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Hybrid Narratives: Exploring Cultural Fusion in *The Goats in the Cemetery* by Kanogpong Songsompun

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Abstract

The short story "The Goats in the Cemetery" by Kanogpong Songsompun, a Buddhist writer from Southern Thailand, incorporated Islamic terminologies as its opening and closing lines, highlighting the presence of hybridity between Islam and Buddhism in the region. This research aimed to explore and analyze the depiction of hybridity between Islam and Buddhism in Southern Thailand as observed in Songsompun's writing. The focus was on the coexistence and mutual respect between the majority Malay-Muslim villagers and the Thai-Buddhist capital holders in the face of a modernization program. This research employs Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory. The analysis revealed that the short story effectively portrayed the villagers' anxiety caused by the modernization program. Despite the religious differences, with the villagers being predominantly Malay-Muslims and the capital holders being Thai-Buddhists, they lived harmoniously, demonstrating mutual respect and coexistence. Moreover, Songsompun's writing challenged the notion of Islam as a restricted religion by presenting it from a global perspective within the context of his work. The research findings emphasized the potential for hybridity to thrive when different religious communities respect and tolerate one another. This research contributes to a broader understanding of the manifestations of hybridity between Islam and Buddhism in societies that embrace multiple religions. It underscores the importance of mutual respect and coexistence, serving as a reminder of the possibilities for cultural hybridity and harmonious coexistence in diverse communities.

Keywords: *Hybridity, Postcolonial Study, Religion Short Stories, Southern Thailand*

Introduction

Southern Thailand consists of several provinces that share borders with Peninsular Malaysia. These provinces include Chumphon, Krabi, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Narathiwat, Pattani, Phang Nga, Phattalung, Phuket, Ranong, Satun, Songkhla, Surat Thani, Trang, and Yala. Each of these provinces has its own distinct characteristics and cultural influences. The Sultanate of Patani, which existed in the past, was a Malay sultanate encompassing a significant area in present-day Southern Thailand (Jory 273). The estimated territory of the Sultanate of Patani included the modern Thai provinces of Pattani (Patani), Yala (Jala), Narathiwat (Menara), parts of Songkhla (Singgora), and the northernmost part of modern Malaysia (Aphornsuvan 3). This historical context highlights the multicultural and multiethnic nature of the region, with influences from

both Thai and Malay cultures. Understanding the historical and cultural background of Southern Thailand, including the presence of the Sultanate of Patani, can provide valuable insights into the dynamics and diversity of the region.

Although Southern Thailand is often associated with having the largest Muslim population in Thailand, it is essential to note that the Muslim majority is only concentrated in specific provinces (McCargo 411). According to the 2019 survey, the provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Satun have the highest percentages of Muslims, with Pattani having the highest proportion at 80 percent, followed by Yala at 68.9 percent and Satun at 67.8 percent (Melvin 5). These provinces have a significant Muslim presence, and the Muslim population shapes their cultural and religious dynamics. The overall Muslim population in Thailand is estimated to be between 4 and 6 million, constituting a sizable ethnic minority in a country with a total population of about 62 million (Yusuf 4). This makes Muslims the second-largest ethnic minority in Thailand after the Chinese community. Additionally, Thailand is known for its diverse religious landscape, with most of the population practicing Theravada Buddhism. Therefore, Muslims in Thailand represent a significant religious minority within the country (Scupin 229).

The cultural diversity and the coexistence of different religious and ethnic groups can profoundly affect humanity. In the case of Thailand, the presence of a large Muslim minority alongside other religious and ethnic communities enriches the nation's social fabric and contributes to its cultural diversity. The coexistence of diverse communities promotes understanding, tolerance, and mutual respect among people of different backgrounds. It fosters opportunities for intercultural exchange, dialogue, and collaboration, which can lead to social cohesion and harmony. Cultural diversity allows individuals to express their unique identities, traditions, and beliefs, fostering a sense of belonging and pride. It promotes the preservation and celebration of cultural heritage, including languages, customs, rituals, arts, and cuisine.

