

**BESSH-16****Love and Desire in Thai Homosexual Songs**Assist. Prof. Dr. Orathai Piayura<sup>1\*</sup>, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jackkrit Duangpattra<sup>2</sup><sup>1, 2</sup>*Department of Thai, KhonKaen University, KhonKaen, Thailand*

## Abstract

This article explored the songs about homosexual broadcasting in Thailand during 2003-2013. The focus was on the songs with love and desire theme. The study found that there were 26 songs about homosexual being broadcasted during that decade. However, there were only 5 songs mentioning love and desire of homosexual. The rest of them were about homosexual identities, depression and social influence. The songs with love and desire theme expressed the difficulty to find true love among homosexual relationship, the desire to have their own 'husband', the desire of aging gay men, the inexperience of young gay men and the inferiority of gay men for being a 'fake'.

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*Keywords*—Thai, Homosexual, Song, Love, Desire

## Introduction

Homosexuality is like other issues about sex in Thai society, a private issue that one should not reveal. In traditional Thai society, before the 19<sup>th</sup> century was flexible about homosexual. It was not an acceptable practice but there was no punishment for it. The cause of unaccepted was the anti- policy of the state to reproduce as much population as possible because population was important for the old kingdom as the work force and military. Homosexual, in that period, was ambiguity and difficult for a simple society of Siam to understand. The illustration was found in a Dictionary of Siamese Language by Rev.J.Caswell (1855) as the following;

กะเทยนั้นคือบุคคลที่มีประเทษที่ลับปนหญิงก็ใช้ปนชายก็ใช้นั้นเรียกว่าคนกะเทย

Katoey is a person who has female and male sexual organ.

The other definition was Bradley (1873) as 'a person who is not a man, not a woman, and has only a urine path' or คนไม่เป็นเพศชายไม่เป็นเพศหญิงมีแต่ทางปัสสาวะ. Thus, Katoey is a Hermaphrodite and was perceived by Thai society as only by physically sexual difference. The meaning of cultural Katoey was found for the first time in Thai Three Seals Lawin 1894 in the section about the characteristics of a witness or *AiyaganLaksanapayan*.

Although there were some degrees of sexual discrimination for homosexuals in Thai society, there was no hard punishment. Some homosexual men could live in Thai society with inferiority but still enjoy their lives and being accepted as good friends, good colleagues and good members of their families.

## Thai Homosexual Songs and Thai Society

Homosexual songs were one of the elements to express homosexual relationship. The first Thai song with homosexual content was *PlengSutthaai* (เพลงสุดท้าย) which literally means 'The Last Song'. This song was released in 1985 as a soundtrack in the movie of the same title and became dramatically popular. In 1994, another song about homosexual men was released with the title *Kliart Tut* (เกลียดตุ๊ด) or 'I hate Tootsie'. This song was criticized for its pejorative meaning. Another song with negative tone was released in 1998 entitled *Prateang*, (ประเทือง) a common male name. Both *Kliart Tut* and *Prateang* narrated the lives of homosexual men from straight men's perspective. It could be generalized that homosexual songs in early period contained pejorative tone with no empathy. This phenomenon continued through the decade of 2003-2013 as the study found from 26 songs about homosexual being broadcasted

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during that period. However, the interesting thing about the songs in this decade was some of them contained the feeling of homosexual men about love and desire empathetically.

### Love and Desire in Thai Homosexual Songs

Apart from the songs sung by the straight men with negative tone, there were songs sung from the homosexual perspectives. Five songs being released in the decade of 2003-2013 containing the themes of love and desire were popular to some extent, not the top hit of the chart like those with the negative tone sung by straight men. The illustrations of the songs about love and desire of homosexual men were as the following analysis.

