

Traditions of Eroticism in Thai Literature and the Contribution of Sujindaa Khantayaalongkot¹

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Introduction

Thailand is a place of contradictory phenomena about sex. A lot of westerners know Thailand as a sex tour destination while the country itself has a rather modest sexual culture. In reality, sexual issues are infrequently discussed openly, especially among women. This culture is dubbed by a Thai critic as 'a culture of silence' (Sutham, 2001 : 120). Therefore, whoever, especially women, is not silent about sex is considered to be 'controversial'. Sujindaa Khantayaalongkot is the most controversial woman writer who dares to take a share of erotic writing which has been dominated by Thai

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ศิลปิน : ชวง มูลพินิจ
หนังสือ "ความลับ" โดย ชามา

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male authors for centuries. Moreover, she has contributed a lot into the traditions of Thai erotic literature.

The Definition of ‘Erotic’

The *Bloomsbury Guide to Erotic Literature* explains that the term ‘erotic’ entered English language via the French ‘erotique’ from the Greek ‘erotikos’ which in turn derives from ‘eros’ meaning ‘sexual love’. Thus ‘erotica’ means anything that is about sexual desire, whether or not it was written with the intention of arousing desire in the reader. *The Oxford English Reference Dictionary* defines the term ‘erotic’ as ‘of or causing sexual love’. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* adds ‘esp. tending to arouse sexual desire or excitement’. *Webster’s Dictionary* adds ‘literary or artistic items having an erotic theme, esp. books treating of sexual love in a sensuous or voluptuous manner. This article will adopt the definition of erotic from the *Bloomsbury Guide to Erotic Literature* and the *Webster’s Dictionary* together. Therefore, the ‘erotic literature’ to be discussed in this article is ‘literary items having an erotic theme or concerning sexual desire, whether or not it was written with the intention of arousing desire in the reader’.

The History of Eroticism in Thailand

According to Naai Tamraa Na Meuangtai, a famous Thai intellectual, the original model of erotic writing is in the famous work of classical Thai literature called *Lilit Pralor* (‘A poem about Prince Lor’, ลิลิตพระลอ). There is no clear evidence about the author and the period of writing for this poem, however, the widely-accepted assumption is that a male writer wrote it in the mid 15th

century.³ Nothing like this appears in any other older Thai literature (Tamraa, 1999 : 383). The story is about two princesses who have heard about the beauty of the young but married prince and fall in love with him without seeing him. They then try to make him aware of them and get him to come to meet them by means of magic. After the prince hears about the beauty of the two princesses, he falls madly in love with them without seeing either. He then asks for permission from his mother and his wife to go to see them. Neither the wife nor the mother wants him to go because these princesses are the daughters of an enemy king. However, nobody can prevent the young prince and he travels a long way to meet the two princesses. When they meet, there is a very detailed description of their love-making, which constitutes the erotic part of the story. At the end, the prince and princesses are all killed together on the orders of the princesses' grandmother and the two warring kingdoms finally become friends. The following quote is an example of love-making scene, which is the erotic part of the story.

เชยชมชูปากบ้วน	แสนอมฤตรสข้อน
สวาทเคล้าลึงสมร	
กรเกี้ยวกรกอดเกื้อ	เนื้อแนบเนื้อโอเนื้อ
อ่อนเนื้อเอาใจ	
พักตราไสใหม่หมา	หน้าแนบหน้าโอหน้า
หนุ่มหน้าสรสม	

³ Wibha Kongkanan, a Professor of Thai literature in Thailand, once raised her own opinion that the author of *Lilit Pralor* is female. She suggested that the depiction of the mother's love is so real that no male writer would be able to imagine such feelings and the author pays much attention to describe the beauty of the prince but not the princesses. In Wibha's opinion the author could only be a woman and a mother to be able to write something like this. However, Wibha's theory is not widely accepted by academics, as the evidence to support is not sufficient.

นมแนบนมนี้มน้อง	ท้องแนบท้องโอ้ท้อง
อ่อนท้องทรวงสมร	
สมเสนห์อรใหม่ห่ม	กลั้วสกลั้วกลืนกลั้ว
เกลสกลั้วสงสาร	
บุษบาบานคลี่คล้อย	สร้อยแลสร้อยซ้อนสร้อย
เสียดสร้อยสระศรี	
ภุมรีคิ่งคู่เกล้า	กลางกมลยรรเย้า
ยัวร์้องขานขึ้น	
สรงสระสวรรค์ไปเพียง	สระพระนุชเนื้อเกลี้ยง
อาบโอ้อาใจ	
แสนสนุกในสระน้อง	ปลาชื่นชมเต้นต๋อง
ดอกไม้บัวบาน	
ตระการฝั่งสระแก้ว	หมดฝ้าผ่องแผ้ว
โคกฟ้าฤๅปูน	
บุญมีมาจึงได้	ชมเต้าทองน้องไ้
พี่เอ๋ยวานชม	หนึ่งรา

