

Making sense of *BuppeSanNivas* songs:

What do they tell about beliefs, cultures, values, and love?

ความหมายของเพลงประกอบละครบุพเพสันนิวาส:

การบอกกล่าวเรื่องความเชื่อ วัฒนธรรม คุณค่า และความรัก

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Abstract

Emotional appreciation and insight understanding in beliefs, cultures, and values are all rewards given by songs. They are also equipped all Thai dramas. With the most popularity, in this case, the Star-Cross Lovers or *BuppeSanNivas* songs were studied and examined in terms of its beliefs, cultures, and values as well as type of loves represented. Critical discourse analysis through lexical selection was employed. The study demonstrated that rebirth, reincarnation, and transmigration; fatalism; and the focal of romantic love were the cultural and value ideologies existing in Thailand. Likewise, romantic love was predominantly and obviously mirrored in the four sample lyrics. In the field of cross-cultural communication, the study reiterates that marketing communicators need to respect to Thailand's culture and value. Otherwise, failure in communication can be the expected result. Apart from basic demographic and psychographic factors of analysis, likewise, scholars and researchers are encouraged to include fatalism as another important factor.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, Cultural ideology, Love ideology, Romantic love,
BuppeSanNivas

Introduction

Songs do not make people enjoyable only, but they can tell and give us social, cultural, and historical beliefs, insights, and construct. Such appreciation, certainly, comes from language creativity and development (Watanasawad, 2007). Spitzer and Walters (2003) expressively and obviously underlined about songs and are agreed by other academia and professionals (e.g., Botella, 2009; Watanasawad, 2007) that there are three vital dimension of

song appreciation, i.e. 1) emotional reflection; 2) making sense of personal life; and 3) historical representation.

There are many studies confirming these facts. For example, the study of Firdaus (2013), by analysing song lyrics revealed three different types of love including affectionate love between men and women, parental love between parents and their children, and personal love about someone's life. The study of D'Água (2016) demonstrated how women representation has changed from time to time and that can be a good source of information for gender historians and scholars. Moreover, the study of Kotchapakdee et al. (2014) provided and showed us more understanding on Lao PDR's music industry that it has continually been influenced by the changes in the country's infrastructure and cultural factors. Nonetheless, traditional beliefs and cultures remain vital in the people's ways of life. Even types of song play an important role of a happening and making sense in society. For instance, rap music is a venue of yielding human rights and social equality made by a group of Black people. It, likewise, represents their perception on various social violences (Patel, 2008).

Songs are also of need in all dramas in order to make audience appreciated and understandable in the stories and in insightful cultures, values, and traditions. In Thailand, the majority of the country's dramas pay attention in love story. These, just recently, include *BuppeSanNivas* or, in English, star-crossed lovers. This drama hits a record of rating in Thailand and aired by Thai TV Color Channel 3, a commercial television company. Its story is about permanent love destiny, death and birth, and historical knowledge in the reign of Ayutthaya. Even prisoners, interestingly, it is said by Krit Krasaethip, chief of the Bangkok Remand Prison that "[s]ome prisoners have no education. But they could learn about the history of the country, so they are allowed to watch the broadcast [*BuppeSanNivas*]" (cited in *Prisoners in Thailand get to watch mega drama hit love destiny – by popular demand*, 2018). Its popularity gives economic growth and contribution from drawing a much larger number of domestic and international visitors.

As a result of these, the targets of the study were to study Thai beliefs, cultures, and values presented in *BuppeSanNivas* and to examine the type of love reflected in the drama.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were as follows: 1) to examine Thai beliefs, cultures, and values presented in *BuppeSanNivas* and 2) to examine the type of love reflected in the drama.

Cultural and value ideologies in Thailand

Thailand is a religious-oriented country. The majority of Thais respect Buddhism. They are cultivated with rebirth and reincarnation, fatalism, and love.

With truth, as for rebirth and reincarnation, '[o]ne central belief of Buddhism is often referred to as reincarnation – the concept that people are reborn after dying. In fact, most individuals go through many cycles of birth, living, death and rebirth. A practicing Buddhist differentiates between the concepts of rebirth and reincarnation. In reincarnation, the individual may recur repeatedly. In rebirth, a person does not necessarily return to Earth as the same entity ever again. He compares it to a leaf growing on a tree. When the withering leaf falls off, a new leaf will eventually replace it. It is similar to the old leaf, but it is not identical to the original leaf' (UNHCR, n.d.).

Not different from rebirth and reincarnation, in terms of fatalism, people are embedded with fatalism. The poorer they are, the more they respect to fatalism (Ruii, 2013).

For love ideology, as stated earlier, Thais are tied with religious concept of Buddhism. And, this affects on Thai people's love ideology. Concluding from several previous studies, we can see the ideologies of love in many aspects as follows.

