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Picturing Femininity: Portraits of the Early Modern Siamese Women¹

EKSUDA SINGHALAMPONG

Abstract

This paper aims to analyse the construction of modern femininity through portraits of women in Thailand's patriarchal culture on the eve of the modern period. Prior to the mid-19th century, there were restrictions on the representation of royal individuals, especially women in the Siamese royal court, who were confined to their residence, hence avoiding the public gaze. The imported medium of portraiture eventually liberated the restricted condition of women in the royal court. This study will explain how portraiture presents and represents images of femininity and the gender roles of Siamese female nobility, especially Queen Saovabha Phongsri (hereafter referred to as Queen Saovabha), queen consort of King Chulalongkorn. The study will also suggest that portraiture allows us to explore Siamese modern femininity, as opposed to Siamese men's construction of masculinity. Portraits of women also show cross-cultural fashions associated with modern outdoor activities, reminiscent of the feminist ideal of the New Woman. Hence this paper also seeks to understand the mechanism of cross-cultural fashions, which suggests a form of empowerment by which the Siamese female elite began to establish their position in a changing world.

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Introduction

When the early visual images of Siamese women were circulated, they were reproduced in European travellers' journals, most particularly of Henri Mouhot, a French naturalist and explorer who visited Siam (now Thailand) in 1858 and made Bangkok the base for his Indochina expedition.² Mouhot's two-volume travel journal was first published in 1864, three years after the death of the author. His publications feature impressive photography-based engravings of Siamese women, both elites and commoners. The mid-19th century saw the dawn of photography in Thailand, thus this French publication³ offered the public a rare opportunity to gaze upon visual images of the Siamese female body, especially those of palace women, whose special circumstances will be further discussed at length.

Inherent in the visual images of Siamese women in Mouhot's posthumous publication was the issue of slightly obscured gender identity, essentially caused by Siamese unisex fashion. Like many visiting Westerners in Siam before him,⁴ Mouhot was puzzled by Siamese hairstyle and clothing, which seemed to bear no distinction between male and female:

les femmes portent le même toupet, mais leurs cheveux sont fins et tenus soigneusement. On regrette, à les voir, qu'elles les rasent impitoyablement dès leur naissance. Le costume des hommes et des femmes est peu compliqué: une pièce d'étoffe qu'ils relèvent par derrière, est leur unique vêtement. On lui donne indifféremment le nom de pagne ou de langouti. Les femmes portent, en outre, une écharpe d'une épaule à l'autre. Nous reconnaissons, du reste, volontiers, qu'ici, le type féminin, tant qu'il peut s'étayer de la jeunesse, est de beaucoup supérieur au type de l'homme et que, la finesse des traits à part, la Siamoise de douze à vingt ans a peu à envier aux modèles convenus de notre statuaire.

[The women wear the same style, but their hair is fine and carefully kept. It is regrettable to see that they shave them mercilessly from their birth. The costume of men and women is uncomplicated: their only garment is a piece of cloth that they wear on their lower body. It is interchangeably given the name loincloth or *langoti*. The women also wear a scarf from one shoulder to the other. Moreover, we readily acknowledge that here Siamese woman, as long as she can rely on her youth, is far superior to Siamese man. Apart from her fineness of features, a woman from twelve to twenty years of age has little to envy of the agreeable model of our statues.]⁵

Mouhot's account also heavily implies that the cropped hair of Siamese women did not coordinate with the Western idea of feminine beauty.

In his study on Thailand's same-sex and transgender cultures, Peter A. Jackson cites Westerners' confusion between the genders of Siamese men and women in the 19th century. This ambiguity of gender, or what Jackson describes as "the universal androgyny", was seen as an indication of the "barbarism of Siamese gender and sexuality" in the accounts of Westerners, along with the nakedness of the body and polygamy.⁶ The issue of gender thus found a place in the grand scheme of Siam's 'Quest for Civilisation'. This process, which was predominantly controlled by men of the ruling class, was equivalent to modernisation.⁷ Siamese male aristocrats' determination in pursuing modernity inevitably had an impact on Siamese women's gender roles, particularly on high-ranking women.

In response to 19th-century discussions of gender ambiguity in Siam, in this essay I will investigate how notions of modernity accompanied the colonial expansion over the Southeast Asian region, and how this colonisation restyled and redefined Siamese femininity through portraiture. In so doing, social norms and practices regarding polygamy as well as court etiquette will be brought into this study. As one of the Westernised modes of practice adopted by the Siamese elite, portraiture allowed Siamese female royalty and nobility to engage in a mode of self-fashioning. Here, I use the term modernisation and Westernisation interchangeably. As I have discussed elsewhere, Western aspiration underlaid Siam's machinations to achieve modernity.⁸ In the case of Siamese socio-cultural movements during the late 19th to early 20th centuries, modernisation and Westernisation were most often indistinguishable as many of Siam's modernising programmes followed Western models and were frequently supervised by European officials.

This study also explores a level of female agency in women's sartorial displays, as an active agent in dress politics. I argue that Siamese women at the court of King Chulalongkorn were also significant players in adopting Western fashions, especially their invention of the hybrid dress, to reconstruct their gender identity and a modernised visual image. This essay primarily focuses on Queen Saovabha's portraits, as her political role and status outshone those of King Chulalongkorn's other consorts due to her titles as the mother of the Crown Prince (the future King Vajiravudh) and the first female regent in the history of the Thai monarchy.⁹ Also, in order to underline the changing gender identity in visual representations of Siamese women, portraits of Queen Saovabha's predecessor, namely Queen Debsirindra, will be discussed immediately after this introduction.

FIGURE 1a: *The King and Queen of Siam*, drawn by M. Bocourt, from a photograph, 1863. Source: Henri Mouhot, *Travels in the Central Parts of Indo-China (Siam), Cambodia, and Laos: Vol. 1* (London: John Murray, 1864), <https://archive.org/details/travelsincentral01mouh> [accessed 1 Aug. 2017].

FIGURE 1b: *King Mongkut and Queen Debsirindra*, 1860. Courtesy of National Archives of Thailand.