#### Love

The songs about love of homosexual were different from love songs of heterosexual. Homosexual love songs were always about a *Katoey* (Thai homosexual man) seeking true love which was believed not to exist. The illustration could be seen from the song *Katoey's Feeling* (หัวใจกะเทย) as follow:

เพลงหัวใจกะเทย (เจมส์เชิญยิ้ม)

เกิดมาเป็นผู้ชายไม่รู้ทำไมอยากมีหัวใจจริง ๆ ร่างกายเป็นชายแต่ใจเป็นหญิงนี่แหละของจริงกะเทยเมืองไทยกะเทยเมืองไทยนี่แหละหัวใจกะเทยชายไหนเล่าเอ๋ยให้ความจริงใจมีแต่ความรักหลอกๆ พอเขาปลอกแล้วก็ทิ้งไปไม่เคยจะเจอรักจริงไม่เหมือนกับหญิงที่เขารักชายผู้หญิงที่รักผู้หญิงยังมีรักจริงกว่าหญิงรักชายนั่นมันเป็นเพราะอะไรผู้ชายรักชายนั่นน้อยจริงอยากจะได้กลับเป็นชายแต่กลับไม่ได้เพราะจิตใจเหมือนหญิงขอเดือนกะเทยจริง ๆ จะแปลงเป็นหญิงก็งัดจิตใจนี้แหละหัวใจกะเทยอยากมีรักจริงเลยจะทุ่มเทกายใจขอเพียงคุณผู้ชายอย่ามาทำร้ายหัวใจกะเทย

“I was born as a man. But I don't know why I want to have a husband so much. My body is a man but my heart is a woman. I am a real Thai Katoey. I want to meet a man with true love but most men would leave me after they rip me off. There are true love in a 'woman and woman' and a 'woman and man' relationships. But true love in a 'man and man' relationship is difficult to find. I want to reverse to be a man but I cannot because my feeling is a woman. I want to warn other Katoeys what you will face if you really want to be a woman, you can never be. I want to meet a man with true love. I will devote my life and soul for him. This is the feeling of Katoey. Please do not hurt Katoey's feeling.”

The above song illustrated that a homosexual man was upset about not able to find true love. He believed that true love only exist in lesbian relationship and heterosexual relationship. The interesting point was heterosexuals of love always about unfulfilled love. Men and women were seeking true love in heterosexual relationship as well but a Katoey in homosexual songs were not convinced about that.

Apart from being upset about not able to find true love in homosexual relationship, the other song entitled *'Moaning Katoey'* (กะเทยรำพัน) illustrated the inferiority about being 'a woman in a man's body' which was believed to be the reason of unfulfilled love. This could be exemplified in the following song:

เพลงกะเทยรำพัน (โจอี้ฮีส)

คุณเห็นฉันเป็นเช่นดังกะเทยไอ้ที่เราเอ๋ยเกิดมาอาภัพเสียยิ่งร่างเป็นชายแต่ใจเราเป็นหญิงคิดไว้ซ้ำใจเสียจริงทุกสิ่งที่เราได้มาอย่าเห็นฉันเป็นคนนอกสังคมอย่าได้ทับถมมองเราไม่มีคุณค่าอย่ามองฉันคิดไม่มีจริตมารยาทแสนแสร้งทำวางท่าที่วางเหมือนคิงผู้หญิงรู้อย่างไรใครซ้ำชอกฉันจะบอกเรื่องราวที่มีทุกสิ่งหัวใจกะเทยทุ่มเทหวังชายแอบอิงพอเขาได้ไปทุกสิ่งแล้วเขาก็ทิ้งฉันไปถึงแม้ฉันเป็นสาวประเภทสองคุณอย่าได้มองหมกหมิ่นไม่ให้ฉันหมองไหม้พระพรหมลิขิตคิดเส้นจึงต้องเป็นไปชาตินี้โทษใครไม่ได้ตัวฉันเป็นชายแต่ใจเป็นหญิง

“You only see me as a Katoey. I'm so unfortunate. My body is male but my mind is female. I'm so upset about what I have got. Please do not think I'm an outsider and useless. Please do not misperceive me. I'm not a pretentious to pretend talking like a woman. Please understand how much pain I have to go through. I devote everything for men but they left me after they get what they want. Although I am the second typed woman, please do not look down at me. This is the way god wants me to be. I cannot blame anyone. My body is male but my mind is female.”

Both of the songs about love of homosexual as exemplified above reflected the perception of homosexual men towards heterosexual men as lucky people who could find true love and homosexual men as the unlucky people who were deceived in the relationship and unable to find true love.

