The Themes in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character typology</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Theme to be emotionally effected | - Ghost are dreadful
- Ghosts are embedded with rage
- Ghosts create loved and friendship | Soap opera’s role is to entertain the audience and satisfy human’s emotional, intellectual and mental needs. The ghost character in TV soap opera can satisfy those needs. |
| 2. Theme to be intellectually effected | - Ghosts truly exist
- Ghosts are otherness
- Ghosts are powerful | From the analysis of theme, the ghosts’ meaning that is portrayed through theme. It is from Human’s point of view towards ghosts which is also effecting the audience’s emotion, intellectual and mental respectively. |
| 3. Theme to be mentally effected | - Ghosts are in the Law of Karma | |

Table 6.13 Time and Place in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character typology</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Time | 1. Daytime and night time
2. Past time – Present time and Present time | Time and place are necessary for the support and the continuation of each situation and also used to indicate some definition of the production including the character’s action. |
| 2. Place | 1. The appearance in restricted area and non-restricted area.
2. The appearance in rural area and urban area.
3. The appearance in the place in the past and in the present. | This reflects the thought about ghosts that is related to the ghost’s power demonstration on earth and the belief in the ghost stories in Thai society. The major reason that ghosts can appear in the daytime is due to the change in the way of life of people nowadays. People begin to work more at night time rather than work at daytime only. |
Table 6.14 Iconography in Thai Soap Opera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character typology</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The construction of ghosts’ meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Visual</strong></td>
<td>- Camera angels: The angles have to be change and create several perspectives and used in coherence with the narration.</td>
<td>Camera angles in ghost soap opera always commonly give a sense of horror to surprise the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Size of shot: It is important to determine the size and change the angles, thus allowing the audience to see different viewpoints such as long shot, medium shot and close-up shot.</td>
<td>Each shot should have the connection with one another and the size of each shot is commonly used to convey the power of ghost or the emphasis of horror.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Lighting: Lighting is a significant factor which promotes image composition because light and shadow can arouse the feeling of the audience.</td>
<td>Ghost soap operas often set in the dark or dim light to evoke the sense of horror.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Editing: Editing is done by changing the shots from one to another in many different forms.</td>
<td>Cutting is common for ghost soap operas shot. It is quickly to evoke the feeling of surprise in haunted scenes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Special effects: Special effects are the using of effect which is not created on the computer screen.</td>
<td>Those are in regards to the ghost in order to create a dreadful and terrifying look.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Audio</strong></td>
<td>- Speech: Speech means the sound of each character.</td>
<td>The characteristic of ghost sound is different from human sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Sound effects: Including natural and artificial sound.</td>
<td>A signal that make the audience felt terrified and more excited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Music: Including score and original soundtrack.</td>
<td>It refer to understand the feelings of each character following their emotions and the tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Silent sound: No sounds for a while in the scene.</td>
<td>It refers to triggers excitement of what will happen next in the scene.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2 Discussion

The transformation of ghosts in Thai soap operas is the result of processes that construct the meanings of ghosts, for example, genre, plot, concepts, character, scenes, pacing, picture and sound. The ghost soap opera genre would always be linked to other genres, such as drama, romance, detective or action, in order to arouse audience appeal because genre plays such an important role in determining theme, mood and tone as well as the character of the ghosts, which is where the meanings of ghosts begins.

The construction of the meanings of ghosts through the narrative structure of soap operas consists of plot exposition, the primary component to convey the meaning. This will portray the transformation from a human being to a ghost with supernatural powers. When the ghosts appear in the mortal world, the interaction begins with the rising action to represent the supportive and vengeful relationship between the human beings and ghosts. This will lead to the climax when human beings and ghosts eventually confront and fight for their survival. However, no matter how hard the ghosts fight, ultimately, as seen during the falling action, they cannot defeat humans nor stay in the mortal world. The results of this research also prove that there is no soap opera that ends with ghosts remaining in the mortal world.

Character itself clearly constructs the meanings of ghosts. A ghost character will have a superficial personality and emotional qualities similar to those of ordinary people, because the plot generally connects ghosts with human beings. Nevertheless, ghosts are made to differ from human beings so the audience will realize that the character is not a human but a ghost. This can be done through special powers, like the ability to soar into the air or become transparent. When the ghosts take the form of a human body and act like a common person, they will be made to be different through the use of computerized special effects.

Furthermore, the construction of the meanings of ghosts in regards to emotional qualities may not be entirely different from those of human beings. There are both good and bad people and as ghosts are linked with human beings, they can also be good or bad. However, evil ghosts are filled with hatred that makes them even more vicious. Since humans are unable to suppress ghosts themselves, they rely on
social institutions to suppress the vicious ghosts. For good ghosts, their good deeds will make it so they will rest in peace and reincarnate as good human.