The subject of this research is Kanogpong Songsompun's short story "*Phæa nai ku boí*" (แพะในกุโบร์) (translated as "The Goats in the Cemetery"). Kanogpong Songsompun was born in Phatthalung, Southern Thailand, in 1966. He gained recognition for his literary contributions, and in 1996, he received the S.E.A. Write Award, which is a prestigious literary award given to Southeast Asian writers. His short story "*Phæa nai ku boí*" was initially published in the *Krungthep Turakij* (บางกอกโพสต์) (Bangkok Post) newspaper in 1996. Songsompun's untimely passing in February 2006 due to a severe lung infection marked a loss in the literary community. As a Buddhist, his funeral was held at Wat Pikulthong in Phatthalung, which is a significant Buddhist temple in the region.

The international recognition and acclaim received by Kanogpong Songsompun's work are evident in various ways. One notable achievement is the inclusion of his short story, "*Phæa nai ku boí*," in the prestigious ASEAN Short Story Anthology published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (709). This anthology served as a platform to showcase the literary talents of 50 renowned Southeast Asian writers, with the selected stories translated into two languages, Malay and English, to reach a wider audience. Songsompun's thought-provoking narrative, titled "Kambing dalam Kubur" in Malay and "The Goats in the Cemetery" in English, stood out among the diverse range of stories, solidifying his place as a significant voice



in the Southeast Asian literary landscape. By featuring his work alongside other acclaimed writers, the anthology brought attention to the region's rich cultural tapestry and literary contributions. Songsompun's inclusion in this esteemed collection further validates his storytelling prowess and underscores the universality and appeal of his work beyond the borders of Southern Thailand.

"The Goats in the Cemetery" derives its metaphorical title from its setting in Southern Thailand, where goats symbolize Satan in the Islamic tradition, and the cemetery represents death (Ali 124). This title serves to convey the notion that the region's unrest, attributed to the influence of Satan, has resulted in a significant loss of life and has plunged the community into a state of turmoil. In the context of Thailand's stringent legal system, individuals involved in the unrest, particularly the Muslim majority, face torture and even killings. Against this backdrop, the story unfolds in a multicultural village, exploring the coexistence of various religious and ethnic groups such as Malay Muslims, Thai-Buddhists, and Hindus. Within the narrative, the themes of life and death take center stage, symbolizing the perpetual cycle of existence. The births of children occur alongside the deaths of individuals who are unable to witness the progress brought about by societal development. Consequently, the story raises crucial questions about the treatment of the Muslim community, their rights, and the impact of modernization on traditional values and religious practices. Through its thought-provoking exploration, the story illuminates the complexities inherent in a multicultural society grappling with transformative societal changes.

Based on the research, the events in the short story are estimated to have occurred in early 1987. This timeframe aligns with Thailand's Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan 1997-2001, which sought to enhance the non-agricultural sector in peripheral areas (Parnwell 7). The story reflects the time's socio-economic context and prevailing developmental goals by situating the narrative within this period. It underscores the connection between the village's modernization process and Thailand's broader national development plans. This contextual information adds depth to the understanding of the story's setting and sheds light on the socio-political factors shaping the village and its inhabitants during that specific period.

Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory, particularly his concept of hybridity, can be highly relevant and applicable in analyzing the cultural interaction and dynamics portrayed in the short story "The Goats in the Cemetery." Hybridity, as conceptualized by Bhabha, refers to the mixing and blending of different cultural elements, resulting in new and distinct cultural forms (Bhabha 159). It challenges the notion of fixed and essentialist identities, highlighting the fluidity and complexity of cultural expressions that emerge in contact zones. The coexistence of Malay-Muslim, Thai-Buddhist, and Hindu communities creates a fertile ground for cultural hybridity. The interactions, exchanges, and negotiations between these diverse groups create new cultural products and practices that transcend rigid religious and ethnic boundaries.

By employing Bhabha's postcolonial theory, particularly the concept of hybridity, in the analysis of "The Goats in the Cemetery," one can explore how cultural hybridity challenges notions of purity, authenticity, and fixed identities. It allows for examining the complexities of cultural encounters, negotiating power relations, and creating new cultural expressions within a postcolonial context. Overall, Bhabha's postcolonial theory, with its emphasis on hybridity,



provides a valuable framework for understanding and interpreting the cultural dynamics and interactions portrayed in the short story, shedding light on the complex interplay of identities, power, and cultural production in a multicultural context (Rutherford 211).