Portraits of the Siamese Queen in a 'Traditional' Style

Changes in unclear gender identities in 19th-century Thailand operated under Siam's ideology of 'civilisation' and its aspiration to be a modern country. The royal court had always been the centre of this revolution. King Mongkut (r. 1851–68) had pioneered a number of innovative technologies from the West and introduced aspects of Western culture to his court, including photography and dress. Photographs show the king and his courtiers adopting Western military uniform for formal occasions, or at the very least, when posing for the camera; however, this was worn together with a Siamese *chong kraben* – จักรเยน.¹⁰ At this time, female clothing was still a traditional court dress. One such instance is a full-length photograph showing seated King Mongkut and Queen Debsirindra (born Princess Rampoei, 1834–61), which was reproduced as an engraving in Mouhot's travel journal (Figures 1a and 1b).

These images show Siamese monarchs in a sitting position, close to each other. However, their close proximity does not reflect the royal couple's

intimacy or familiarity. Rather, their postures are formal and conventional, thus emphasising the formality and tradition of the Siamese royal court. Such characteristics are emphasised by the Queen's traditional crop-cut hairstyle, as mentioned earlier, as well as her court dress comprising the '*saphak*', สะพัก or '*sabai*', สไบ (a long and narrow gold embroidered cloth that wraps around the torso and across one shoulder) and the '*phra phusa chep*'—พระภูษาจีบ (an ankle-length skirt that is pleated at the front). Her sartorial display is the opposite of her husband's (semi-) modern appearance. The king appears in his European military jacket, a Scottish cap and *chong kraben* with a pair of Siamese slippers, his sartorial statement demonstrating authority and the ability of men to become 'civilised'. Moreover, the projection of military dress on the male body also intensifies King Mongkut's royal power. European women's fashion might not have made its way successfully to the royal court of Siam in King Mongkut's reign yet, but Queen Debsirindra's traditional garment and hairstyle, as well as her very distinctive bare feet, embody the inferiority of the female gender role in the wider scheme of Siam's Western aspirations and modernisation.

Yet, the Queen's elegant traditional court dress presents her as an ideal woman of the highest rank of Siamese social class. The fact that she was the only one of King Mongkut's many consorts chosen to be photographed with him, and was seated in an equal position demonstrates her highest position in Siam's queenship as the Queen consort and the mother of the heir apparent, Prince Chulalongkorn (the future King Chulalongkorn). Interestingly, the king and queen's equal position in the portraits was a careful strategy in order to show Queen Debsirindra's rank as a major queen. More importantly, despite the fact that the king actually had 54 consorts and concubines, this visual representation was an attempt to satisfy the Western ideology of a monogamous family structure—a Western legal standard of marriage.¹¹

On the subject of Siam's polygamy, the Westerners in Siam often criticised this scandalous practice. One of them was Dr Dan Bradley, an American missionary and the editor of *The Bangkok Recorder*. Once King Mongkut countered Dr Bradley's criticism of polygamous marriage in the royal family by remarking, "[W]hen the Recorder shall have dissuaded princes and noblemen from offering their daughters to the king as concubines, the king will cease to receive contributions of women in that capacity".¹² Although his polygamous marriages were ongoing, King Mongkut had always maintained a facade of faux monogamy throughout his reign to appeal to the West, by sending double portrait photographs of himself with Queen Debsirindra as diplomatic gifts to foreign heads of state, including the President of the United States in 1856. After the Queen died in 1861, King Mongkut did not

replace her as Siam's highest-ranking queen (in Thai อัครมเหสี, *akkhara mahesi*) with one of his other consorts, an act of a faithful husband.

“Elephant's Hind Legs”

The photograph discussed above clearly indicates that Siamese women, even those of the highest ranks, had not yet participated in the sartorial modernisation scheme. The photograph also reflected the position of Siamese women in the family. As an old Thai proverb went: “A husband is the elephant's front legs, a wife is the elephant's hind legs”, men were considered as leaders and women as their followers.¹³ As Siamese palace law and court traditions dictate, women in the royal court would have to live and remain in the restricted ‘female-only’ area of the Grand Palace called ‘*Khet Phraratchathan Chan Nai*’, เขตพระราชฐานชั้นใน (Inner Court)¹⁴ throughout their lives.¹⁵ Thus these women were unofficially called ‘*nang ham*’, นางห้าม (forbidden woman) or ‘*nang nai*’, นางใน (women living in the Inner Court). Also, very much like royal courts elsewhere, the centre of power was in the hands of the king. The expression ‘elephant's hind legs’ was thus an apt description of the lives of these forbidden women.¹⁶ The Inner Court was essentially a female domain, yet it was laid within the Grand Palace's patriarchal structure. Although the queen might have played the role of its leader, it was actually the king who ultimately ruled by proxy.

It is worth mentioning that the sheltered life of the women in the royal court was vividly described in Anna Leonowens' renowned work, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court*. The book recalls her time as an English tutor for King Mongkut's children and wives.¹⁷ It was published approximately ten years after her departure from Bangkok. The book had first introduced visual representations of the lives of Siamese women in the royal court to outsiders, especially to American readers.¹⁸ It was also during the mid-19th century that photography had become a new sensation for the Siamese elite; it was, more importantly, the beginning of a new era for visual representations of women.

The early photography of Queen Debsirindra (discussed above) implies the male dominance of Siam's patriarchal culture on the eve of the modern period (the mid-19th century). Such photographs were also an object of the male gaze—through and for the eyes of Westerners—during the early 1860s. Despite King Mongkut's efforts in representing his visual image with only his major queen in official diplomatic gifts, the accounts of Westerners such as Mouhot and Leonowens chose to romanticise and dramatise the lives of Siamese women in the royal court as a ‘harem’, either through text or images.

Portraiture was in high demand in the royal court and among the upper classes of Bangkok in the reign of King Mongkut's son, King Chulalongkorn (r. 1868–1910). This mode of self-representation was enthusiastically embraced by Siamese men and was in turn bestowed upon Siamese women as well. Certainly, these portraits of female royalty and courtiers were largely commissioned by and for their male counterparts, especially the king. Yet the women of the royal court appeared to govern their own sartorial manifestations and fashionable selves as the century progressed. Their fashionability, in a way, induced a modern femininity within the female aristocracy in Bangkok and set a prototype for Siamese women elsewhere. More importantly, the king and queen(s) of late 19th-century Siam played a crucial role in developing a clearer gender identity and distinctions between men and women, which addressed the concerns of visiting Westerners in the earlier period.