The meanings of ghosts in Thai ghost soap operas can be both positive and negative, depending on the narrative as well as the social and cultural contexts in the story’s particular period of time. For example, ghosts in the Sukhothai period were respected and worshipped, as they represented holy spirits that protected and maintained the stability of the kingdom.

As time passed, many beliefs and thought started to expand in the Thai Kingdom. One came from the introduction of Brahman ideology, which had an influence on beliefs in ghosts as did Buddhism. Consequently, there were three major beliefs in Thailand, animistic, Brahman and Buddhist. However, when science emerged, it revolutionized beliefs. This created a critical turning point for “ghost religion”. While, in the past, ghosts were recognized as holy spirits, now, they were perceived as the souls of the dead, denoting negative meanings. For example, “ghosts consist of supernatural power,” “ghosts can help or harm humans,” “ghosts are horrifying,” “ghosts are regarded as the otherness,” “ghosts are unable to live with humans and have to be disposed of one way or another,” and “ghosts are not accepted by social institutions.” All these meanings were constructed through opposition to social institutions from time to time through media presentations.

As the meanings of ghosts are now constructed by the media, the belief in ghosts still exists. Still, it is questioned by some members of Thai society. As time goes by, knowledge used to explain the meanings of ghosts have changed. In science, ghosts are denied and possibly through of as shapeless forms of energy. This meaning is parallel with the Buddhist though and conventional medicine, which says that death when major organs of the body stop working. Meanwhile in Buddhism, the soul travels out of the body after death and becomes formless.

Many explanations for ghosts’ come from different social institutions. In Buddhism, ghosts are merely a soul or shapeless form of energy. Science has also proven that ghosts are forms of energy that are harmless to humans. Therefore, the construction of the meanings of ghosts in soap operas is another type of social structure with the power to to create new meanings for the society. The media, particularly television, plays a role in determining the meanings of ghosts, particularly
through soap operas that present old and new concepts that society can choose to accept or not. Thus, the answer to the question: “What are ghosts?” is clearly explained by the construction of ghost characters presented in soap operas.

Therefore, ghosts can have different meanings in soap operas than those of many institutions. They appear on television screens with powers that can bless or harm humans. Moreover, some particular actions portrayed in soap operas can contradict other ideologies. For example, police officers in a ghost soap opera won’t be able to catch an evil ghost, but they may be able to help others, including a ghost, to catch a human criminal. Moreover, conventional medicine in ghost soap operas is presented to help patients recover from diseases or be reborn after death, which is what is believed by many in real life as well. This was the case when Por Tridsadee, a Thai famous actor who was hospitalized and later died after suffering from the dengue fever. He received conventional medical treatment while many people prayed, meditated, made merit and even ordained in the hopes this would help him survive. Furthermore, there are the people who claim themselves that they are able to see their past lives and karma, even karmic entities, or ghosts that have to be conquered by religious practice, possibly ordination.

Religion and ghosts are considered traditional beliefs that confront each other in many ghost soap operas. As Buddhism promotes morality, any person who breaks the discipline and misbehaves should be taught a lesson. Ghosts are often considered who break disciplines, which is reflected by them remaining in the mortal world after their death. Consequently, ghosts have to be cleansed by a religious person. This is how religion can subjugate ghosts. This conflict between ghosts and religion in Thai soap operas is considered as a fight of social powers. Since Thais became Buddhist, the belief in ghosts has decreased. This research found that in all twelve soap operas, none of the ghosts were able to defeat monks. This reflects the traditional belief that ghosts should be afraid of monks and the virtues of the Buddha despite the transformation of ghosts.

Soap operas uses more special techniques than other types of media such as technology to create images and sound that will draw audience attention. Meanwhile, the content presented will be based upon both fiction and non-fiction stories, similar to the audience’s daily lives. Consequently, the soap operas can draw audience
attention, especially those who believe in ghosts. The construction of the meanings of ghosts through the TV ghost soap opera narratives can be defined as constructing an imagined reality where ghosts are defined by society and, thus, can take on various forms depending on the beliefs of individuals and Thai society. To summarize, ghosts in Thai ghost soap operas convey a myth that represents horror, power and ‘otherness’ which fall under the Laws of Karma.

The construction of meaning is the result of signs and meanings identified by society. It substitutes social meanings for feelings, attitudes and values and are conveyed through communication. The construction of a meaning consists of signs, codes and cultures. Meanings, therefore, do not reflect reality but a perception created through these compositions. After receiving these meaning repeatedly, they develop into strong social values and ideologies.