Thailand, as a Southeast Asian nation, has never been colonized by Western (Aphornsuvan 14). However, it is essential to note that the concept of colonialism extends beyond direct political control and can encompass various forms of power dynamics and influences. Thailand's strategy of social reengineering and intellectual improvement, which aimed to modernize the country and present a modern image to the West, can be seen as a response to Western imperialism's pressures and influences during the European colonization era in neighboring regions. This process can involve the adoption of Western practices, language, and ideologies in order to strengthen one's position in the global context.

The term “auto-colonialism,” “self-colonization,” or “crypto-colonialism” is sometimes used to describe the phenomenon where a non-colonized nation adopts or internalizes aspects of Western culture and values as a means of asserting its own power and avoiding external domination (Chaloemtiarana 14). In the case of Thailand, while there may have been a strategic embrace of Western culture and values, the country has also maintained a strong sense of its own cultural heritage and traditions. The Thai people have continuously negotiated their own identity and navigated the complexities of cultural exchange in a manner that preserves their unique cultural identity and independence.

The incorporation of Islamic terminologies in the villagers' daily lives in the short story “The Goats in the Cemetery” reflects the religious and cultural practices of the Malay-Muslim community depicted in the narrative. It is not uncommon for individuals or communities to integrate religious terminologies or expressions into their everyday language as a way to express their faith and maintain a connection to their religious beliefs (Yamireng 2). The Islamic statement “*Innalillahi-wainailaihirajjun*” is an Arabic phrase that is commonly used by Muslims when someone has suffered a calamity, as a sign of patience and recognition that God is all-powerful and is usually recited by Muslims after having heard that someone has passed away. It is translated to “Surely from Allah we come, and to Him, we shall return.” This phrase is a reminder of the transient nature of life and serves as a recognition of the belief that all human beings ultimately belong to and will return to their Creator.

In relation to the short story “The Goats in the Cemetery” by Kanogpong Songsompun, the inclusion of this Islamic statement at the beginning and end of the story suggests a thematic connection to the cycle of life and death. It emphasizes the inevitability of death and the belief in the afterlife as fundamental aspects of the characters' lives. By using these Islamic terminologies, Songsompun may be highlighting the cultural and religious context of the story, particularly concerning the Muslim community in Southern Thailand. The presence of these terminologies may also signify the importance of religious beliefs and practices in shaping the characters' perspectives and experiences.

Ali (2015) researched the same subject, in Songsompun's short story “the Goats in the Cemetery”, but was on the topic of “The Other in Thailand: Thai-Muslim Identity in Kanogpong Songsompun's “the Goats in the Cemetery”, which was published in the *Journal of Literature, Language & Culture*. Thus, no specific research has been conducted on “The Goats in the



Cemetery” by Kanogpong Songsompun and its exploration of hybridity, cultural interaction, and religious tolerance. It presents an opportunity for further investigation and analysis in the field of literature, cultural studies, or postcolonial studies. Research on this topic contributes to understanding intercultural dynamics and the representation of diverse religious identities in literary works from Thailand.

Method

The analysis of the short story "The Goats in the Cemetery" aligned well with Homi K. Bhabha's working method, which facilitated the observation, interpretation, and analysis of cultural phenomena. Bhabha's significant contributions to cultural studies, particularly in understanding hybridity and postcolonial identity, made his theoretical framework highly relevant to this research (Rutherford 211). However, it was necessary to note that Bhabha's work primarily focused on the theoretical frameworks and conceptual analysis rather than providing a specific research method.

To explore the short story, the researchers would employ qualitative research methods to examine the text thoroughly, delve into the themes of hybridity, cultural interaction, and religious coexistence, and explore the nuanced meanings within the narrative. This could involve practices such as close reading, textual analysis, and potentially including interviews or surveys with readers or field experts to gain additional perspectives. It was crucial to clarify that while Bhabha's theoretical framework could be applied within a qualitative research approach, Bhabha's work itself didn't offer a specific research method. Therefore, researchers would need to combine qualitative research methods with Bhabha's concepts to investigate the phenomenon under examination.