#### Desire

On the aspect of desire, there was a song entitled *'An Old Katoey Craving for a Husband'* illustrating the feeling of an old homosexual man who was trying to 'advertise' himself and convince men to be his husband by tempting them with materials like an iPhone and iPad. The content of the song were illustrated:

เพลงกะเทยเต่าอยากได้หัว (สาวสองพันกัณจิกะ)

หวานใจปี่บัวว่าน้อยยุคสามกษัตริย์เทพอ่าอย่างปี่ไค้ได้เจ้าเป็นคัวน้องเอ๊ยมาเป็นคัวกะเทยมันบ่เซยแน่นอนเป็นกะเทยแต่ละเหงากเหงาใจไค้ได้ป้อจายมาเป็นคัวอี่ปี่บัวว่าน้อยบ่าวใหญ่บ่าวใหม่บ่าวจี่หน้าคาคีเป็นคัวปี่บ่บ้องปี่กะเทยแต่จะคอยเฝ้าใจหมองไค้มีคู่กรรมมารวมห้องเดิมที่บ่าวน้อยบ่าวจี่เป็นคัวปี่บ่บ้องเป็นคัวกะเทยมันบ่เซยแล้วกันจะแต่งทั้งวันเอาแบบเกาหลีกะได้จะซื้อไอโฟนไอแพดหื้อใจแสบเลือดรุ่นใหม่เข้าโลกออนไลน์ตั้งวันการเอาใจใส่บ่หื้อได้คิดหวังจะดั่งคั้งปี่จะแบ่งจะปันกอดกอดหัววันหัววันก็มันจิ้นใจแล้วเป็นกะเทยแต่ก็แผ่นแต่ร่างกายในใจยังสศสศหื้อแข่งกับชะนีปี่บ่บ้องหรือปี่ขอรับรองจะหื้อมันดั่งกันจะกินกินจิวาญจิวากันปี่สาวสองพันขอฮึดมันสัญญาฮึดปี่ได้คณาบ่าวน้อยบ่าบ้อง

“My sweetheart, a young man of 3G epoch, an old Katoey like me wants to have you as a husband. Please come to me and be a Katoey’s husband. It will keep you up to date. It is lonely to be an old Katoey. I want a man to be my husband. I don’t care if you are a young man or an old man. Handsome man, do you want to be my husband? I’m so sad waiting for a partner to sleep in the same room. Oh young men, please come to be my husband. I will not embarrass you for being an old fashion Katoey. I can dress up in Korean style. I will buy an iPhone and iPad or any tablet you want for you. We can access the online world all day. I will take care of you. I will give you the money. I will hug you. Hug hug that was enough to keep me happy. I am old, but I’m still young at heart. I can compete with a woman with no problem. I can guarantee you with fun. I can take you for Korean food. An old lady like me will keep my promise. Please love me young men.”

The desire of a homosexual was expressed in a ‘funny’ way in the above song. Looking at the content of this song on the surface, it was amusing. But more in-depth analytical reflected Thai sexual culture. ‘Sex issues’, especially ‘sexual intercourse’ were seen as dirty and embarrassing things that one should not reveal. This was influenced by the teaching of the Buddha that sexual desire was craving and the cause of unhappiness (Siriporn, 2003:137-138). Therefore, to express the feeling of sexual desire directly could be embarrassing for a homosexual man in this song. However, that was interesting because usually Katoey were seen as a group of people who were sexually extrovert in Thai society. The modest expression of sexual desire in this song could be because of being an ‘old Katoey’ that caused a lack of self confidence to express sexual desire more explicitly. In addition, the song was presented with a ‘funny’ tone which was another ‘technique’ of sexual presentation in Thai ‘literati’.

#### Conclusion

Homosexual issue was like other issues about sex in Thai society that people still find it embarrassing to talk or write about. In early period, the songs about homosexual were sung in an unsympathetic tone. Homosexual was presented as a disgusting and funny group of people. In the decade of 2003-2013, there was the emergence of songs about love and desire of homosexual presented with more empathy. However, the songs about homosexual love were presented as an impossible mission for homosexual men to find true love and homosexual desire was presented in a modest way with a ‘funny’ tone.

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