As Griselda Pollock suggests, visual representations of women in works of art signify a system of culture, allowing viewers to “recognize the centrality and critical importance of the representation of woman in patriarchal culture. And hence to grasp the radical potential of its analysis and subversion”.¹⁹ Although Pollock's discussion revolves particularly around European and American examples, her analysis can also be applied to Siam's politico-cultural landscape, since Siam was also a patriarchal culture. This suggests that (visual) representation of Siamese women was vital as well. In investigating the construction of modern femininity, the following section will examine portraits of Siamese women, particularly those of Queen Saovabha.²⁰ Specifically, it will analyse the ways in which the new medium of portrait photography and portrait painting present and represent images of femininity and roles of the Siamese female nobility. It also aims to explore their female agency in manipulating their own visual image in portraiture.

The Making of Fashionable Modern Women: Official Portraits of Queen Saovabha Phongsri from the 1890s to 1910

The period from the last decade of the 19th century to the early 20th century presents a fruitful field for tracking the formation of modern female gender identity in Siam. Following his father's path, King Chulalongkorn commissioned several Thai and foreign photographers to capture visual images of his family.²¹ Additionally, many photographs were sent to Europe as models for paintings shortly before and during the king's first official visit to Europe in 1897.²² At present, the catalogue of royal portraits published by the Bureau of the Royal Household (BRH) in 1993 is still the most elaborate volume for

studying the commissions of King Chulalongkorn.²³ Unfortunately, most of the portraits are still undated and the identity of the artists are mostly unknown. An exception to this are the ones painted during King Chulalongkorn's European visit in 1897, including a family portrait and a portrait of Queen Saovabha, which will be discussed shortly.

On the related subject of the reconstruction of female gender identity in the early modern period of Thailand, one of the significant movements was the refashioning of female court dress. Following his second coronation on 16 November 1873,²⁴ King Chulalongkorn restructured many court customs, including court uniform and court dress for men and women, to meet his Western aspirations. Women were required to wear a long skirt with pleated folds at the front, together with an embroidered shawl for formal occasions and when in audience with the king. They were also directed to wear stockings and shoes. As for the 'infamous' *chong kraben*, the women in the royal court were instructed to wear it as a daily dress, with a long-sleeved shirt, together with a *sabai*, also worn with stockings and shoes.²⁵ Cropped hair for both men and women had also been gradually falling out of favour since King Chulalongkorn first visited the Straits Settlements in 1871.²⁶ This reform of courtly garments strongly indicates that the king had power over the queens' wardrobe. Female gender identity was still largely dictated by men during the first decade of King Chulalongkorn's reign. One such example of the reformed female court dress is depicted in Queen Saovabha's portrait at the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall in the Grand Palace, Bangkok (Figure 2).

This full-length portrait is part of the set of the Chakri kings and queens' state portraits believed to have been created between 1896 and 1897 by an unnamed European painter.²⁷ Considering that Queen Saovabha's appearance in this portrait is much younger than her other visual images of the same year (to be discussed shortly), it is most likely that the painting was rendered after her earlier official photograph. The queen appears in the elaborate traditional court dress, consisting of a long-sleeved blouse covered by an embroidered shawl, a long skirt with pleated folds at the front and a pair of Western-style court shoes. The bare shoulders and feet of the queen, as seen in the earlier photograph of Queen Debsirindra, were no longer exposed to the public gaze in this image. Additionally, the queen wore a new hairstyle that was longer than the traditional cropped hair, yet was still relatively short and very much like the male hairstyle. The location of the portrait is also significant, as the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall was ceremonially opened in 1882, the centennial anniversary of the Chakri Dynasty. It was also King Chulalongkorn's first throne hall, built following his second coronation, after

FIGURE 2: Anonymous, *Queen Saovabha Phongsri*, 1896–97, oil on canvas, 272 × 150 cm. Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, Grand Palace, Bangkok. Courtesy of Bureau of the Royal Household, Kingdom of Thailand, 2003–15.

which he resumed his full regal authority. The left and right wing of this Siamese-European-style throne hall form the galleries for the royal portraits, where guests could admire these works of art while waiting for an audience with the king.

Similar to her predecessors, as the queen consort of Siam, Queen Saovabha was ranked as the queen because of her birthright or patrilineal descent (as a daughter of King Mongkut), as well as her bearing a son. Queen Saovabha was one among King Chulalongkorn's 152 consorts, all of whom came from old and powerful political dynasties, from both royalty and the nobility. For Siamese royal and noble men, possessing a large number of wives and children signified masculinity and a capacity for leadership, known in Thai as *barami*, งามมี (merit, virtue, prestige).²⁸ Feminist studies mostly view the woman as a sign of political and economic exchange in marriage, as well as its object. Thus marriage as an exchange system signifies social order, namely socio-sexual relationships and power.²⁹ In the case of King Chulalongkorn, marrying women from powerful families who were also members of his

reformed government, could guarantee political support from their peers. Therefore, polygamy in Siam was closely associated with political power and alliances. Women's role in the royal court could thus be interpreted as a reflection of male dominance within the realm of matrimony and the superior gender role of men in the family and the political regime. Hegemonic masculinity in the Siamese royal court further affects the royal consorts concerning their ability to produce male offspring; if royal consorts born with a regal rank (i.e. princess) gave birth to a male child, they would thus be elevated to the highest rank of royal consort and the child would consequently be designated as an heir apparent. However, it should be noted that during the last decades of the 19th century, high-ranking consorts also actively contributed to activities outside their marriage and in political exchange, such as the country's social development (nursing schools, infrastructure, education for boys and girls etc.).