Data collection is a vital stage in research, encompassing the gathering and examining various forms of representation (Denzin 443). Both primary and secondary sources should be considered. In this case, the primary source was the short story "The Goats in the Cemetery." Primary sources, such as literary texts, provide direct access to data and insights relevant to the research questions. Analyzing the short story's content, themes, and narrative elements would enable the exploration of the presence of hybridity and cultural interaction within the text. Secondary sources, on the other hand, play a supportive role by providing theoretical frameworks, concepts, or scholarly interpretations that can inform and enhance the analysis. Bhabha's postcolonial theory, particularly his ideas about hybridity, could be considered a secondary source that aided in interpreting the primary source (the short story) and offered a theoretical framework for understanding the cultural phenomena depicted within it (Bhabha 85-86).

The researchers acted as instruments in the research process, as their knowledge, expertise, and personal involvement shaped various aspects of the study (Denzin 1014). As human instruments, researchers were responsible for determining the research focus and objectives. The researchers selected appropriate data sources, such as the short story "The Goats in the Cemetery," and decided on the data collection techniques to be employed. The researchers also played a crucial role in ensuring the quality of the collected data, which might involve establishing criteria for data validity and reliability, evaluating the credibility and trustworthiness of the sources, and addressing any potential biases or limitations.



Data analysis is another indispensable task for researchers (Macdonald 5). They apply Bhabha's postcolonial theory as a theoretical framework to analyze the gathered data, identifying patterns, themes, and instances of hybridity within the text. The researchers are responsible for interpreting the findings and drawing conclusions from the analysis.

The research results would typically begin with an introduction highlighting the analysis's emerging findings. Subsequent paragraphs would delve into specific details, providing a comprehensive account of the research results. Each paragraph may focus on a particular aspect of the findings, supporting it with relevant evidence or examples derived from the analyzed data. Researchers might employ descriptive language to summarize key points and establish connections between different findings to provide a cohesive and comprehensive representation of the research results. Furthermore, researchers may incorporate quotations or excerpts from the primary source, the short story "The Goats in the Cemetery," to illustrate and support their analysis and interpretations.

Results and Discussions

The Thai language has been enriched through the absorption of numerous loanwords from various languages, such as Malay and Arabic. This linguistic phenomenon can be attributed to historical and cultural factors that have shaped Thailand's language landscape, particularly the influence of Islam in Southern Thailand (Aphornsuvan 7, 16). The historical trade connections between Thai ports and merchants from Malay-speaking regions facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas, and languages. Over time, Malay words and expressions gradually integrated into Thai, especially in the Southern regions where the Malay population is more concentrated. This linguistic assimilation reflects the cultural exchanges and influences between the Thai and Malay communities.

Furthermore, the spread of Islam in Thailand brought the introduction of Arabic vocabulary and Islamic terminology into the local languages. Islamic scholars and teachers, known as *ustadz* or *ulama*, played a pivotal role in disseminating Islamic teachings and establishing Islamic schools in the region. Through their efforts, Arabic words associated with religious practices, prayers, and Islamic concepts became assimilated into Thai, particularly among Muslim communities. This linguistic fusion between Arabic and Thai highlights the religious and educational influences brought by Islamic traders and scholars, further reinforcing the cultural ties between Thailand and neighboring regions.

The absorption of loanwords from Malay and Arabic into Thai exemplifies the dynamic nature of languages and the ongoing interaction between different cultures and communities. It demonstrates how languages evolve and adapt through cultural exchanges and historical influences. Incorporating these loanwords not only expands the vocabulary of the Thai language but also serves as a testament to the interconnectedness and shared history of Thailand with its neighboring regions. Through linguistic assimilation, Thai society has embraced diverse cultural influences, contributing to the richness and diversity of the language spoken in the country.



Innalillahi-wainailahirajjun.

(From Allah we came, and to Him we return) (Songsompun 658).

“In the name of Allah, the compassionate.”

He uttered the words quietly and his body became still.

Innalillahi-wainailahirajjun.

(From Allah we came, and to Him we return) (Songsompun 684).