The prince and the two princesses embrace each other and lean down. They feed each other with their lips. It tastes like juice from heaven. Their arms are around each other, flesh is next to flesh. The young and bright faces are next to each other. Breasts next to breasts, stomach next to stomach. The lovers are enjoying the new taste of lust, losing themselves in their cravings. The flower is opening its petal. The carpenter bee is nuzzling in the middle. They make noises together. (The prince said) "Bathing in the pond in heaven is not as good as in your pond. Your flesh pond is so smooth. It is very enjoyable in your pond. The fish is happy and jumps to touch the lotus. The bank of the precious pond is amazing. It is nice and clean. Even the hill of

heaven cannot compare with it. I am so lucky to have an opportunity to see your golden breasts” (Lilit Pralor, 1983 : 131).

After Lilit Pralor, comes a traditional style of writing that includes erotic scenes or episodes. The poets have to use beautiful language, simile and metaphor to describe the love-making scenes, rather than straightforward language. The erotic scenes or *Bot atsajan* (บทอัสจารย์) becomes one of the important elements in traditional Thai literature as is mentioned by a Thai literary critic, Pong Payajak :

Aesthetics in Thai classical literature depend on the ability of the author in describing nature, the beauty of the characters and many other things.... including erotic scenes (Pong, 1998 : 35).

All of the great Thai classical literature then has erotic scenes, all written by male writers and widely accepted as canonical literary works.

The following example is a descriptive love-making scene taken from the famous Thai classic *Kaakee* (‘Kaakee’, กาเกี), written by Jao praya praklang Hon. Kaakee is the very beautiful wife of King Prommathat. She is kidnapped by Khrut (‘Garuda’), a supernatural half-bird half-man creature living in a world different from that of human beings, vehicle or bearer of Vishnu. The following extract is a description of the love-making scene between Kaakee and Khrut.

<p>จงสว่างโศกมาเกษมสวาทบัง พลางกระหวัดรัตรวภิรมย์ใน บันดาลพลาหกเทวบุตร โผยมพยับอับอิงอนธการ สัตภันท์บรรพทกัโหวหวั่น</p>	<p>อย่าให้ร่างเร็ดขีดพิสมัย ชงชะไขว้ในเชิงระเริงลาน ก็ฝิ่งผุดตั้งทั่วทิศาศาล สะท้านถึงเมรุราชสีขรินทร์ คงกาลันเป็นระลอกกระฉอกสินธุ์</p>
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ฝูงม้ามัจฉาในวาริน
 อันดวงดอกสิมพลีที่ตูมกลัด
 ที่ตูมบานก้านกลีบขจรจาย
 แมลงภูที่พริบร้อนเอามาซาบ
 สองสุขสองเกษมเปรมสกัน
 ครุฑลีมล่งเล่นอโนดาต
 ครุฑลีมล่งเล่นสัตภัณฑ์

ก็โดดดินเล่นน้ำลำพองกาย
 ครั้นฝนซัดเซยแซมแย้มขยาย
 รำพายกลิ้งรีนรสเสาวคนธ์
 อาบละอองต้องทั่วทุกขุมขน
 สองกมลสองสวาทไม่คลาดกัน
 วรรณภูลีมีมิ่งมไหศวรรย์
 สุตาจันทร์ลีมีพักตร์พระภัสสา

“Please stop being sad and come to enjoy sex with me” Khrut said, putting his arms around Kaakee. He then stimulated her all over. Suddenly, there was a big downpour of rain. The sky was all dark, the thunder echoed to the biggest mountain in heaven, the mountain and forest were shaking and the water was wavy in the river. The fish was playing with the water and puffing up its body. The heaven blossom, after being hit by the big rain, was now starting to bloom. When the petals opened, beautiful scent came out. The magic carpenter bee hurried to dip himself in and bathe every inch of his body. The two lovers were euphoric. Khrut forgot to go swimming. Kaakee forgot the king. Khrut forgot to go out and play. Kaakee forgot her husband’s face (Kaakee; Jao prayaa prakhleng Hon).