Therefore, the construction of the meanings of ghosts that are presented in soap operas can be divided into two parts. The first constructs, reproduces and then develops social values and ideologies. The second is the transformation of meanings according to individual beliefs. It has been found that beliefs in ghosts are reproduced in “the convention of soap operas”. In the twelve ghost soap operas, beliefs in ghosts were well integrated into the story despite the fact that these beliefs are seen as superstitious and irrational by many. Ghost soap operas convey social beliefs and values through the presentation supported by the special effects employed by the director who has his own beliefs and visions. These factors emphasize the fact that ghosts might be real. The ability to see or sense their appearance depends upon the imagination of both the director and the audience.

Ghost soap operas are produced based on human beliefs and imagination about ghosts in different forms. As a result, the construction of the meanings of ghosts requires different signs and codes, resulting a transformed meaning of ghost. The new meaning could be the result of changing language structure, which can be described as, “the creation of soap opera language,” through ‘invention’. These changes of signs and codes also has an impact on the meanings of ghosts in soap operas as new one can gradually replace the old beliefs. For example, a ghost without any magical power living and working with humans to find the truth can help humans as well as
themselves. This change is seen in the evolution of soap operas between 1999 to the present.

The process of the transformation of the meanings of ghosts is considered as the shaking up the ideal traditional belief of ghosts in Thai society. Therefore, Thai ghosts have been deconstructed and re-interpreted by the narrative process in TV soap operas while still related to human beings. It could be said that ghost - human relationships that have been transformed to allows humans to live with ghosts the same as they do with humans love can overcome everything, even death. This is in contrast to the traditional belief that ghosts cannot live with humans. However, in TV soap operas, ghosts do live with humans using postmodern narrative styles such as intertextuality and pastiche, which connect the content and emotions of the soap opera or media together through narrative structure, character development and the scenes. Additionally, it can be shown through discontinuity, using a subplot that can be inserted into the telling of the main story to create new meanings. Ghosts become the reality, and it becomes difficult to separate the real and non-real, creating what is called the “Hyperreal”. Thai TV ghost soap operas aim to present phenomena to the audience so they can experience situations without having to care about whether they are real or not through simulation. All these strategies are in the production of TV ghost soap operas. They bring old and original content and change it to fit an era. This process creates the transformation of the meaning of ghosts. Moreover, beliefs in ghosts come from the combination of culture, knowledge and beliefs with some ghosts becoming immortal with the help of advanced science. This reflects that society still hope science will find away to escape on death and become immortal. It also reflects that humans need to challenge nature and the Law of Karma.

Humans create soap operas to express their imagination. Modern innovative techniques have improved the appearance of through special effects and narrative composition. The ghosts will be different from humans, as they will be able to fly, be transparent and have the most frightening appearance. Through the use of innovative technologies producers can create ghosts from their imagination in all kinds of forms. Therefore, the belief in ghosts in Thai culture is continually portrayed in TV soap operas.
Realistic ghosts are created using innovative technologies. This can then lead to social myths developing beyond past beliefs in ghosts appearing different from humans. Still, people believe that ghosts have supernatural powers and, in some ways, remain inseparable from mankind. Ghosts exist as a form of power that lingers. This existence of power is reflected by those who believe in ghosts and follow Buddhist teachings, as seen in many rituals such as in funerals, oblations and requests for spirits to support their business.

Ghosts can take on different roles including spiritual anchor as shown in rituals associated with ghosts. This is especially true when science cannot provide an answer for the unknown. The mystery of ghosts can then respond to this need. Moreover, ghosts can be classified as good or evil to control others’ behavior. It is believed that good ghosts protect good people and punish those who are bad as reflected in the phrase, “ghosts protect the kind one.” The meanings of ghosts is constructed and reproduced to form social ideology that can be adopted by society.

Although, people are unable to identify what ghosts actually are. They never disrespect ghosts. Instead they regard ghosts as mysterious spirits that can help or harm humans. Mysteries make people aware that ghosts may exist. Even if the social context has changed, people continue to try to understand the meaning of ghosts. These meanings can help determine the narrative compositions. For this reason, the process of the constructing the meanings of ghosts through TV soap operas is a process that inherits and maintains values and ideologies concerning ghosts that exist in Thai society.

The construction of the meanings of ghosts in TV soap operas is a process that is generated from a collection of compositions consisting of signification, context, narrative structure, television techniques and technologies. It has become object to present the abstract concept that ghosts exist. They can be dreadful and have supernatural power. They represent an ‘Otherness’ but remain subject to the Laws of Karma. If these meanings of ghosts are challenged, then patterns may be altered and transformed. Since any meaning can be generated through a construction system, the ultimate meaning will become a matter of “entertainment”. In the other words, ghosts and the meanings of ghosts in the future will be generated in new ways currently beyond human expectations.
6.3 Recommendation from the Research:

6.3.1 Recommendation for Agenda Setting: Belief is a crucial cultural asset of society. The belief in ghosts has been rooted in Thai society for ages. The belief of mystical power is used as a tool to support human activities such as solving problem, giving hope and discovering mystical power. While though the beliefs in ghosts have been transformed, many still adhere to these beliefs and ignore knowledge. Thus, the beliefs remain a force that drives people to succeed. Mass media is a social institution that has the ability to reproduce broadcast phenomena that can affect society. Whether these phenomena will be useful or not depends on what and how the mass media chooses to present it. Therefore, mass media has great impact and influence on an individual’s beliefs which can guide them in the way they live.