Songsompun began and ended his short story with these Islamic terminologies. The use of Islamic terminologies in the story's opening and closing lines may indicate a religious or cultural influence. The observation that the terminology “*Innalillahi*” is used by both Malay Muslims and non-Muslims in Southern Thailand during times of calamity and obituaries suggests a cultural assimilation and the presence of a hybrid culture in the region. This blending of traditions and practices between Malay-Muslims and Thai-Buddhists has influenced the shared usage of certain terminologies and expressions, including religious ones. The interdependence between language and ethnic/cultural identity is a recognized aspect of sociolinguistics and cultural studies. Yamireng's study (65), highlighted the dynamic nature of this relationship, where language and identity mutually influence and shape each other. In relation to the Malay-Muslim ethnic groups in the southern provinces of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, the religious dimension of identity is intertwined with language and culture.

Cultural assimilation and hybridity occur in diverse societies, and the coexistence and interaction of different religious and ethnic groups can lead to adopting and integrating various practices, beliefs, and expressions (Joll 259). These dynamics contribute to the complexity and richness of cultural identities within a given region. Language can play a crucial role in maintaining group identity and cohesion. It serves as a vehicle for communication, cultural expression, and transmitting values and traditions. Even when language has evolved to have a symbolic role, its significance in shaping and preserving group identity remains relevant. Although not primarily focused on religion, Yamireng's study (2018) found that religion emerged as a recurring theme in the in-depth interviews with respondents. This indicated that religion hold significance in how individuals interpret and construct their ethnic and cultural identities. Religion often serves as a system of beliefs, practices, and values contributing to a sense of belonging and identity within a specific community.

A couple weeks later, the chairman passed away. The Muslim attended his funeral without feeling any discomfort (Songsompun 661).

The villagers portrayed in the short story "the Goats in the Cemetery" demonstrated a remarkable familiarity with Islamic terminology and expressions in their everyday lives, even when experiencing mourning encompassing diverse religious beliefs. This observation highlights the cultural and religious context of the Southern Thai community. It indicates that Islamic traditions and linguistic influences had deeply permeated the villagers' daily routines and ceremonial practices. In contrast to the prevailing Buddhist mourning customs in other parts of Thailand, the villagers in this specific setting drew upon their rich Islamic cultural and religious heritage to navigate the complexities of grief and loss.



Thai Buddhist funerals typically involve specific chants, prayers, and rituals that aim to honor the deceased, accumulate merit, and support their spiritual journey in the afterlife. These practices may vary depending on local customs and individual preferences. Common funeral chants in Thai Buddhism include reciting scriptures such as the Paritta Suttas and chanting the names of the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha) and other relevant prayers (Langer 21). It is important to recognize that Thai Buddhism incorporates elements from both Theravada Buddhism and local cultural traditions, which may influence the specific rituals and expressions used during mourning. Therefore, while the aforementioned terminology may not be directly employed for mourning in Thai Buddhist practices, various other traditional chants, and prayers are utilized to offer solace and support during moments of bereavement.

He gave his greetings and paid respects to Mohammad's grave. The town chairman Aanon was the only person that could give the Islamic greetings properly, despite being a Buddhist. Wak Kassim, the grave keeper said it was no strange thing (Songsompun 661).

The fact that the Thai-Buddhist town chairman, Aanon, recited Islamic greetings in the short story further emphasizes the cultural intermingling and coexistence between different religious communities in Southern Thailand. Aanon's ability to recite Islamic greetings suggested a level of familiarity and acceptance of Islamic cultural practices, even as a member of the Buddhist majority. This portrayal highlighted the fluidity and interconnectedness of cultural and linguistic boundaries within the community. It suggested that individuals in the village were not confined to their respective religious identities but were open to embracing and engaging with the practices and expressions of other religious traditions.

Aanon's recitation of Islamic greetings could be seen as a sign of respect and acknowledgment of the cultural and religious diversity present in the community. It also underscored the bonds and relationships that existed between individuals from different religious backgrounds, indicating a sense of mutual understanding and acceptance. This aspect of the story supports the notion that language and cultural practices play a significant role in shaping group identity and facilitating intercultural interactions. It highlights the ongoing cultural exchange and hybridity that occurs within the context of a diverse and multi-religious society like Southern Thailand.

The response of Wak Kassim, a Malay-Muslim character in the short story, who considered Aanon's recitation of the Islamic greeting as normal and not extraordinary, emphasizes the level of acceptance and understanding that existed in the community. Wak Kassim's response demonstrates that cultural and linguistic mixing between different religious communities in Southern Thailand was not only tolerated but also embraced. Wak Kassim's acceptance of Aanon's behavior can reflect the broader atmosphere of inclusivity and coexistence in the village. It suggests that the villagers, regardless of their religious backgrounds, have developed a sense of familiarity and respect for each other's practices and beliefs.