Erotic scenes like the above examples are found in most of the great Thai classical literature written by men. However, this does not mean women writers do not write about sex. Erotic Thai literature written by women writers is quite different from that written by men. They only have some sexual themes but the writer does not give the description in as much detail as the literature written by male writers. This may be because female writers were too shy, or really innocent, or afraid of being condemned by society. An example of early

Thai literature about sexuality written by a female comes in the reign of King Rama IV (1851–68). Khun Suwan was the first female writer who wrote about lesbians in the court. The story is called Mom Pet sawan (‘Lady Heavenly Duck’, หม่อมเป็ดสวรรค์) and concerns a lesbian couple that are court ladies, who are found kissing each other under the blanket while the princess is asleep. The love-making scene between these couples is described as follows :

เข้าซูลมุนุ่นวายอยู่ปลายพระบาท
ก็คิดคาดเอาว่าคนหาเห็นไม่
จึงกระทำเอาแต่อำเภोज
ด้วยแสงไฟมืดมืดไม่มีโพลง
กระซุบกระซิบซุ่มกายอยู่ปลายพระบาท
อุตุลตุตุจาดทำอาจโถง
เอาเพลาะหอมกรอมหุ้มกันคลุมโปง

The couple were messing around with each other by the princess’ feet. They thought nobody could see them. Therefore, they behaved according to their hearts. It was dark because there was no light. The couple were whispering in the dark by the princess’s feet. They were busily engaged in outrageous intimacy under the blanket (Khun Suwan, 1968 : 78–79).

The love-making between the two lovers is described modestly by the female poet, compared with the love-making scenes written by the male poets. However, the interesting thing about this story is Khun Suwan writes this story in an amusing tone, she makes it seem as if lesbian practice is accepted.

Khun Suwan's most famous work is called *Pra Ma-leh-theh-thai* ('Prince Ma-leh-theh-thai', พระมะเหลเถไถ). This story shows her fantastic skill with the Thai language by putting meaningful and meaningless words together, and the story turns out to be meaningful. What makes this story interesting is the way the hero and heroine are brought together. In Thai traditional writing the female and male characters are mated with God's help. God usually brings a male character to a female character's bedroom. But Khun Suwan makes God bring the female character from her bedroom to sleep with the male character in the jungle. This may be because Khun Suwan is a court lady. Having spent most of her life in the court, the world outside the court must have been challenging for her. Therefore, she imagines being taken outside the court to meet a man. This was considered funny for people of her time and many liked to come and listen to Khun Suwan tell the story. However, Khun Suwan's imagination is analysed as female sexual fantasy by Kepner, as quoted :

Phra Malethethai is a female fantasy of sexual adventure and escape from repression; the intervention of the god Indra absolves her of responsibility. The name of this heroine, "Talaeng-gaeng", can be literally translated as "the place where the prisoner is to be executed", by which Khun Suwan suggests that a woman's safe, chaste bedchamber is a prison (Kepner, 1996 : 10).

Although it was controversial for Khun Suwan to write about female sexual fantasy, she was not controversial enough to describe the love-making scene between Prince Malethethai and Princess Talaeng-gaeng explicitly. The erotic scene in this story remains as modest as the erotic scene in the previous example from her other work *Mom Pet sawan*.

The following extract is to exemplify the description of the erotic scene between Prince Malethethai and Princess Talaeng-gaeng.

นี่บุญของพี่ยามะลาเตา	จึงพาเจ้ามาสมมะลเทศ
ว่าพลางทางถดมะหลดติด	อย่าอายเอียงเบี่ยงบิตมะลิตเป้
นางป้องปัดหัตถามะลาเท	มะโลโตโปเปมะเลตุง
สองภริมย์ชมเซยมะเลยปม	สำราญรมย์รื่นเริงมะเลิงตุ้ง
สัพพอกหยอกเย้ามะเลาชุง	สมสวาศีมาตมุงมะลุงแขง

“It was my great fortune that god has brought you to me,” the prince said, and moved himself close to her. “Please do not be shy”. The princess was embarrassed and tried to stop him from touching her. The two were engaged in foreplay with each other. They then had pleasure together” (Khun Suwan, 1968 : 23).

After Khun Suwan, there were some female writers such as Thidaa Bunnaak, Rayong Wenurak and Suwannee Sukhonthaa writing novels or short stories with sexual themes but nobody really called themselves ‘erotic writers’. Sujindaa Khantayaalongkot, the writer of the 1990s was the first female writer who dared to call herself an ‘erotic writer’ and her works ‘erotic fiction’. Her work has been found to be very controversial and contributed a lot to the Thai literary traditions of eroticism. Sujindaa’s female characters are independent and their attitude towards sex is very controversial. It is the first time that female characters describe sexual intercourse explicitly as well as mentioning masturbation and women enjoying group sex. This is a new phenomenon in Thai literary traditions of eroticism. Sujindaa’s style of writing is also different as it is written in an autobiographical style.

Sujindaa Khantayaalongkot

Personal Background

Sujindaa was born and grew up in Bangkok and graduated from Chulalongkorn University, achieving a Bachelor degree in Teaching. As she was majoring in Fine Arts, she spent some time working as a school teacher teaching Art. After this, her first job, she worked with magazines, newspapers and publishers as an artist and later became an editor. She was married in 1983 and divorced eight years later, having found out that her husband was having an affair in the seventh year of marriage, although she didn't break up with him straight away. She spent a year being patient and hoping that he would come back to her but, unfortunately, he never did. (Sujindaa, 2002 : 8-9) Sujindaa then got married for a second time to an English man. She now lives a peaceful life with her husband in Folkestone on the south-east coast of England.