In 1893, Queen Saovabha was appointed the President of the Most Illustrious Order of Chula Chom Klao for female members. This was a crucial moment in the sartorial manifestation of her female body by her own agency. According to the memoirs of Queen Saovabha's lady-in-waiting, following this designation, the Queen created four styles of female costumes suitable for certain occasions or activities, namely: traditional casual dress, modern casual dress, formal or court dress, and formal dress for the Order of Chula Chom Klao.³⁰ Concerning the subject of female agency in the court of King Chulalongkorn, Leslie Woodhouse gives us invaluable examples of the role of female elites, particularly of Erb Bunnag, a royal consort, in representing palace women's images through photography. Woodhouse argues that the enthusiasm for portraiture shown by these female elites—and not only by their male superiors—also reflects a crucial movement in Siam's cultural and political history.³¹ Just as this demonstrated royal women's contribution to the modernisation/Westernisation of Siam, oil painting portraits of the Siamese queen examined here were a tool that recreated Siamese palace women's distinct gender identity, fashionability and femininity.

Queen Saovabha's state portraits produced in 1897³² often show her in this new style of court dress. One example is a full-length portrait by Michele Gordigiani (Figure 3), commissioned by King Chulalongkorn when he visited Italy. In this portrait painting, the queen appears to be at the same age as she was at the time of painting, unlike the other portrait in the Chakri Throne Hall, mentioned earlier. Nonetheless, the painting process was very much the same: an original photograph was presented to the artist, along with the Queen's clothing, which was sent to the artist's studio at the request of Gordigiani.³³

FIGURE 3: Michele Gordigiani, *Queen Saovabha Phongsri*, 1896–98, oil on canvas, 257 × 153 cm. Uthayan Phumisathian Mansion, Bang Pa-In Palace, Ayutthaya Province. Courtesy of Bureau of the Royal Household, Kingdom of Thailand, 2003–15.

Formal attire was worn during the reception of foreign dignitaries and at royal ceremonies. Queen Saovabha made reference to the traditional style of female court dress as seen in her state portrait at the Chakri Throne Hall. However, with the influx of Western fashion at the royal court, in this painting the Queen instead wears a fashionable silk bodice with puffed or ‘leg-o’mutton’ sleeves (without a corset), rather than the old-style long-sleeved shirt. This new article of clothing indicates Queen Saovabha’s fashionability, which is *au fait* with 1890s Western fashion, especially with the ‘leg-o’mutton’ sleeves introduced in the mid-1890s.³⁴ The overblown sleeves, which were tight at the lower arm and puffed out at the upper arm, aim to accentuate a tiny (corseted) waist, together with a flared full skirt, thus creating an hourglass silhouette—perceived as an ideal feminine form—on the wearer’s body.³⁵

For the Siamese, the ideal feminine form of the hourglass silhouette was never precisely cited in any sort of documentation. Visual images of Siamese women in the late 19th century do not show tiny corseted waists, thus it is

doubtful that Siamese women wore corsets underneath to achieve the hour-glass silhouette effect. Literature from earlier decades provides a contrasting image of the Siamese idea of female beauty. Verses that depict the beauty of characters or scenes are called *saowaratchani*, เสาวราชินี or *bot chom chom*, บทชมโฉม; these lines declare admiration for a beautiful face and complexion, slender arms and full round breasts on a slim body.³⁶ It was very rare that these verses would dedicate much attention to the beauty of the lower part of the female body—the flared hips, to be specific. It is plausible that such an ideal feminine form in Siamese culture originated from Siamese women's daily attire, consisting of partially covered breasts and a loose *chong kraben* that mostly hid the shape of the wearer's hips. This, together with King Chulalongkorn's criticism of the conservative nature of Siamese women's mode of dressing,³⁷ leads one to infer that the Western ideal feminine form hardly appealed to Siamese women. Therefore, when Queen Saovabha wore the fashionable 'leg-o'mutton' sleeves bodice, perhaps she did not aim to create the hourglass shape for her body. Rather she probably aspired to Western women's fashion simply because of its modernity, fashionability and, plausibly, out of her regal duty to appear as a 'civilised' Siamese queen.

Queen Saovabha's traditional long skirt completes the look and is equivalent to a European woman's day dress or tailored suit, a very fashionable and popular item of clothing during the 1890s. Unlike unisex items such as the *chong kraben*, this traditional long skirt, known as *phra phusa chep* or *pha nung*, ผ้านุ่ง, appealed to Westerners' tastes, as stated in King Chulalongkorn's letter to the Queen. When he visited Sir Charles Bullen Hugh Mitchell, the Governor of the Straits Settlements, King Chulalongkorn gave a photograph of Queen Saovabha in formal dress to Lady Mitchell (Eliza Weldon), who praised the beauty of the Siamese queen in a *phra phusa chep*.³⁸ This article of clothing signified both the formality and gentility of Siamese female royalty, and also functioned as 'camouflage', to borrow Homi K. Bhabha's concept of mimicry,³⁹ in order to conform to European sartorial elegance. Bhabha's conceptualisation, indeed, largely focuses on the interplay between the colonised and coloniser.

Though never politically colonised, Siam was dominated by the colonial power of the West economically and juridically.⁴⁰ It has thus been argued that Siam was semicolonial. Consequently, there has been an ongoing debate on whether Siam's conversation on modernisation should be approached using colonial and postcolonial theory.⁴¹ Hybridity defines an ambivalent space of cultural identity wherein a negotiation of the unbalanced power is employed.⁴² Siam's mimicry was probably a form of either conformation or resistance (or both in equal measure) against the West, while attempting to gain a recognition

of its own hierarchical power within the kingdom and in relation to other nations in Southeast Asia. Here, I propose that by considering the modernisation of *non-colonised* Siam as a sort of mimicry or colonial ambivalence, Siam's role can be clarified in colonial networks, particularly by refashioning its cultural identity.