This acceptance may stem from the long history of coexistence and cultural exchange in the region, where different religious communities have interacted and influenced each other



through time. It also demonstrated open-mindedness and tolerance within the community, enabling it to embrace diversity rather than reinforcing divisions. Wak Kassim's response may also indicate that non-Muslim individuals' practice of Islamic greetings was not perceived as usurpation or violating religious boundaries but rather as a demonstration of unity and shared cultural experiences.

This highlighted the interconnectedness and hybridity that characterizes local culture, emphasizing the idea that cultural practices and expressions are not limited to a particular religious group, but rather shared and celebrated by the wider community. In general, Wak Kassim's acceptance of Aanon's recitation of Islamic greetings highlights the spirit of inclusivity and understanding in the village, confirming the thesis that cultural assimilation and hybridity exist in religious coexistence.

The reciting of Islamic terminologies was not only conducted by Thai-Buddhists to Malay-Muslims, but also vice versa. There seems to be no awkwardness between them in using these terminologies in everyday life. As Wak Kassim did to Aanon and his mother as follows:

"I've made a promise to come, Maám," said the old man, "*Assalamuálaikum*, Mr. Aanon. May Allah protect you"(Songsompun 679).

The reciprocal pronunciation of Islamic terminologies between Thai-Buddhists and Malay-Muslims, as depicted in the interaction between Wak Kassim and Aanon and his mother, indicated a mutual acceptance and convenience in using these expressions in their everyday lives. The absence of any awkwardness implied a similar level of familiarity and cultural practices between them. The easiness with these Islamic terminologies of Wak Kassim, a Malay-Muslim, interacting with Aanon and his mother in the presence of Islamic terminologies demonstrates a certain level of cultural integration and understanding. It suggests that the boundaries between religious and cultural practices were fluid, and there was recognition and respect for each other's traditions.

This mutual exchange of Islamic terminologies can be considered a form of cultural exchange and respect, where individuals from different religious backgrounds actively engage and embrace each other's traditions. This indicates a willingness to bridge cultural and religious differences, fostering a sense of unity and togetherness among the diverse villagers. The absence of awkwardness in these interactions further strengthens the notion of hybridity and coexistence of different religious and cultural identities in Southern Thailand. It highlights the existence of a shared cultural space where individuals from different backgrounds can comfortably engage in religious expression without feeling alienated or out of place. Furthermore, the absence of awkwardness in the recitation of Islamic passages between Thai-Buddhists and Malay-Muslims indicates harmonious coexistence and an atmosphere of acceptance and mutual respect within the community. This reflects the intricate dynamics of cultural interaction and the blurring of religious boundaries, which contribute to the region's overall cultural complexity and diversity.

Hybridity between religions occurred not only between Islam and Buddha, but also with another Hindu religion. This was indicated when Mrs. Malee perceived that Aanon was being



overshadowed by evil spirits, which necessitated the utilization of Buddhist Monk and Hindu Fortuneteller at the very same time to shield Aanon from danger.

The Buddhist Monk and the Hindu Fortuneteller had unanimously declared that Aanon, her son was the the path off danger. She had Buddhist prayers performed at her home and was asked to place a magic figurine on the gates to ward danger. (Songsompun 667-668).

The Hindu community in Southern Thailand has successfully maintained their religious practices despite being a minority in a predominantly Buddhist country. Their presence enhances the region's religious diversity and contributes to the cultural fabric of Southern Thai society. The coexistence and interaction among Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam in this area highlight the intricate dynamics of religious hybridity and tolerance within the local communities. It is important to acknowledge that the Hindu community in Thailand is relatively small compared to the Buddhist and Muslim populations. Yet, their existence and contributions serve as a reminder of the historical and cultural connections between Southern Thailand and the Indian subcontinent, enriching the region's cultural heritage (Devarakonda 76).