Background as a Writer

Sujindaa has been very famous, actually notorious, since her first book *Jai duang pliaw* (Lonely Heart, ใจดวงเปลี่ยว) was published in 1992. Her work is popular among educated youngsters but banned from academic society because she uses very straightforward language, or 'naked' words. Some words are considered rude by many academics, an example being Niwat Kongpian, a famous Thai columnist and critic, who argues that Sujindaa's work is not erotic but is in fact pornographic.⁴ Although her work is not widely accepted within academia, she is considered a successful erotic writer in

⁴ Interview with Niwat Kongpian on May 10th, 2001.

terms of the numbers of books sold.⁵ This phenomenon is very similar to that of Thidaa Bunnaak, the female writers of novels with sexual themes of the 1950s. Thidaa's book, *Kham saarapaap rak khorng ying saao* was banned for its use of "naked language" but she was a best seller of her time.

Jai duang pliaw is a collection of ten short stories, nine of them having explicit love-making scenes. Only one story entitled *Mae* ('Mother', แม่) does not talk about sexual relationships but about an old Chinese housewife who is, presumably, modelled on Sujindaa's own mother.⁶ The nine stories are either about a woman whose marriage fails or a woman who meets an attractive man and wants to have sexual relationships with him. Therefore these women are quite self-confident and open about sex. As discussed earlier, these are not the characteristics of typical or 'good' Thai women. After *Jai duang pliaw*, Sujindaa produced another nine books, two of them are travelling books and the others are fiction. These books are *Daet see khaao* (The White Sun, แดดสีขาว) (1995), *Meuan rabam dork nun* (Like the Dance of Cotton Blossoms, เหมือนระบำดอกนุ่น) (1993), *Daet naao* (The Cold Sun, แดดหนาว) (1994), *Reuang san khat thing* ('Unwanted short stories', เรื่องสั้นคัดทิ้ง) (1997), *Paap raang meuan jing* ('The Realistic Sketch', ภาพร่างเหมือนจริง) (1997), *Mai kaangkhen kap duangdao* ('The cross and the star', ไม่กางเขนกับดวงดาว) (1999), *I-taa-lee* ('Italy', อิตาลี) (1997) *Ee-yip* ('Egypt', อียิปต์) (1997), *Paa-tee* ('Party', पार्टी) (1996).

⁵ *Jai duang pliaw* was published seven times and 2,000 copies each time.

⁶ Sujindaa mentions her own mother in the preface of her book. Her mother is a Chinese who is very obedient shares the same characteristics as the main female character in *Mae* (Mother).

After Sujindaa's success, erotic writing has become a popular medium for new writers. This fashion for erotic writing could possibly be down to reasons of income and/or the desire for fame. Selling a vast number of copies could result in a sizeable income and being a woman writing erotic fiction in Thailand is always seen as controversial and attracts people's interest. The popularity of Sujindaa and erotic writing in the 1990s illustrates the change of attitude to female sexuality in Thailand. When Thidaa Bunnaak wrote about kissing and included sexual scenes in the 1950s, she was condemned by society and her style of writing did not become fashionable. This could be because at that time writing and talking about sex was considered extremely vulgar. It has taken forty years for this attitude to change. There was no such period before the 1990s that erotic writing was widely read among female youngsters. By the late 1990s, the bookshelves in major bookstores in Thailand were flooded with erotic books from mainly 'new face' (*naa mai*, หน้าใหม่) female writers. Apart from Sujindaa's influence, this change of attitude in Thai society could as well be because of the change in attitude to sexuality as a result of an increase in Western influence and exposure to popular Western culture. Some Thai academics and critics, for instance, Nithi lewsriwong, argues that it is not Western influence that make the new generation of Thais become more promiscuous. In contrast, he argues that such western influences as Victorian beliefs about women having to be virgins until they are married or the concept of monogamy has helped to control promiscuity in Thai society (Nithi, 2002 : 75). Nithi's argument may be right about the Victorian influence and ideas of monogamy but his claim about western influence has nothing to do with the promiscuity of the new generation of Thais and is not convincing because the general phenomenon in the big cities in Thailand, especially Bangkok, in the twentieth century is that youngsters are copying western styles of dress and

dance as exhibited on MTV and other music channels. Watching western television programs and acquiring information about western lifestyles through other forms of media, such as the internet, are the main contributing factors in the change in attitudes of the new generation about many things including sexuality.

New Attitudes to Sexuality in Sujindaa's Work

Female characters in Sujindaa's works are not 'afraid' of having sexual relationship because they don't think having sexual relationship is wrong (Pinyo Korng-thorng, 1993).