6.3.2 Academic Recommendation of Mass Communications: Everything in this world is constructed to be more understandable using human perception. It is society that agrees to meanings. If society’s agreement changes, the meanings will also change. The phenomena of these transformations occur through language agreements. The term “language” here doesn’t specify only verbal or written languages, but also includes the nonverbal. To understand the meaning of something, it is necessary to construct a source of concepts and understandings of everything related to what already exists through belief. This belief is the asset that develops meanings and radical understandings of any phenomena.

Changes in science have brought changes in beliefs and reasoning, until they can provide a better explanation for everything. From the beliefs man has constructed using concepts, strong beliefs can be explained. These explanations are used to establish beliefs as knowledge through the communication construction process. This process must be creditable to communicate more widely. Consequently, the mass media have a role to expand beliefs and their creditability because of their potential to turn a reality into a hyperreality. Therefore, in postmodern belief, ghosts in the media are able to be more that they used to be as well as different, depending on a
producer’s imagination. Even if their imagination is not very innovative, in developing a newly invented ghost, intertextuality and implosion of meaning will help the meanings of ghosts to exist for ages, as it will possibly be redefined. Then, when these new innovations of thoughts are broadcast via mass media repeatedly, they can transform the meanings of ghosts and their role in society. The proves that true meanings are constructed by language tools. However, when realizing that everything portrayed is unreal, this could trigger society’s members to ignore and abandon beliefs of the past. For this reason, everyone has to think different and be courage to deconstruct negative original meanings, and then take part in constructing positive meanings for society.

6.3.3 Recommendation for Mass Media: People in Thai society have their own knowledge and beliefs that form culture. Mass media’s responsibility should maintain and support the culture. It should not only present cultural phenomena but with logical principles, because mass media’s messages are constructed through their point of view. Therefore, mass media can control the development of meanings for Thai society. If the ghost definitions are constructed with symbols that are terrifying, disgusting and evil the audience will have these meanings implanted. It must be remembered that ghosts can also consist of goodness and positive values that can help mankind. In brief, if the patterns for presenting ghost stories are transformed into a positive and creative form, the meanings of ghosts will also be positive. When mass media presents new ideas, people will review and analyze them. This will then lead to new positive thinking. If mass media can change the way to present a ghost story, the identity of Thai ghosts will also change creatively.

6.3.4 Recommendation for TV Soap Opera Producers: TV soap opera producers, especially of TV ghost soap operas, should present content related to ghosts in ways that allow the audience to learn about life. People live to learn from the experiences that occur in their life, whether they are happy or sad. The producers must think about how to manage both negative and positive emotions appropriately. The images of life-after-death in which the ghosts, as the main characters, suggest the audience that karma has an effect on the final period of person’s life can be
considered as a warning for them as to how they live. As ghost characters are portrayed opposing Buddha's grace or goodness, the audience usually believes that ghosts represent immoral behavior. This can be considered as dysfunction that persuades the audience not to act like these ghosts. All must remember that death is unavoidable. Running away from the truth is considered a form of suffering. The audience perceives the content but may interpret it in other ways, which can actually be a detriment to watching a television ghost soap opera. In short, television, especially TV soap operas, have the ability to persuade an audience to believe and appreciate the reality generated from a producer’s imagination. Therefore, they have to realize the roles of constructing the meaning of ghosts and communicating these in a creative way that is not nonsensical, ignorant or is aimed at just generating audience appeal. The ultimate purpose of a soap opera should be to improve the audience’s minds through ghost characters that help people better understand life.

6.4 Recommendation for the Next Research:

6.4.1 The Study for the Construction of Postmodern Meanings of Ghosts:
This research aimed to study only the redefinition of ghosts in TV soap operas during a specific period through the point of view that TV soap operas are a medium that constructs the meaning in the society. Further study on TV soap operas as the world moves from the analog to the digital age is recommended. The study should be about the process of the constructing meanings of ghosts and what strategies are employed, such as narratives structure, tactics, technologies and image and sound that used to emphasize the meanings of ghosts.