The inclusion of Hinduism alongside Islam and Buddhism in the context of inter-religious hybridity added another layer of complexity to the cultural dynamics of the village. The belief held by Ms. Malee that Aanon was plagued by evil spirits, and the utilization of both a Buddhist monk and a Hindu fortuneteller to protect Aanon, reflects the integration of various religious practices and beliefs into the villagers' worldview. This demonstrated the community's willingness to embrace different religious traditions when addressing spiritual issues, indicating a syncretic approach where elements from different religions are combined or coexist to fulfill specific needs or resolve problems. Historical and cultural factors and the interactions between diverse religious communities in the region can influence this syncretism.

The acceptance and integration of Hindu practices alongside Islam and Buddhism in matters of spiritual protection highlight the flexibility and adaptability of the village's religious identity. It signified a willingness to embrace diverse religious beliefs and practices, seeking guidance and protection from multiple sources. The interaction between elements from Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism contributed to the hybridity and complexity of the village's culture, reflecting the fusion of religious traditions and the coexistence of various religious influences in the villagers' daily lives and spiritual beliefs. Overall, the incorporation of Hindu practiced alongside Islam and Buddhism in the context of protecting Aanon illustrated the inter-religious hybridity and syncretism present in the village, showcasing the community's readiness to draw upon resources from different religions in addressing spiritual matters and emphasizing the richness and diversity of the region's culture.

Exploring the merging of different religions, as depicted in the short story "The Goats in the Cemetery" by Kanogpong Songsompun would be an intriguing area for future researchers. The narrative offers a unique glimpse into the interaction and coexistence of Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism in a village setting, showcasing the hybridity and syncretism that arise from the convergence of these religions. A potential research study could delve deeper into understanding the dynamics of this inter-religious fusion, investigating the factors contributing



to its occurrence, its impact on individual and communal identities, and the practices and rituals reflecting this integration. This research could involve analyzing the texts themselves, exploring the beliefs and interactions of the characters, and investigating the cultural and historical contexts that shape the religious landscape of the region.

Additionally, field research and ethnographic methods can be employed to gain a deeper understanding of how these religious traditions are integrated into the lives of individuals. Interviews, observations, and participant observation can be conducted to explore the perspectives and experiences of individuals within the community, shedding light on their beliefs, practices, and social dynamics that facilitate the coexistence and blending of different religious elements. By examining the incorporation of different religions in the narrative of "The Goats in the Cemetery" and conducting empirical research within relevant communities, future researchers can contribute to a better understanding of the complexities of interfaith hybridity, syncretism, and the cultural dynamics of pluralistic societies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research on the utilization of Islamic terminologies in the short story "The Goats in the Cemetery" by Kanogpong Songsompun has revealed a fascinating aspect of the cultural dynamics within the village. The findings demonstrated that incorporating Islamic terminologies into the everyday language of the Thai-Buddhist villagers was a common practice and did not evoke any concern or discomfort among the Malay-Muslim villagers. This observation highlights a level of cultural assimilation and acceptance between the two religious communities depicted in the narrative. The ease with which Islamic terminologies were adopted by the Thai-Buddhist villagers reflects their religious tolerance and cultural integration, indicating their familiarity and acceptance of Islamic traditions and expressions.

Moreover, the research emphasized the interaction and hybridity of religious and cultural practices within the community, where the use of Islamic terminologies by Thai-Buddhists has become a customary practice. This phenomenon can be attributed to the historical and cultural interactions between the Thai-Buddhist and Malay-Muslim communities in Southern Thailand. The gradual blending of cultural and linguistic elements has contributed to a degree of syncretism and the integration of Islamic terminologies into the broader cultural fabric of the village. These findings shed light on the complex relationship between religion and culture in diverse communities, underscoring the importance of understanding local contexts and dynamics when exploring the coexistence and integration of different religious traditions.

Further research could delve into the factors that contribute to this mutual acceptance of Islamic terminologies and explore its impact on community cohesion and identity formation. Additionally, it would be valuable to expand the research to include an analysis of the Hindu community mentioned in the short story, further exploring the dynamics of religious hybridity in the context of Southern Thailand. By investigating the dynamics, manifestations, and implications of religious hybridity between Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, researchers can address the existing research gap and deepen our understanding of the fluidity and adaptability of cultural and religious practices in a multi-religious community, as exemplified in "The Goats in the Cemetery."



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