During his stay in Florence in the summer of 1897, King Chulalongkorn commissioned another Italian artist, Edoardo Gelli, to paint a family portrait: *The Siamese Royal Family* (Figure 4a). This family portrait also features Queen Saovabha in her elegant formal wear—an embroidered white faille silk bodice with a *phra phusa chep*—and holding a luxury folded fan. She also appears in this style in Gordigiani's portraits. Compared to Gordigiani's portrait of Queen Saovabha, the exquisite way in which Gelli painted her long skirt is more elaborate; the material looks lighter, smoother and shinier, and the draperies also appear to flow more fluidly than the actual material of the skirt as seen in the photograph. The artist's alterations also helped to enhance the queen's femininity in contrast to her husband's and sons' military uniforms. Such deliberate alterations from original sources (i.e. photographs) demonstrate that the artist can complicate “performative” aspects of photographic images that are calculatedly concealed yet meaningfully transparent.⁴³

The portrait was completed and sent to Siam in 1898, after which it was hung in the reception room of the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall.⁴⁴ Very much like his father, King Chulalongkorn attempted to appease the West's sensitivity regarding polygamy by choosing to portray his *one* nuclear family. This family portrait by Gelli shows King Chulalongkorn and Queen Saovabha sitting among their five children, namely Prince Asdang (Prince of Nakhon Ratchasima), Prince Maha Vajiravudh (the Crown Prince of Siam, later King Vajiravudh), Prince Chakrabongse (Prince of Phitsanulok), Prince Chudadhuj (Prince of Phetchabun) and Prince Prajadhipok (Prince of Sukhothai, later King Prajadhipok). The painting is based on a studio photograph (from Robert Lenz's studio in Bangkok) taken one year earlier (Figure 4b). This may indicate that the king had already planned before his departure to have his family portrait painted while in Europe. Another indication of this is that in the photograph, Prince Chirapravati and Prince Sommatiwongse (King Chulalongkorn's sons by his other consorts) were asked to pose in place of their half-brothers, Prince Vajiravudh and Prince Chakrabongse, who were studying in England at that time.

The emphasis on family values is certainly made manifest here. Apinan Poshyananda states that the composition of this family portrait reflects the contrasts between public and private facets, between the formality and

FIGURE 4a: Edoardo Gelli, *The Siamese Royal Family*, 1897–98, oil on canvas, 312 × 374 cm. Amphorn Sathan Residential Hall, Dusit Palace, Bangkok. Courtesy of Bureau of the Royal Household, Kingdom of Thailand, 2003–15.

FIGURE 4b: Robert Lenz's Studio, *The Siamese Royal Family*, 1896. Courtesy of National Archives of Thailand.

FIGURE 5: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *The Royal Family in 1846*, 1846, oil on canvas, 250.5 × 317.3 cm. East Gallery, Buckingham Palace, London. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2018.

intimacy of the royal family.⁴⁵ Such value placed on appearance of family life was widely thought to be a key feature of Victorian morality. As an institution,⁴⁶ the Victorian family was idealised as a centre of stability and functioned as a preparation for the public sphere (i.e. society).⁴⁷ This idealisation is diligently embodied in the large picture of Queen Victoria's family by Franz Xaver Winterhalter titled *The Royal Family in 1846* (Figure 5).⁴⁸ The portrait features Queen Victoria with her husband Prince Albert, the Prince Consort and their children: Victoria, Princess Royal; Albert Edward, Prince of Wales; Princess Alice; Prince Alfred; and Princess Helena.

Conceivably, the official relationship between Siam and Britain since the mid-19th century—most notably ratified by the Bowring Treaty of 1855—may have prompted the Siamese royal court to develop an awareness of Victorian family ideals. Considering that King Chulalongkorn had commissioned a large number of portraits for his family and constantly wrote letters back home during his travels, his domestic role was as active as his political role as a monarch. King Chulalongkorn perhaps would have also wanted to

introduce the morality of family values to Siamese society, with himself as a role model. Hence, this portrait of King Chulalongkorn's family very probably reflects influence from British society, regardless of the artist having been Italian. It should also be noted that the king sent many of his sons, including the two princes mentioned above, as well as young Siamese nobles, to study in England. This connection plausibly facilitated the Victorian cultural appropriation by the Siamese royal court.

These portraits of royal families from opposite sides of the world skilfully depict the official and domestic roles of the monarchs. Although the emphasis on domestic harmony is clear, references to royal status (through the setting, furniture, garments and royal decorations) and the continuation of the royal lineage are also at play. Even though these two royal portraits share many similarities, the overall effects are different. In *The British Royal Family in 1846*, the bright and brilliant colouring emanates an air of peaceful and happy domesticity. By contrast, the dark and sombre shades of *The Siamese Royal Family* renders an austere and detached atmosphere. The royal couple's posture also plays a crucial part here: Queen Victoria and Prince Albert are depicted sitting slightly facing each other, their hands almost touching, whereas King Chulalongkorn and Queen Saovabha were more reserved in their affections, and are depicted sitting far apart. An intimate family moment, captured exceptionally in the British royal family portrait, is not present in the portrait of the Siamese royal family.

Nonetheless, the female figures in both pictures demonstrate femininity and a maternal role. Queen Victoria's compassionate posture is different from the usual demure formality of Victorian femininity often shown in portraiture.⁴⁹ Similarly, Queen Saovabha's relaxed sitting position is in contrast to her other portraits and certainly differs from Queen Debsirindra's when posing with King Mongkut in Figure 1. Also, despite being a studio photograph in its original form, in Gelli's portrait, Queen Saovabha seems oblivious to the viewer. Both the queens wear their respective versions of evening dress or formal gowns, with sets of jewels, and this helps to enhance their appearance of femininity. Furthermore, Queen Victoria wears the star of the Garter whereas Queen Saovabha wears the pendant and the star of Chakri. Britain's Order of the Garter and Siam's Order of the Royal House of Chakri convey a traditional aspect of the monarchy. Hence, their portrayal displays a clear indication of various roles, namely gender, as well as the domestic and public spheres in which these female aristocrats of their respective nation-states would dutifully play.

As a whole, Gelli's work is highly effective in portraying a positive image of the royal family: Queen Saovabha presents her maternity and wifehood,

whereas the depiction of King Chulalongkorn in military uniform suggests his role as a leader of both the domestic and political realms. Additionally, the postures and sartorial display of the adults enhance the formal facet of the Siamese royal family, while the youngest princes, in more casual attire⁵⁰ and poses, represent a more familial aspect.

Considering the solid connection between the British and Siamese royal courts stated earlier, the emphasis on domestic harmony could also be regarded as a form of Siam's "Victorian ecumene".⁵¹ Following Carol A. Breckenridge's contextualisation of the transnational cultural world, Siamese elites were certainly not strangers among transnational global elites.⁵² Transnational cultural flows that occurred during the course of the second half of the 19th century affected Siam's cultural practices greatly—not only Queen Saovabha, who adopted and adapted Western clothing to refashion her identity and hierarchical status, but also King Chulalongkorn's other consorts as well as their daughters.