6.4.2 The Study on the Meanings of Ghosts in other Context: Previously, research was conducted about ghost story telling and the representing images of ghosts in film. Since film is considered the media that generates the best income in Thailand, especially films about ghosts, more studies should be done on the construction of the meanings of ghosts in film as well as television, as they attract different audience market groups. It is quite interesting to know how each audience group understand and interpret the meanings of ghost. Furthermore, at present, there
is still a lack of research about the connection between ghosts and consumer behaviors. The context will be quite interesting in both economic and marketing perspectives to determine if ghost stories can continue to generate enormous income.

6.4.3 The Study of TV Soap Operas Audiences: This research had as its aim the study of the construction of meaning in the context of TV ghost soap operas. However, the meanings created through this context are interpreted by each audience. Individual who believe in ghosts have different demographic characteristics that can affect their perspectives, attitudes and beliefs generated differently by watching TV ghost soap operas. Therefore, a deeper study of viewers TV soap operas would be beneficial for writers, producers and directors as well as those working in other media or products and services related to ghosts. This is because ghosts have become an important tool for creative industry that can have an impact on the market in terms of values and culture.
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Appendix A

12 Synopsis of Thai TV Ghost soap operas

1. Parp Arthun

Parp Arthun – Chedtha bought an ancient mansion, property of the Family from A-nongwadee’s mother. Chedtha meant to re-construct the building, but A-nongwadee, the last heiress of the Family, opposed his idea. She tried to persuade Chedtha by asking him to spend the night at the mansion. That night both Chedtha and A-nongwadee met with the Ancestor Ghost from the portrait in the mansion, Khun Prayong, in their dream. Khun Prayong made them recall their past life and realized their triangle love between Chao Khun (Chedtha), Khun Prayong and Mae Orn (A-nongwadee) in the past. Khun Prayong was so delight to meet Chao Khun once again
and tried every way to seduce the present Chao Khun to love her as in the past. However, Chedtha was able to resist her will. Therefore, Khun Prayong decided to use her last straw by locking up Chedtha as in the past. Anyhow, Chedtha’s true love towards A-nongwadee can eventually overcome Khun Prayong’s stubbornness throughout the century. Khun Prayong finally left along with her portrait being burnt down to ashes.
Tha Yard Asul – Khun Yai Worrnanard, an elegant lady who only looked like 40 years old but she was actually in her 80s came to live with her niece, Warint (Oui). Oui was targeted to be the heiress of Tha Yard Asul, but Khun Yai Worrnanard was not able to do so due to the Sacred Silver Dagger that Oui received from Sontad, her boyfriend. When strange things occurred in the house, Olarn, Oui’s father and Ratcharoj, her brother seek for the advices from many sorcerers, but all of them ended up dead because of Asul’s power. It was only the nun, Sang Boon, who was willing to subjugate the monster (Asul). She was certain that it was only the Sacred Silver Dagger can be used to defeat the monster and the person must be Sontad. Khun Yai Worrnanard tried every way to make Warint become the heiress of Tha Yard Asul. When it seemed too impossible to use Oui, Khun Yai Worrnanard turned to a new target which is her distant niece, Naiyanade. However, Sang Boon Nun was able to stop the inheritance ritual, so Khun Yai Worrnanard turned to Oui once again. This time Sontad was able to help Oui with the power of the Sacred Silver Dagger.
Moreover, Khun Yai Worrarnard’s soul was released from being hypnotized for 70 years by the help of A-rak, her true love who reincarnated. In the end, the Asul was defeated and was paid back by all the souls he killed.
Srisa Marn – Pilantha Wichienpat (Phee), a fine lady with strong psychic ability encounter a car accident which cut her head off. She was able to pick up her head and brought it home to Piti, her biological uncle who was the famous scientist and surgeon. Uncle Piti was able to attach her head back to her body and compound the scientific solution for soaking the body, but the solution cannot prevent the body from decaying. Phee found out the only way to preserve her body was drinking fresh blood, so she kept on finding victims for fresh blood. However, her Uncle Piti opposed the idea which led to a fight with Phee. Unfortunately, Phee’s body was soak in the acid from the fight, leaving only her brain behind. Phee wanted to live on with Sakkarn whom she admired but happened to be her cousin, Maew Meaw’s boyfriend. Phee demanded her Uncle Piti to make a surgery switching her brain with Maew Meaw, but Sakkarn was able to save Maew Meaw just in time and also destroyed Phee’s remaining brain. Anyhow, no one realized that Phee’s psychic mind still lingered around hoping for one day she can live once again.
Gerd Tae Chard Pang Nhai – Anon, a family guy was unfortunately killed in a robbery. His soul was still wandering around at the place where he died. Meanwhile, Anon helped Mutitha, a beautiful lady who was an insurance agent and was being harmed in that area. It turned out that Mutitha was able to communicate with Anon Ghost, so Anon asked for her help to take care of his family. While contacting with Anon, Mutitha encountered with her ex-boyfriend which upset her present boyfriend, Khedkhan. When Anon soul went to heaven, his good deeds granted him an Angel status. He was given a personal remote control which he used to help Mutitha many times but this led to his parol and missed the chance to be the Household Ghost at his wife house. In the same time, Pong, a friend of Mutitha, began to love Anon’s wife which really upset Anon. However, Anon came to realize that he was dead and his wife should be taken care by a nice person. Eventually he allowed Pong to love his wife and also said goodbye to the friendship with Mutitha. He left to where he belonged and finally reincarnated as Mutitha’s son.