The above quote from the well-known Thai academic and critic, Pinyo Korng-thorng, refers to one of the modern (*than samai*, ทันสมัย) elements in Sujindaa's work. This is because traditional Thai women are supposed to be 'afraid' or be 'modest' of having sexual intercourse because their value as a woman will decrease according to their sexual behaviour. If a woman loses her virginity or lets more than one man gain access to her body, she will be condemned as a 'bad' woman. There is a Thai idiom which refers to bad people who should not be respected which is, *Ying saam pua, chaai saam both* or หญิงสามผัว ชายสามโบสถ์ ('A woman who has had three husbands and a man who has ordained more than three times'). Therefore, when Sujindaa creates female characters who are not modest about having sexual intercourse, it is considered to be controversial and displaying a lack of Thainess. Harrison refers to this phenomenon as follows :

In the 1990s, Thai readers and critics fear that the highly explicit and directly expressed erotic element in the work of Sujindaa

Khantayaalongkot represents a challenge to Thailand's long held literary and cultural traditions (Harrison, 2000a : 116).

This challenge to Thai traditional values posed by Sujindaa's more modern attitude to female sexuality is seen as a 'fall' of society by the Thai critic, Thanet Wetpaadaa :

“When a woman has a belief in sexual liberation, enough to make her go and sleep with any man, it illustrates the (moral) decline of society” (Thanet Wetpaadaa, n.d. : 36).

As sexual good behaviour is valued as morally good for Thai women, the moral 'decline' of Thai society regarding sexual liberation is believed to be because of western influences according to Thai academics and Thai people in general. This is because westerners are seen as being promiscuous by Thais, as exemplified in Nithi lewsriwong's article about Thai virgin women, when he refers to western women after the sexual revolution as *raet sut sut meuan farang lang yuk kaan patiwat thaang pet* ('...as promiscuous as westerners after sexual revolution', ...แรดสุดๆเหมือนฝรั่งหลังยุคการปฏิวัติทางเพศ) (Nithi, 2002 : 75). The works of Sujindaa illustrate the western influence through the female character's sexual behaviour and their attitudes towards sex.

Sexual Liberation : Promiscuous Woman

“The sexual revolution in the west in the 1960s promoted a wave of rebellion, exploration and political radicalism which is now believed by many feminists to have helped men gain more access to women's bodies, or as yet another attempt by the patriarchal culture to impose itself on women. On the other

hand, other feminists argue that sixties radicalism was of benefit to women” (Horrocks, 1997 : 130). Sujindaa’s female characters seem to support the latter group of feminists by enjoying casual sex without worrying about whether they are letting men in patriarchal society gain too much access to their bodies.

This western influence is seen through Sujindaa’s female characters. They are Thai women who are independent enough to show their pleasure in sexual activities and to refuse when they do not want it. Their views on sleeping with men are different from traditional Thai women’s views. Typical Thai women are supposed to be passive in sexual activities and be determined to have their first sexual experience on the wedding day. Thai women in Sujindaa’s work do not have this kind of idea, they are not passive in relationships and are not overly concerned about how many men gain access to their bodies. This could be because Sujindaa herself was ‘active’ in relationships according to her interview given to Matchimaa, a Thai columnist, as quoted :

“I always propose men. I don’t like men who propose me. I always run away from them. I have to be the chooser” (Matchimaa, n.d. : 62).

A lot of other women of Sujindaa’s creation also often complain or criticize men and their sexual performance. The following example is from *Wan thee mai yaak tham arai* (‘The day I don’t want to do anything’, วันที่ไม่อยากจะทำอะไร) from *Paa-tee* collection.

He inserts ‘his’ in as deep as possible. ‘His’ is not really big, not a great one, and she sometimes like it. Sometimes it can be very strong and make her wonder how it makes her come. She does not like it too

big. It is good that this time ‘his’ is quite all right. She can bear to give him co-operation, even though she is telling herself that it is so-so. She is not turned on, let him enjoy it by himself (Sujindaa, 1996b : 73).

Female Fantasy

Wright argues that fantasy is a complex articulation of both the subject and its unconscious desire in a shifting field of wishes and defences (Wright, 1992 : 87). However, “feminists have not always acknowledged this insight, and fantasy occupies an ambiguous place in feminist discourse. Radical feminists tend to be suspicious of fantasy, encouraging women to repudiate sexual, especially heterosexual, fantasies modelled on dominance and submission (Jeffereys, 1990; MacKinnon, 1987). Psychoanalytic feminists evince an interest in relating women’s fantasy to a form of oppression whereas Rosemary Jackson (1981) has examined the subversive potential of fantasy as a literary genre” (Andermahr, Lovell and Wolkowitz, 2000 : 91). Although the issue of female fantasy has been one of the important elements in such a modern concept as feminist studies, female fantasy is not a new phenomenon.