Conclusion

The reconstruction of Siamese femininity, which has been the focus of this paper, was in a way a Siamese women's vestimentary movement. The Siamese female elite wore their hybrid dress in order to react and adapt to the changing world around them. A fine example of the fashionability of cross-cultural dress is in *fin-de-siècle* Britain, where Japanese kimonos and Chinese coats were considered fashionable among British female socialites. Undoubtedly, imperialism helped create cross-cultural fashion trends through which Victorian and Edwardian women promoted their feminine imperial identities.⁵³ Following this line of thought, Siamese women's sartorial manifestations were not far from their European contemporaries, and had been initiated by the complex triangle of modern femininity, fashionable dress and imperial/colonial encounter. Although the process of Westernisation in Siam was largely driven by men, Siamese women of the upper classes could also assume some freedom so as to be represented as they chose, particularly through their creation of hybrid forms of dress. Western aspiration was extremely crucial to Siam's concept of modernity as discussed at length. By employing Western ideology of femininity to examine Siamese queen's modern feminine features, this study tries to understand the refashioning of Siam's concept of femininity in its historical specificity.

Moreover, materiality as well as vestimentary values (e.g. forms, colours and tailoring)⁵⁴ also play an important part here. Materials such as lace, an expensive luxury item,⁵⁵ together with embroidery, ribbons or feathered

adornments, as well as beautiful sets of jewellery—all found in the hybrid forms of dress—collectively signify femininity for Siamese women's modern femininity. Siam's hybrid costumes gained much popularity during the 1890s–1900s, eventually replacing Siam's traditional dress as the standard female court dress.⁵⁶

As the nation shifted towards modernity, visual representations in Siam signalled a change in Siam's concept of body and gender identities. As the queen of Siam, Queen Saovabha exercised her power, politically and culturally, to reshape female gender roles in both the political and cultural spheres. Her portraits also help identify Siamese women as active agents in dress politics, amidst the influx of Western powers over the Southeast Asian region. These portraits are a testament to female power and gender roles in Siam's patriarchal culture and political regime.

BIOGRAPHY

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NOTES

- ¹ This paper is based on the first chapter of my current research, “All Things Western: Fashionable Identity of the Early Modern Thai Elites”. An earlier version was circulated as part of the Gender in Southeast Asian Art Histories symposium, 11–13 Oct. 2017 at University of Sydney.
- ² Henri Mouhot, *Voyage dans les royaumes de Siam, de Cambodge, de Laos et autres parties centrales de l'Indochine*, first printed in 1864 (Paris: Librairie de L'Hachette, 1868), <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1025086s/f14.image> [accessed 6 July 2017].
- ³ An English edition of these volumes was published in the same year under the title *Travels in the Central Parts of Indo-China, Cambodia and Laos During the Years 1858, 1859, and 1860* (London: John Murray, 1864).
- ⁴ For example, Edmund Roberts, an American naval visitor to Bangkok in 1832 noted that he could not tell a Siamese man from a woman, and the Siamese female appeared “more masculine” than her male counterpart. Cited and quoted in Peter A. Jackson, “Performative Genders, Perverse Desires: A Bio-History of Thailand’s Same-sex and Transgender Cultures”, *Intersections: Gender, History & Culture in the Asian Context* 9 (Aug. 2003), n.p., <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/> [accessed 6 July 2017].
- ⁵ Mouhot, *Voyage*, 11; my translation.
- ⁶ Jackson, “Performative Gender”, n.p.
- ⁷ See Thongchai Winichakul, “ภาวะอย่างไรหนอที่เรียกว่าศิวิไลซ์ เมื่อชนชั้นน่านสยามสมัยรัชกาลที่ 5 แสวงหาสถานะของตนเอง ผ่านการเดินทางและพิพิธภัณฑ์ทั้งในและนอกประเทศ”, “Phawa Yang Rai No thi Riak Wa ‘Siwilai’ Muea Chonchannam Siam Samai Ratchakan thi Ha Sawaeng Ha Sathana Khong Toneng Phan Kandoenthang lae Phiphitthaphan Thang Nai lae Nok Prathet” [What are the Conditions Called ‘Siwilai’? When the Siamese Aristocrats Sought Their Status via Travels and Exhibitions at Home and Abroad], *Journal of Political Science* 24, 2 (2003): 1–66.
- ⁸ See, for example, Eksuda Singhalampong, “From Commissions to Commemoration: The Re-creation of King Chulalongkorn and His Court, and the Thai Monarchy through Westernised Art and Western Art Collection”, PhD diss., University of Sussex, 2016; and Eksuda Singhalampong, “สัญลักษณ์แห่งพระราชอำนาจและรสนิยมสมัยใหม่ในพระบรมสาทิสลักษณ์รัชกาลที่ 5 โดยศิลปินยุโรป”, “Sanya Haeng Phra Ratcha-amnat lae Rotsaniyom Samai Mai nai Phra Boromsathisalok Ratchakan thi 5 doi Silapin Yurop” [Regal Symbols and a Modern(ised) Taste in the State Portraits of King Chulalongkorn by the European Painters], *Journal of Fine Arts, Chiang Mai University* 8, 2 (July–Dec. 2017): 145–83.
- ⁹ It is worth noting that Queen Saovabha’s elevation to the ‘first’ queen and mother of the Crown Prince was as the replacement of her older sister Queen Savang Vadhana, whose firstborn son and the first Crown Prince of Siam, HRH Crown

Prince Maha Vajirunahis died in 1895. Because of this, Prince Vajiravudh, the oldest son of Queen Saovabha became Siam's Crown Prince.