Susarn Khon Pen – Laan Tom, a millionaire, was sick with unidentified disease. She would stop breathing out of sudden but managed to come back alive. One day Laan Tom was in a car accident and lost her conscious. The doctor said that she was dead but only her niece, Ausa, did not believe. Meanwhile Laan Tom soul left the body and found out that her husband, Chu Cheep was cheating on her since he was with Rod Sukhon. Ausa seeked for the doctor who was the father of Tharind, her boyfriend to cure Laan Tom. The doctor used ancient ritual together with acupuncture to wake up Laan Tom. When Laan Tom woke up, she rearrange her will and order everyone to always keep her body in the house in case her sickness occurred again. However, Chu Cheep wanted to live with Rod Sukhon, he planned to kill Laan Tom and succeeded. Due to the will, he had to kept Laan Tom corpse in the house. Still he and Rod Sukhon registered for their marriage to insult Laan Tom. Consequently, Laan Tom was very mad and haunted both Chu Cheep and Rod Sukhon in order for them to
repent. However, Chu Cheep went crazy and accidentally killed Rod Sukhon himself. Ausa decided to cremate Laan Tom body in order to end all the rages. Laan Tom appeared before she left the human world to bid Ausa farewell and left everything to Ausa.
Phut Sao Proud Sanay – Nisa, a struggle lady, dreamed of becoming an actress, but unfortunately lost her life. She then became the strayed ghost wandering around an abandoned shrine called Chao Mae Sabai Thong. There she was caught in a camera and became well known as the real holy Chao Mae Sabai Thong. Meanwhile, a huge soap opera production wanted to make a soap opera about Chao Mae Sabai Thong to catch with the flow. As same as Chanothai who believed that this was an opportunity to recover his modeling business by casting leading actress to be Sabai Thong Ghost. Nisa happened to be chosen for this role without no one knowing that she was a ghost and changed the name to Nonny. In order for Nisa to appear in human form, she must perform her power to help villagers who worshipped her at the shrine. Therefore, Chao Mae Sabai Thong Shrine became very famous in contrast to the Chinese sorcerer office. The sorcerer Jew demanded his followers to destroy the shrine, but Nisa Ghost came to protect it allowing sorcerer Jew to know the true identity of Nisa. He wanted to have Nisa Ghost as his subordinate, so he created a story that Chanothai were under serious karma and Nisa was the only one can help him. Nisa was caught in
black magic and turned into a bad ghost, but Chanothai was able to save her in time. He also found out that Nisa was a ghost. Nisa decided to leave the world to be reborn against Chinothai’s feeling. The time had passed for 30 years, Chinothai had become the owner of soap opera production and was remaking Chao Mae Sabai Thong soap opera. He met with an 18 years old girl named Nisa whom he had been waiting for.
Susarn Phu Tesuan – “Tripatrasul Necklace” was discovered by Terd Narong, an archeologist who brought it back to Nopasul who was the father of Nilpatra. Every time that Nilpatra wore this necklace, she acted strange. In the meantime, a mysterious billionaire named Ackhee appeared together with his secretary, Peri and tried to get close to Nilpatra. They informed Nilpatra that she was cursed with dark magic and needed to be cured at the Akoralai Kingdom. On the way to the place, Nilpatra was kidnapped by Kalajal, a mysterious guy who meant to kill her. However, Kalajak found out that Nilpatra was not the same as Nilpat, a greedy lady he knew from the ancient time, so he let Nilpatra free with Terd Narong. Terd Narong had forbidden Nilpatra to wear the necklace again since it will change her to Nilpat who was greedy in dark magic and also the lover of Phu Tesuan or Ackhee. While both of them tried to escape, Nilpatra wore the necklace, but pretended to still be Nilpatra to deceive Terd Narong. She then secretly left Terd Narong to find Phu Tesuan and was going to do the resurrection ritual. During the ritual, Nilpatra woke up to herself and
tried to stop the ritual, in the same time, Kalajak had come to rescue her. It was revealed that Kalajak was once the best friend and solders of Phu Tesuan. When he found out that Phu Tesuan was fond of his lover, Nilpat, he decided to give her up. However, when he knew the true personality of Nilpat, he decided to kill both of Phu Tesuan and Nilpat. He also killed himself in a ritual in order to become a soul that continuingly haunted Nilpat’s soul. Meanwhile, Phu Tesuan’s soul was resurrected by the power Thetripatrasul performed by Peri, his loyalty slave. However, when the ritual was broken, the legendary of Akoralai Kingdom and King Phu Tesuan was torn down, left behind only the pieces of Tripatrasul Necklace with it power.
**Rong Ram Phi** – Luang Naruebalbureerak, a fine executioner, was fond of Saraphee. He ordered Perm to bring Saraphee to his room. Saraphee hated Khun Luang so much and resists to sleep with him. Since Khun Luang loved her so much, he did not force her but he locked her up instead. Pan, one of Khun Luang’s slaves, pitied her, so he helped her escape. Khun Luang went out to find both of them, but accidentally got hurt, seriously injured. He left his final words to Perm ordering not to do any religious ritual for his corpse, but bury his in 7 abandoned cemeteries, then hide the corpse at his house in Banglamung. He also gave this house to Saraphee and Pan in his will in order to revenge both of them. However, the power of Chiang San Buddha brought into the house had prevented Khun Luang to do so. His soul was locked into the secret chamber for 10 years until Parinya, Saraphee’s son, graduated. He decided to have the house renovated into a hotel. He then removed Chiang San Buddha allowing Khun Luang Ghost to be free. Since then, many lives were murdered within the hotel by Khun Luang who made it look like Pan was the murderer. Pan was frantic and eventually committed suicide. Anyhow, Khun Luang’s main target was to revenge on Saraphee, but she died before he could do that. Therefore, Padthama, Saraphee’s daughter was unfortunately a victim of his rage. He kidnapped Padthama’s soul and
hid it. The only way to save her was to cremate Khun Luang’s corpse or to defeat him with the Slaughter Sword. Since there was no ways for the body to be found, the sword was the last option. Khun Luang was defeated and when his soul was about to dissolve, he was given forgiveness from all the souls he killed. He finally understand the power of forgiveness and eventually freed Padthama soul and left to pay for his karma.
9. Jong Kol King Tien