1) Love is a parental business. Both studies of Boonpanyarote (2015) and Pananakhonsab (2016) apparently highlighted that love is one dimension of parental expectations and responsibilities. In other words, the parents influence on their children's love and couples choices. We love the sentence made by Boonpanyarote that '[t]he social structure of Thailand also makes it difficult for a couple to be truly independent in mate selection because it must be 'right' in the eyes of an adult or of ancestors who have passed away' (p.).

2) Love is a mixture of happiness and grievance (Sounsamut, 2009).

3) Love is about destiny (Sounsamut, 2009).

4) Love is something like the fifth basic need in life. Even the ever-changing world, singleness is not much accepted in Thailand. The statement of Pananakhonsab (2016) and

the study of Sounsamut (2009) confirm about this. We shall draw the direct explanation of the former scholar that: 'In Thailand, like many cultures, the ideology of romantic love and having a family stresses to women that finding a partner, preferably a soul mate, is absolutely fundamental to their happiness' (Pananakhonsab, 2016, p.29).

Triangulation theory of love

According to Robert Sternberg, a psychologist, there are seven types of love and three scales evaluating such loves. There are three components of love ranging from the beginning to the mature, i.e. intimacy, passion, and commitment. Based upon the three elements, six types of love, i.e. liking, romantic love, infatuation, fatuous love, empty love, and companionate are elaborated below by impinging upon the explanations made by Hofstra University (n.d.).

For the first three types of love, only one dimension of love is highlighted. At the lowest, 'hit it off' should be a good description for *liking*. The second type of love focuses on passion only or 'love at first sight' and that can cause 'I don't love you anymore' easily. This type of love is called *infatuated*. *Empty love* comes up when there are no more intimacy and passion left. Commitment or responsibility is taken into granted in marriage life, instead.

The last four types of love are a mixture of intimacy and passion, i.e. *romantic love*, intimacy and commitment, i.e. *companionate*, passion and commitment, i.e. *fatuous love*, and intimacy, passion, and romantic love, i.e. *consummate love*. As for *romantic love*, both affective and physical love is used. For ease of understanding, we shall call this type of love something like 'blind faith'. Moreover, *companionate love* or rational love is a mixture between profoundly emotional love and commitment or partner/family responsibility. Also, those who share their life with can be everything, i.e. husband/wife, friend, partner, and the like. Divorce and cheating on someone can be the expected results in a very short of time for *fatuous love* because couples employ passion on decision-making on marriage. Last but not least, the type of love every couple wishes to have in their marriage lives is so-called *consummate love*, a perfect love that is consisted of intimacy, passion, and commitment. Referring to Sternberg, it is much more difficult to keep this type of love going.

Research Scope

The scope of this study employed a single case study of *BuppeSanNivas*.

Methodology

Critical discourse analysis through scrutinising the *BuppeSanNiva* lyrics was employed. For *BuppeSanNivas*, there were four songs including *BuppeSanNivas* (star-crossed lovers), *Aor Chao Aei* (My sweetheart), *Piang Sob Tah* (Love at first sight), and *Ter Nor Ter* (My love) (full lyrics could be seen in appendices). Please be noted that only the first, i.e. text analysis and third, i.e. socio-cultural analysis layers of critical discourse analysis were highlighted in this study.

Results

According to the objectives of the study, this section was separated into 1) Thai beliefs, cultures, and values and 2) type of romantic love.

Thai beliefs, cultures, and values

Drawing upon critical discourse analysis, this study exhibited cultural and value ideologies in Thailand as 1) Rebirth, reincarnation, and transmigration, 2) Fatalism, and 3) The focal of romantic love, i.e. *BuppeSanNivas*.

1) Rebirth, reincarnation, and transmigration

All the lyrics repeated the ideology of rebirth, reincarnation, and transmigration through direct lexical selection. Some examples were exhibited below.

Example 1

<u>ฟ้าดินแยกเราเท่าไรไม่ขาด</u>	Even though time passes, we are not broken apart
<u>ภพชาติพรากเราห่างกันไม่ได้</u>	Until this present incarnation, we have not been broken apart

Example 2

<u>เพียงชาติใดถ้าเราไม่อาจได้คู่กัน</u>	If we can't meet each other in this incarnation
<u>ในชาตินั้นจะยอมเปลี่ยวใจถ้าไร้เธอ</u>	I promise I will be alone
<u>จะชาติใดขอใจติดตามไปพบเจอ</u>	In any incarnation, I will follow you

Both examples exhibited obvious words including 'time passes', 'this present incarnation', 'in this incarnation', and 'in any incarnation'. Birth, death, and rebirth were always taught and cultivated, and believed among Thai people from time to time.