- ¹⁰ A *chong kraben* is a garment that resembles loose breeches. The wearer wraps a rectangular piece of cloth around his waist, the edge of cloth is then passed between the legs and tucked in at the wearer's lower back. Many 19th-century European accounts often called them knee breeches, riding breeches or knickerbockers. See, for example, Sachchidanand Sahai, *India in 1872: As Seen by the Siamese*, trans. Kanthika Sriudom (Bangkok: Textbooks Project, 2003), pp. 170–4.
- ¹¹ Tamara Loos, *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2006), p. 7.
- ¹² Quoted in Anna Leonowens, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (Bedford, Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 2009), p. 257 (originally published by Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1870).
- ¹³ Thai literature such as *Kruetsana Son Nong Kham Chan-กฤษณาสอนน้องคำฉันท์* [The Ode of Krissana's Instruction to Her Sister], which predates the Rattanakosin Era and early Rattanakosin literature *Suphasit Son Ying-สุภาษิตสอนหญิง* [A Guide for Women Proverb], provides useful sources for Siamese women's gender roles and how to be a good wife. All of which were predictably written by male authors.
- ¹⁴ One single male who was allowed in this area was naturally the King. Their sons would be raised in the inner court until they reached their adolescence, marked by the cutting of their topknot during the Soka Ceremony (around the age of 13).
- ¹⁵ Malcolm Smith, *A Physician at the Court of Siam* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 143–4.
- ¹⁶ It was less oppressive for common Siamese women. They too had their roles in household management as wives and mothers, but there was no prohibition for women to work outside of their houses.
- ¹⁷ See Anna Leonowens, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1870); also Leonowens, *The Romance of the Harem* (Boston: J.R. Osgood and Company, 1873).
- ¹⁸ However, Leonowens' claims in these volumes have since been met with considerable skepticism concerning their historical accuracy. Recent analysis on Leonowens' accounts include Pramin Khruathong, “ครูฝรั่งวังหลวงกับชมรมคนเกลียดแอนนา” “Khru Farang Wang Luang kab Chomrom Khon Khat Aenna” [Thai Public's Hostile Conviction against Anna, a Foreign Teacher at the Royal Court], *อ่าน* [Aan Journal] 2, 1 (April–Sept. 2009): 85–94. See also Anna Leonowens' biography in Susan Morgan, *Bombay Anna: The Real Story and Remarkable Adventures of the King and I Governess* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2009).

- ¹⁹ Griselda Pollock, "Vision, Voice and Power: Feminist Art Histories and Marxism", in *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 32.
- ²⁰ Queen Saovabha (born on 1 Jan. 1864) was born as Princess of Siam to King Mongkut and his concubine Chao khun chom manda Piam Sucharitakul (later Princess Piyamavadi Sri Bajarindra Mata). This thus made her half-sister to King Chulalongkorn, whom she married when she was about 15 to 16 years old. Their firstborn was a girl, Princess Bahurada Manimaya, who was born on 19 Dec. 1879.
- ²¹ See Sakda Siriphan, *กษัตริย์กับกล้อง: วัฒนาการถ่ายภาพในประเทศไทย พ.ศ. 2388 – Kasat kap Klong: Wiwatthanakan Kanthaiphap nai Prathet Thai, pho. so. 2388–2535* [King and Camera: Evolution of Photography in Thailand, 1845–1992] (Bangkok: Dansuttha Kanphim, 1992), pp. 129–61.
- ²² A telegram from *Krommuen Pitthayalap* to King Chulalongkorn during his sojourn in Florence in 1897 mentioned the measurements of the canvas and frames of the portrait of King Phra Phuttha Yotfa Chulalok (King Rama I). Cited in Apinan Poshyananda, *Modern Art in Thailand* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 12.
- ²³ See Apinan Poshyananda, *จิตรกรรมและประติมากรรมแบบตะวันตกในราชสำนัก เล่ม 1 – Chittrakam lae Pratimakam Baep Tawantok nai Ratchasamnak Lem 1* [Western-Style Paintings and Sculptures in the Thai Royal Court Vol. 1] (Bangkok: Bureau of the Royal Household, 1993), pp. 40–225.
- ²⁴ King Chulalongkorn's second coronation marks the end of Si Suriyawongse's regency, a position he had held since 1868. Thus the king, for the first time, assumed his sovereignty since he succeeded his father.
- ²⁵ Prince Damrong, "Introduction" *ประวัติเจ้าคุณพระประยูรวงศ์ – Prawat Chao Khun Phra Prayun Wong* [The Biography of Chaokhunphra Prayunwong] (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, 1943), pp. 50–3.
- ²⁶ Damrong, *The Biography*, pp. 42–4.
- ²⁷ For further discussions on this set of royal portraits, see Poshyananda, *Western-Style Paintings*, pp. 168–85; and Eksuda Singhalampong, "From Commissions to Commemoration: The Re-Creation of King Chulalongkorn and His Court, and the Thai Monarchy through Westernised Art and Western Art Collection", PhD diss., University of Sussex, 2016, pp. 26–60.
- ²⁸ Loos, *Subject*, pp. 114–5.
- ²⁹ Pollock, "Vision, Voice and Power", pp. 30–4.
- ³⁰ Uthumphon Viravaidya, *Phraratcha Prawat Suan Phraong Somdet Phra Si Phatcharinthra Barom Rachininat – พระราชประวัติส่วนพระองค์สมเด็จพระศรีพัชรินทราบรมราชินีนาถ* [The Private Life of Her Majesty Sri Bajrindra The Queen of Siam] (Bangkok: Phadung Suksa, 1972), pp. 103–5.