**Jong Kol King Tien** – Chao Bua Tien, 85 years old lady, was telling a story to her nephew about the miracle things happened to her life. She used to be call Tien Kanya, a young fine lady, but suffered from illness. She inherited a huge amount of fortune and lived with Sol, a boy whom her father adopted. Tien Kanya met with Up-phan and in love with him. Up-phan poisoned Tien Kanya. Tien Kanya also found out before she died that Up-phan was the nephew of Lamom and that his true intention was to use up all her money, so Up-phan pushed her from the stair, injured. She was taken to the hospital and died there. At that time, her soul was dragged into Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body, a high rank lady from the North, who encountered a car accident and was brought to the hospital as well. Tien Kanya woke up in Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s body whose personality was completely different from her. Meanwhile, Chao Bualawong was so sure that Tien Kanya was not Chao Bua Kam Kaew. Therefore, Tien Kanya told her the truth in which Chao Ya gave her a new name called Bua Tien and also let her know the secret of the elixir. When Chao Ya passed away, Chao Bua Tien hastily tried to find out about Up-phan and have him punished because Chao Bua Kam Kaew soul had come to ask for her body back. Anyhow, Chao Ya Bualawong soul did not allow Chao Bua Kam Kaew to do so. She wanted Chao Bua Kam Kaew to realize about life and become a nice person. Meanwhile, Chao Bua Tien took the
elixir and lived a long life allowing her to do more goodness to the world. Afterwards, she had a daughter with Sol, but her daughter was mean just like Chao Bua Kam Kaew and eventually met with her doom as well. Chao Bua Tien had been waiting for Chao Bua Kam Kaew’s return to give back everything. When she was 85 years old, she met with her adopted girl, Sri Kanda. Once she saw her, she knew all of sudden that Chao Bua Kam Kaew had returned.
10. Rak Boon