In Thai classical literature dating back to the early 19th century, the issue of female fantasy was already presented as in Khun Suwan’s *Pra Ma-leh-theh-thai*. (See the History of Eroticism in Thailand for further information). The female fantasy of Khun Suwan is seen in the way a hero and a heroine are brought together. In Thai traditional writing the female and male characters are mated with God’s help, God usually bringing a male character to a female character’s bedroom. Controversially, Khun Suwan makes

God bring the female character from her bedroom to sleep with the male character in the jungle. This may be because Khun Suwan is a court lady and, having spent most of her life in the court environment, the world outside must have been very challenging for her. Therefore, she imagines being taken outside the court to meet a man. This was considered humorous to people of her time.

In modern Thai literature an example of female fantasy can be seen in Seedaaoreuang's *Fan rak khorng Saai-rung* ('Love dream of Saai-roong's, ฝันรักของสายรุ้ง'). In this story, the main female character, Saai-roong, is a married woman who is attracted to her male neighbour and imagines herself to be his lover. The story ends as she feels heartbroken when he sends her his wedding invitation. However, this story does not have any sexual love scenes.

Sujindaa's female characters have a lot more extreme fantasies than Khun Suwan's and Seedaaoreuang's characters. Her female characters are also controversial enough to have the fantasy of sleeping with a man and asking him for a kiss in reality. Making female characters that are able to sleep with many men could be called a fantasy for a Thai woman because it is an unacceptable practice of the society. In addition, it could be a fantasy life for Sujindaa herself because her ex-husband had the opportunity to sleep with many women while she did not. The following story is a good example of Sujindaa's work in the field of female fantasy.

Jai duang pliaw

Prayong is a city girl holidaying at the seaside with her boyfriend. They stay with a fisherman couple who are not married and younger than Prayong and

her partner. Prayong is attracted to the fisherman and dreams about him making love to her. She wakes up and finds her own partner beside her instead of the fisherman. That morning, Prayong asks the fisherman to kiss her while their respective partners are away. The fisherman not only doesn't kiss her but also looks at her strangely, Prayong already having a boyfriend and the fisherman already having a girlfriend. In reality, the fisherman is not interested in Prayong at all, it is Prayong who is attracted to him and wishes to sleep with him. Her desire for him is very strong until she has a dream about him making love to her.

In that dream, she can feel the hot kiss for the first time as soon as they move their body close to each other (Sujindaa, 1992 : 100).

Then the heated love-making scene in her dream is described as explicitly as follows :

She holds him with her legs, keeps kissing him again and again... on his lips and then his neck, breathing over his ears as if he were a baby, holding his neck to bring him to lick her breasts. His love is as hot as she had wished for. When the last piece of clothes was taken off and her back touched the floor, she believed it was real. The weight over her body and the lively 'organ' make her believe... it is real. The two bodies moved and cuddled as if they both were enjoying bathing in the river. It felt nice and cool all over the both their flesh. They actually were bathing in their own sweat and 'holy juice', flooded from both their 'entries' to combine into one stream... And when he penetrated her, she could feel the paradise (ibid. : 100).

The above extract illustrates female fantasy and demonstrates another brave aspect of Sujindaa's character. A lot of other women may think that dreaming about having sex with a man they are attracted to is a bad thing but Sujindaa does not, as illustrated in the character of Prayong. Moreover, Prayong is made to ask the man for a kiss and, when he refuses, to think he is stupid. Again, this kind of woman is considered to be 'too forward' and of course does not fit into the standard definition of a 'good' Thai woman.

Masturbation

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the feminist analysis of female sexuality is that individual women have begun to speak about their own sexuality (Horrocks, 1997 : 130). Masturbation is one of the most important issues believed to help women exploring their bodies and sexuality. Sujindaa is the first Thai female writer to address the subject of masturbation explicitly. Her female characters are controversial and open about this matter, mentioning from time to time masturbation as something quite common. The following dialogue between a female character and her partner in *Kor-ra-nee sorng pua* ('The case of two husbands', กรณีสองผัว) from *Meuan rabam dork nun* collection is an illustration :

“How often do you do masturbate?”

Three times a day.”

“What?” He does not know that she is only joking.

“I read a romance every day.” She makes it sound serious.

“Is it true that it's better than having sex?”