2) Fatalism

According to Ruiu (2012), 'Fatalism has been shown to play a significant role in determining a vast range of individual behaviors including saving decisions, occupational choices, health screening, natural disaster preparedness. For fatalism I intend people's propensity to believe that their destinies are ruled by an unseen power, Fate, rather than by their will' (p.1). In other words, rationality was of no importance, in this case. Instead, people believed in something that could not physically be identified. These were some examples:

Example 1

กลัวชะตาจะมาพรากเรา I am afraid that the destiny makes us apart

Example 2

มีแค่เธอผู้เดียวชะตาได้หมายมั่น You are the only one indicated by the destiny
คนสำคัญของฉันเสมอ You are always important to me

The word 'destiny' or 'fatalism' was clearly stated in the lyrics. It was believed by the characters that no one could change what had been specified by unknown and unspecified people, event, and action. In this case, it was someone and something that told the characters that they could not be broken apart; they were a lover, instead.

3) The focal of romantic love

There were two techniques showing this ideology, i.e. how to call a romantic woman and overstatement.

How to call a romantic woman

Example 1

เธอตราตรึงในฝันตั้งแสงจันทร์อันสดใส You are engraved on my dream, as you are the bright
moon

Example 2

กลัวฉันกลัวว่าจันทร์จะลาจากฟ้าไกล I am very afraid that you are going away

Example 3

ออเจ้าเอ๋ยงามประกายนภา My sweetheart, you are beautiful as the shining sky
ขอมองไม่ยอมนิทรา I would like to look at you, without sleeps
ขอชื่นตาให้พี่ชื่นใจ to fresh my eyes, to fresh my heart

A moon is used to denote a woman. It was not just a simple, ordinary woman, but her beauty was always shined and remembered. And a man always fell in love with and called for that.

Overstatement

Example 1

ก็ภูผาสูงชันลำน้ำอันกว้างใหญ่ No matter how deep the mountains, how big the rivers
ฉันจะไปขอให้พานพบเธอ I push my hard attempt to meet you

Although there would be big and very challenging difficulties including climbing a very big mountain and swimming in an abundant river, these were not the barriers for fighting for love.

Types of love

Based upon Sternberg's Triangulation Theory of Love, of the four *BuppeSanNivas* lyrics, romantic love, i.e. a mixture of passion and intimacy was predominantly presented. However, *Piang Sob Tah* and *Ter Nor Ter* were more likely to fall into intimacy factor than passion. *Aor Chao Aei* held a good balance of intimacy and passion, though. Furthermore, there was an exception of *BuppeSanNivas* whose content focused on consummate love, i.e. a mixture of intimacy, passion, and commitment. Below demonstrated these findings in greater details.

Consummate love: *BuppeSanNivas*

Thai

English Translation

สบตาเธอคนนี้ไม่รู้ฉันเป็นอย่างไร

When our eyes meet each other, I don't know how I feel

1

เธอตราตรึงในฝันตั้งแสงจันทร์อันสดใส
moon

You are engraved on my dream, as you are the bright

2

3

ห่างไกลยังเฝ้ารอใกล้กันฉันก็หวั่นไหว
you go

Even far away, I am waiting. Even closer, I don't want to let

4

5

เหลียวมองจันทร์ต้องทำให้คิดถึงเธอ

When I glance at the moon, I am thinking of you

6

ไม่ว่าอยู่แห่งไหนตั้งเรามีสายใยผูกพัน

Whenever we are as if we are tied together

...

7

รอวันพบเจอเคียงข้างรักเธอนิรันดร์

I have been waiting to meet and love you forever

As shown in numbers 1 and 6, it focused on intimacy. Numbers 2 to 5 clearly showed passion. The last sentence of the lyric obviously indicated the characters' commitment to live together forever.

Romantic love: *Aor Chao Aei*

อ้อเจ้าเอ๋ยเคยรู้หรือไม่ว่า

My sweetheart, do you know

ตรงนี้ยังมีใครครุฑห้วงหา

there is someone thinking of you

อ้อเจ้าเอ๋ยงามประกายนภา

My sweetheart, you are beautiful as the shining sky

ขอมองไม่ยอมนิทรา

I would like to look at you, without sleeps

ขอชื่นตาให้พื้ชื่นใจ

to fresh my eyes, to fresh my heart

กลัวฉันกลัวว่าจันทร์จะลาจากฟ้าไกล

I am very afraid that you are going away

กลัวฉันกลัวว่าใจจะขาดเมื่อร้างลา

I will be very afraid of my broken heart if breaking apart

กลัวฉันกลัวว่าอ้อเจ้าจะไกลไม่เห็นหน้า

I am very afraid that you are going away and don't meet

you ever

กลัวชะตาจะมาพรากเรา

I am afraid that the destiny makes us apart

เพียงลับตากระวนกระวายและร้อนรน

Even if you are out of sight, I feel worry and impatient

เพียงมีตมณที่จะทานทนได้หรือเปล่า Even if it is at night, I don't know if I can be tolerate on it
เพียงยิ้มมาหัวใจเบิกบานคลายทุกเศร้า Even if you smile, my heart is flying, sadness is gone
เราหนอเราคะนี่ถึงอเจ้าเอย It is me who are thinking of you, my sweetheart