- ³¹ Leslie Woodhouse, "Concubines with Cameras: Royal Siamese Consorts Picturing Femininity and Ethnic Difference in Early 20th Century Siam", *Trans Asia Photography Review* 2, 2: Women's Camera Work: Asia (Spring 2012), n.p., <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7977573.0002.202> [accessed 25 Sept. 2012].
- ³² By this time, Queen Saovabha had reached the peak in rank as Queen of Siam, mother of Crown Prince Maha Vajiravudh (later King Vajiravudh, r. 1910–25) and the Queen Regent during King Chulalongkorn's 1897 journey to Europe.
- ³³ King Chulalongkorn, พระราชหัตถเลขาส่วนพระองค์ สมเด็จพระรามาธิบดี ศรีสินทรมหาจุฬาลงกรณ์ พระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว ทรงมีพระราชทานแด่ สมเด็จพระศรีพัชรินทรา บรมราชินีนาถ พระพันปีหลวง ในเวลาที่ทรงสำเร็จราชการแผ่นดินต่างพระองค์เมื่อเสด็จพระราชดำเนินประพาสยุโรป พ.ศ. 2440, ภาค 1 – *Phraratchahatthalekha Suan Phra'ong Somdet Phraramathipbodi Sisinthramaha Chulalongkorn Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua Song Mi Phraratchathan dae Somdet Phra Siphatcharinthra Boromrachininat Phraphanpiluang Nai Wela thi Song Samret Ratchakan Phaendin Tang Phra'ong Muea Sadet Phraratchadamnoen Praphat Yurop pho. so. 2440, Phak 1* [The King's Correspondence to Queen Saovabha during the Regency in 1897, Vol. 1] (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, 1958), pp. 162–5.
- ³⁴ "History of Fashion 1840–1900", Victoria and Albert Museum, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/history-of-fashion-1840-1900/> [accessed 26 Jan. 2018].
- ³⁵ Madeleine Ginsburg, "Women's Dress before 1900", in *Four Hundred Years of Fashion*, ed. Natalie Rothstein (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1992), pp. 43–4.
- ³⁶ For instance, in early Rattanakosin literature titled *Ramakian*, a Thai version of India's Ramayana, Sita, a leading lady is portrayed with her "lotus bud-like bosom" and "a slender waist like it was drawn by an artist".
- ³⁷ Walter E.J. Tips, *Gustave Rolin-Jaequemyns (Chao Phraya Aphai Raja) and the Belgian Advisers in Siam (1892–1902): An Overview of Little-known Documents Concerning the Chakri Reformation Era* (Bangkok: n.p., 1992), p. 56.
- ³⁸ King Chulalongkorn, *The King's Correspondence*, p. 7.
- ³⁹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 121–31.
- ⁴⁰ Benedict Anderson, "Studies of the Thai State: The State of Thai Studies", in *The Study of Thailand: Analyses of Knowledge, Approaches and Prospects in Anthropology, Art History, Economics, History, and Political Science*, ed. Eliezar B. Ayal (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, Southeast Asia Program, 1978), pp. 209–10.
- ⁴¹ See, for example, Chaayan Rajchagool, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy: Foundations of the Modern Thai State From Feudalism to Peripheral Capitalism* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1994); Kasian Tejapira, *Commodifying Marxism: The Formation of Modern Thai Radical Culture* (Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2001); Craig J. Reynolds, "On the Gendering of Nationalist and Postnationalist

Selves in Twentieth Century Thailand", in *Genders and Sexualities in Modern Thailand*, ed. Peter A. Jackson and Nerida M. Cook (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1999); Hong Lysa, "Extraterritoriality in Bangkok in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn, 1868–1910: The Cacophonies of Semi-Colonial Cosmopolitanism", *Itinerario: European Journal of Overseas History* 27, 2 (July 2003): 125–46; Hong Lysa, "Stranger within the Gates", pp. 327–54; Peter A. Jackson, "The Performative State: Semi-coloniality and the Tyranny of Images in Modern Thailand", *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 19, 2 (Oct. 2004): 219–53; Jackson, "Semicoloniality, Translation and Excess in Thai Cultural Studies", *South East Asia Research* 13, 1 (March 2005): 7–41; Jackson, "Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities", in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, ed. Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), pp. 187–205; Loos, *Subject Siam*; Michael Herzfeld, "The Absence Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism", *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, 4 (Fall 2002): 899–926; Herzfeld, "The Conceptual Allure of the West: Dilemmas and Ambiguities of Crypto-Colonialism in Thailand", in *The Ambiguous Allure*, pp. 178–86.

⁴² Marwan M. Kraidy, "Hybridity in Cultural Globalization", *Communication Theory* 12, 3 (1 Aug. 2002): 318, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2002.tb00272.x>. [accessed 23 April 2018].

⁴³ Woodhouse, "Concubine", n.p.

⁴⁴ The painting was recently relocated to the Amphorn Sathan Residential Hall in Bangkok.

⁴⁵ Poshyananda, *Modern Art*, p. 13.

⁴⁶ Asa Briggs, "Victorian Values", in *In Search of Victorian Values: Aspects of Nineteenth Century Thought and Society*, ed. Eric M. Sigsworth (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 22.

⁴⁷ Anthony S. Wohl, ed., *The Victorian Family: Structure and Stresses*, first published in 1978 (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 15.

⁴⁸ Jennifer Scott, *The Royal Portrait: Image and Impact* (London: Royal Collection Publications, 2010), pp. 144–6.

⁴⁹ Jennifer Craik, *The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 44.

⁵⁰ Maurizio Peleggi notes that the colour of the princes' sailor suits were changed from navy blue (the colour for daily wear) to white (the colour for summer wear). Presumably, Gelli adjusted the colours in accordance with the summertime when he painted this portrait. See Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), p. 187. Also, the white of the sailor suit of the young princes, as opposed to their older brothers' darker-toned military uniform, heightens the casual

and familial aspect of this family portrait. Although sailor suits in 19th-century children's fashion came in both white and dark blue, the white nautical suit is a reference to the renowned portrait of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales by Franz Xaver Winterhalter (1846, now in the Royal Collection, UK). From that point onward, sailor suits became a popular item of children's clothing, especially for royal princes from European countries, particularly those with powerful navies. Gelli, who worked widely with European royalty, was perhaps aware of this notion; hence white sailor suits on the youngest Siamese prince may convey a deeper political message for Siam.

- ⁵¹ Carol A. Breckenridge, "The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World Fairs", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, 2 (April 1989): 196.
- ⁵² See further discussion on Siam in World Fairs in Thongchai Winichakul, "What are the Conditions Called 'Siwilai'?", pp. 34–66.
- ⁵³ Sarah Cheang, "The Ownership and Collection of Chinese Material Culture by Women in Britain, c. 1890–c. 1935", PhD diss., University of Sussex, 2003, pp. 80, 93–7 and 109.
- ⁵⁴ Roland Barthes, *The Language of Fashion*, trans. Andy Stafford, ed. Andy Stafford and Michael Carter (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 14.
- ⁵⁵ Since its origins in the 16th century, lace had been a desirable fabric for both men and women, but by the end of the 18th century, men stopped wearing lace. See National Museum of American History, "Lace Collection", <http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/object-groups/lace-collection> [accessed 26 July 2017].
- ⁵⁶ Susan Conway, *Thai Textiles* (London: British Museum Press, 1992), p. 100.

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