“Definitely” (Sujindaa, 1997a : 78)

The above conversation is taking place in the middle of sexual intercourse, the couple just talking about it as something common. Monaa in *Daet naao* also mentions masturbation as follows :

“I didn’t really understand my feelings at that time, I only knew that I was touching one organ in my body and I liked it. I didn’t know anything about it but I knew what to do with it without being taught by anybody. I hid myself from my family to do it... I could do it upstairs without being suspected by anybody. Actually, I didn’t think it was a bad thing to do, just a little embarrassing. But it was like doing a bad thing; I didn’t know why. One day my older brother caught me while I was masturbating beside my bed, he was very angry and told me not to do it again. When I was young sex was something mysterious. We were told that doing bad things to ourselves and other people was not right. The words ‘doing bad things’ was always in my head. What I was doing (masturbation) must be a bad thing. I thought I would quit. I could sometimes refrain from it for a week or even a month but I sometimes came back to it with the feeling that it couldn’t be that bad.” (Sujindaa, 2000 : 27-28)

The above extracts show Monaa’s frankness. Although she admits masturbation is an embarrassing thing, she is not embarrassed to talk about it. In addition, it also shows how a woman in an oppressive society has to suffer sexual anxiety. This is the first time masturbation was discussed in a literary work written by a Thai female author.

The Experience of Being Woman

Khaattakam erotikaa

Ampawan Paisonngern's husband is a womaniser who has a minor wife (a mistress) called 'Mom'. Ampawan and Mom have a clear arrangement about the 'having a husband' days. Ampawan is very strict about the arrangement, never showing up at Mom's place if it is not her day. She will be very angry if she sees Mom even in a dream. One night she goes to a party with her husband. The host of the party is a lovely lady called Jaeng who has just turned twenty one. Ampawan's husband shows special interest in the lady and Ampawan likes this because she wants him to finish with Mom. Her husband wants to have sex with Ampawan after the party and, even though at first she does not want to, once they begin she enjoys it very much. One week later her husband dies of poisoning and everybody suspects his minor wife, Mom. Nobody suspects Ampawan because she accepted her husband's affair a long time ago so there should not be any reason for her to kill him. However, Ampawan addresses the readers implying that she is the murderer at the end of the story.

This story illustrates the feelings of a wife of a womaniser. Ampawan is very sad when her husband has another woman. Her emotions are described as follows :

Ampawan knows very well every time she has a dream about her husband's other women, it means a horrible dream. Although nothing bad has ever happened in the dream, just seeing another woman with her own husband is bad enough... dreaming of that woman could ruin her day. She would feel the tension which would cause her sadness for hours (Sujindaa, 2002 : 39).

After Ampawan's husband leaves his first mistress for another mistress, Mom, that woman cannot hurt Ampawan any longer, instead it becomes Mom who hurts her. So when her husband shows special interest in Jaeng, the host of the party, Ampawan wishes her husband would leave Mom for Jaeng. The way she does not show her jealousy makes people think she has already accepted her husband's flirtatiousness. Ampawan herself may think like others, as her feelings for her husband are cold. She always gives an excuse for not being willing to sleep with him. However, when he succeeds in persuading her, they have good sex. Ampawan herself is as explicit as follows in the description of their love-making :

His arms are holding her tightly. His legs are around her. His body is moving like a snake constricting its prey. His 'snake' is twisting emotionally, increasing its size and rubbing her legs. He cuddles her tightly as if he does not want her to refuse [...] he slips his hands in to feel her before taking her clothes off gently. He holds her back tightly. His 'snake' shivers quickly before he moves it to explore the 'mystery' which is opened quickly by his experienced fingers (ibid. : 44) (My editing).

Ampawan, the narrator of the story, keeps describing this love-making scene in detail to the end, which takes up three pages (p.44-6). This is the new phenomenon of women's writing in Thailand. It is the first time sexual intercourse is described explicitly by a Thai female writer.

In the 1950s Thidaa Bunnaak was considered to be the most controversial female writer and well-known for using 'naked language'. Although she only describes kissing in detail, it was shocking enough for the readers of that period. It seems as if Sujindaa is doing the same thing in the 1990s, shocking

the readers of her time but with a stronger degree of erotica as in Ampawan's and her husband's love-making scene which is described very explicitly but tastefully. The emergence of Sujindaa is thirty years after Thidaa, and Sujindaa has made a big development. She has shown a rather distinctive development in erotic writing by detailing penetrative sex whereas Thidaa only details kissing.

However, after such a detailed love-making scene, Ampawan's husband dies a week later of poison. Nobody suspects Ampawan because her husband has already had another woman for two or three years so there is no reason for her to get angry and kill him at this time. Surprisingly, Ampawan confesses to the readers that she means to kill Mom, not her husband.

The way Ampawan contemplates killing Mom after she has been with her husband for a long time could be because of the final love-making which she seemed to enjoy very much. Maybe it made her want to have her husband back and decide to kill Mom, unfortunately her husband takes the poison by mistake. In the last sentence of the story while nobody suspects Ampawan, she herself says "Nobody knows how long a woman can wait for revenge" (Sujindaa, 2002 : 48)

In this story, Sujindaa names Ampawan's husband 'Pee Noi' and his mistress 'Norng Mom' which in reality the same names as Sujindaa's ex-husband's and his mistress's, respectively. It seems as if Sujindaa uses a lot of her own life experience to be the raw material for the story. Ampawan is more than likely to be Sujindaa herself as the description of her appearance is similar to Sujindaa's as follows :

She looks like a 'softy'. Everybody who knows her would know that she has a gentle heart. She never hurt even a little animal. People

of Soong nern town are familiar with her long hair. This hairstyle helps illustrate her old-fashioned type (ibid. : 47)..