Intimacy was apparently demonstrated through the phrases and sentences These phrases and sentences could, likewise, reflected craziness in physical appearances, especially 'I would like to look at you, without sleeps', 'to fresh my eyes, to fresh my heart', and even if you smile, my heart is flying, sadness is gone.

Romantic love: *Piang Sob Tah*

เพียงสบตาเท่านั้น หัวใจฉันก็อบอุ่นใจ When I catch your eyes, I feel warm and happy
เพียงสบตาเธอนั้น ฉันก็รู้ทันใด When I catch your eyes, I immediately know
ว่าเธอคือใครคนนั้นที่ฉันรอ that you are the one I am waiting for
ให้ความรักของเราผูกพันใจสองใจ Let our love ties our heart together
ยามต้องไกลแสนไกล นึกถึงตากู้นั้น Even though I have gone far away, I am always thinking of
your eyes

This part of the lyric greatly reiterated the statement the eyes are the window of the soul. That was to say, intimacy was presented that when looking at someone's eyes, proximity and emotional involvement were made and when looking at someone's eyes, proximity was brought forward. In the sense, likewise, physical attractiveness was of need.

Romantic love: *Ter Nor Ter*

ตรงนี้ยังสดใสเพราะมีเธอชิดใกล้สบตา It is still bright because you are closed to me and
catch the eyes each other
ยามสายลมพริ้วในคืนค้ำยังอุ่นใจทุกครา Even having winds at night, I am still and always happy
ทุกคืนคะนี่แต่เธอยามนิทรา While I am sleeping, every night I am thinking of you
ชื่นอุราสองเรามาผูกพัน I am happy that we are tied together
เธอหนอเธอฉันมีแต่เธอในหัวใจ My love, I have only you in my heart

In this case, love was rather an emotion and affection than a rationale. In short, it could be called a crazy in love. Such words and phrases were underlined.

Conclusion and Discussion

Thai society always remains their respect and beliefs in rebirth, reincarnation, and transmigration; fatalism; and the focal of romantic love, i.e. BuppeSanNivas. The result of the following objective of the study confirmed that Thai people predominantly fell in love with romantic love.

According to Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2018), the word belief is explained as 'the feeling of being certain that something exists or is true'. It is not easy and wise get both beliefs in rebirth, reincarnation, and transmigration and also fatalism away from Thai people's heads and minds. Otherwise, harsh attack and offense could be the expected results. Respect to good deeds in the present was of importance, instead. Bhodhisita (n.d., p.8-9) citing Phutthathat Phikkhu, in Phra Dusadee Methangkuro, 2001, p.7) conclusively said that, it was important to do good deeds right now and not have to wait until next life. If people were doing good merits, they would be receiving good consequences in turn in presence and in next life.

Fatalism was another cultural and religious dimension that was difficult to explain rationally. Even in the findings of Kayani (2011) about car accident in Pakistan, fatalism appeared to be the most necessary factor behind car crashes on roads and not to being exposed to communication message. As Kayani (2011) further found that, '[f]ate was used to rationalize fatal crashes using the argument that the people killed were destined to die that day, one way or another. Related to this was the sense of either not being fully in control of the vehicle, or not needing to take safety precautions, because crashes were predestined anyway' (p.v).

As presented in the findings indicating the priority of romantic love, only physical appearance and ideal men and women, and the influence and expectations of parents were predominantly underlined. This group of people who believe in romantic love could only have affection and body rather than cognition, commitment, and responsibility. Also, the couples had shared only happiness, but not sadness and grievances. This was evidenced by the study of Galeon & Rico (2012).

As a result of this, it was not surprising that why a number of Thai people getting divorced had been increasingly. Thairath Online (2017) referring to the report of the Ministry of Interior, in the past ten years, of around 120,000 officially married couples; there was almost 50% of them officially were divorced.

In the field of cross-cultural communication, the study reiterates that marketing communicators need to respect to Thailand's culture and value. In other words, Thai people believe in rebirth or incarnation, fatalism, and romantic love. Otherwise, failure in communication can be the expected result. Apart from basic demographic and psychographic factors of analysis, likewise, scholars and researchers are encouraged to include fatalism as another important, mediating factor.

Further study should employ a multiple case study for a comparative result on rebirth, reincarnation, and transmigration; fatalism; and romantic love.

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