Rak Boon - Jetiya, a part-time embalmer of Niralai Company, received the Rak Boon Box from Uncle Tawee. The box had its secret that if the possessor of the box did 3 good deeds, the person will be granted a wish. The conditions were that the deeds must be done within one month, otherwise the possessor’s life will be taken and that the person cannot dispose the box unless the person was able to find the new possessor. In that time, Jetiya’s mother was in critical illness condition, so she was willing to take box. She then faced with lots of dead people begging for her help to find out about their death. Jetiya became devoted to the tasks she had together with the help from Lieutenant Nawach. When she asked her first wish from the box, her mother’s illness became miraculously much better. While the box was in her possession, she had to help the dead all the times, so she decided that she will stop asking for any wishes from the box. However, Lapin, Jetiya’s boyfriend was shot and seriously injured. Jetiya had no choices but to make a wish from the box. Anyhow, Jetiya realized that the box was making the most of the people by luring people to do
good deeds in return of good wish, causing the possessor became like a slave to the box. Therefore, Jetiya made a wish for the box to be destroyed, leading the box to send out Pran, evil in human form created from all the sins and desires of human kind. Jetiya found out that the box was created by the god of Death who initially created the box in the mean of making mankind realize the power of doing good deeds without nothing in return, but the human failed him, so he left the box on earth allowing Pran to be created from the desires of human. Pran then attacked Jetiya when she asked for the box to be destroyed. In that crisis, Jetiya met the god of Death herself who admired her courage to defy Pran. As a result, the god of Death granted Jetiya her life and the ability to see spirits to be able to continue the good deeds.
Ruen Kalong – Kalong, the prettiest girl in the village, was in love with Mai, but her mother, Mae Kloi did not want Mai to be her son-in-law because of his poverty. Meanwhile, Chote, a gangster and also son of the wealthy village chief proposed an idea to Mae Kloi to exchange the debts she had with Kalong. Mae Kloi agreed with the deal. However, Pudjeeb, Kalong’s best friend helped Kalong by paying all the debts for Mai Kloi and asking her to allow Mai to marry Kalong. Mai also tried to collect money, so he went for the boxing tournament. During Mai’s absent Chote tried to rape Kalong, but she resisted and fought back. Chote ordered his followers to murder Kalong and drown her at the lotus pond. Kalong woke up and tried to get out of the water to survive. She then kept on waiting for Mai to return. Once Mai returned with a huge amount of money, he asked Kalong to marry him. Chote was so surprise to find out that Kalong was alive. However, the truth was that Kalong’s body was still drowned under the lotus pond since that day. Kalong Ghost finally got married with Mai and they both live together as normal couple. Anyhow, Pudjeeb happened to
notice about Kalong. Meanwhile, Kalong tried to cover up her secret using the ghost ability allowing Pudjeeb to find out the truth. She then convinced Kalong to admit the truth that ghost cannot live with human, but Kalong refused and asked Pudjeeb not to tell anyone especially Mai. However, Pudjeeb did not want Kalong to commit anymore sin, she told Mai the truth. Mai was mad at Pudjeeb and harmed Pudjeeb severely. Anyhow, Mai found out the truth. The villager also tried to keep Mai from Kalong. Kalong was enraged at the villager and haunted the villager. Mai did not want Kalong to commit more sins, so he decided to live with Kalong once again in hoping that Kalong will calm down and accept the truth. Afterwards, when Kalong met with the monk on pilgrimage, she finally understood that the happiness was about letting go. Kalong finally allowed Mai to cremate her body so she could rest in peace. In the meantime. Mai decided to become a monk for the rest of his life as a merit for Kalong.
12. Wieng Roi Dao

Wieng Roi Dao - After Dilok and Chansai, foster parent of Roidao in England, passed away in a car accident, Roidao was told by the lawyer to go back to Thailand to be present at the reading of Pakorn’s Will who was her biological father. Roidao was disdained by the other wives of Pakorn as well as their children and Damrong, her grandfather because Pakorn loved her mother, his fourth wife, the most. The will was read and all his fortunes were passed on to the three wives of Pakorn. Wieng Kaew Ghost was severely enraged and aimed to punish whoever involved in this. That night Roidao dreamed of a lady holding a baby. Her conscious told her that the lady was her mother Wieng Kaew. Wieng Kaew came to Roidao and asked for her help. Roidao then saw Wieng Kaew drowned in the water, her neck, hand and ankle was bound by the chain. When Roidao woke up, she began to wonder how Wieng Kaew died. Roidao then discovered Wieng Roi Dao, an abandoned and mysterious place where she met Wieng Kaew Ghost. The ghost told her how she suffered from the magical confinement which Roidao felt sorry for her and eventually took out the
magical black cloth releasing Wieng Kaew Ghost. Afterwards, life after life was killed in Badintorn’s house. Wieng Kaew was almost able to fulfill her revenge, only thing left was to take back the eye of her daughter, the real Roidao, whose Meida received from the eye transplantation. Meida was actually the daughter of Dilok and Chansai and was the step sister of the real Roidao. Therefore, the eyes were the key why Meida or Roidao was able to contact with the mother of the real Roidao. Anyhow, before Wieng Kaew was able to harm Roidao, Paakorn’s monk appeared and taught Wieng Kaew about the power of organ donation and the power of letting go. Wieng Kaew finally came to her sense and allowed Meida to cremate her body together with the real Roidao in order to end everything and leave to the better world.
# BIOGRAPHY

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