The above description of Ampawan's character is like a description of Sujindaa herself. According to Harrison, apart from writing to heal her heart, the way Sujindaa uses everybody's real name except herself could be interpreted as her also intending getting revenge :

If Sujindaa Khantayaalongkot resisted the temptation to castrate her husband in real life as punishment for his adultery, she finally took her revenge on him as a divorcee by committing the literary equivalent of castration with a poisoned pen. More encompassing than castration, she also succeeded in damning his mistresses and the child born of that liaison (Harrison, 2000 : 112).

This supports what Ampawan says at the end of the story about how long a woman can wait for revenge. It could be interpreted that Sujindaa herself has suffered a lot from her ex-husband's affair and has the will to get revenge in her subconscious. Poisoning her ex-husband's mistress might have been one of the ideas in her head some time when her pain was overwhelming. Rather than carry it out as a real act of crime, Sujindaa therefore chooses to write it down as fiction.

Conclusion

The tradition of erotic writing was introduced to Thai literary world since fifteenth century but was limited mainly only in the work of male authors. A woman writer, Khun Suwan, started to touch upon the topic of sexuality in the eighteen century, four hundred years after the first erotic piece of work

was introduced, in a rather modest way. Other female writers then slowly develop the degree of explicitness in their writing about sex. However, it took another century after the first female author who wrote about sex to the emergence of the 'real erotic writer', Sujindaa Khantayaalongkot. Although Sujindaa and her work are criticized and condemned by many Thai academics and critics, it could still be argued that she has contributed a lot to the traditions of Thai erotic literature. Her promiscuous female characters influenced by sexual revolution ideas, explicit love making scenes, the theme of female fantasy and masturbation are significant contributions. In addition, her work about woman experience has served the readers as an invaluable source of information and consolation for those who was suffering from being in the relationships where men were not faithful.

The writings of Sujindaa have something in common with D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* written in 1928. This book also caused considerable outrage at the time due to its explicit sexual context. However it successfully challenged the conservatism prevailing in society at the time and has come to be seen as a groundbreaking work of literature. It may well be that, although they are clearly authors of different class, Sujindaa's work is recognized in the same way in the future.

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วรรณกรรมกามวิสัย : แบบแผนประเพณี กับกลการประพันธ์ของสุจินดา ชันตยาหลงกต

อรทัย ปัญญา

แบบแผนประเพณีการประพันธ์ทอโรติกเริ่มมีครั้งแรกตั้งแต่ศตวรรษที่ 15 โดยปรากฏในวรรณกรรมเรื่องลิลิตพระลอ หลังจากนั้น การเขียนบททอโรติกก็ถูกจำกัดวงอยู่เฉพาะในกลุ่มของนักเขียนชาย หากพบว่ามึ่นักเขียนหญิงคนใดลุกขึ้นมาเขียนเรื่องทำนองนี้ ก็จะถูกโจมตีโดยสังคม สุจินดา ชันตยาหลงกต เป็นนักเขียนหญิงคนแรกๆ ที่เรียกตัวเองว่าเป็นนักเขียนทอโรติกและเรียกงานที่เธอเขียนว่าเรื่องสั้นทอโรติกงานของสุจินดาไม่ได้รับการยอมรับและถูกโจมตีโดยนักวิจารณ์และนักวิชาการไทย ทั้งนี้เพราะมีเนื้อหาและลีลาการใช้ภาษาที่โจ่งแจ้งและขัดต่อศีลธรรมอันดีงามในสังคมไทย งานของเธอจึงไม่สมควรแก่การยกย่อง บทความนี้จึงต้องการนำเสนอประเด็นที่ว่า งานเขียนของสุจินดาไม่ได้ไร้คุณค่าอย่างที่นักวิจารณ์ แต่ในทางตรงกันข้าม สุจินดา ชันตยาหลงกต ได้สร้างสิ่งใหม่ให้กับวงการงานเขียนประเภททอโรติกของไทย โดยการนำเสนอภาพลักษณ์ของผู้หญิงที่ไม่รักนวลสงวนตัว (Promiscuous Woman) การบรรยายฉากรักที่ละเอียดและโจ่งแจ้ง (Explicit Love-making Scene) การกล่าวถึงการสำเร็จความใคร่ของผู้หญิง (Woman Masturbation) ตลอดจนการสร้างจินตนาการเรื่องเพศของผู้หญิง (Woman Fantasy)