

Beauty and the Beast in Twenty-First Century Thai Romantic Fictions: Characters and Motifs

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Abstract

Beauty and the Beast has always been a well-known and popular tale throughout the world, regardless of race, class, or ethnicity. Such enjoyment for a story unites people to remember cultural relocation and acknowledge cultural differences as source of pleasure. *Beauty and the Beast's* plot and motifs have great influence on Thai romantic fiction and are appropriated and contextualized to correspond with the Thai context. Thus, this paper seeks to analyze the Twenty-First Century Thai romantic fictions to explore how they are adapted, retold and reinterpreted to the Thai cultural context regarding to religious, social beliefs and gender relations. It also seeks to examine the motifs of transformation and marriage test of a couple and how they are different from the original version and contemporary Western versions. This textual analysis investigates two Thai romantic fictions written in the Twenty-First Century to discover how they are adapted to fit in the Thai context with a focus on characterization and motifs. It has found that the portrayal of female protagonists is adjusted to be more modern, especially in a public sphere, while still embodying the essence of Thai femininity. The portrayal of male protagonists, especially the appearance, is adapted to fit Thai religious beliefs; thus, beastliness is simply symbolic. Significantly, cultural contexts take part in reshaping the transformation of the protagonists and their marriage tests. Additionally, this intertextuality helps acknowledge how romantic relations and practices have been changed through time and culture.

Keywords: Thai romantic fictions, motifs of transformation, Beauty and the Beast, characterization

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Introduction

Evidently, *Beauty and the Beast* is a hypertext for other subsequent narratives. This illustrates that the tale is favoured and beloved by audiences because it has been adapted, redefined, and retold in several mediums: including literature, films and cartoons. Substantially, tales about animal grooms and brides have been found in many cultures, including Thai culture. According to Bascom's definitions, the various forms of folklore fictions and fairy tales are much alike (Bascom, 1965). Both are told for amusement and can be set in any time and any place; thus, "they are almost timeless and placeless" (ibid., p. 4). In this regard, folktales, (including fairy tales), survive through time and reappear in distinct variants, depending on the places they migrate to. In line with Bascom, Angela Carter, whose *Courtship of Mr. Lyon* is a hypertext of *Beauty and the Beast*, emphasizes the pleasure principle of fairy tales and contends that fairy tales have much in common with female forms of romance (Carter, 2005). Interestingly, Hallett and Karasek also assert that the most popular fairy tale market has been that of romance (Hallett and Karasek, 2014, p. 27). Romance writers, Linda Barlow and Jayne Ann Krentz, also insist that a plot of "spirited young women forced into marriage with mysterious earls and heroes with dark and dangerous pasts who are bent upon vengeance rather than love" has been popular throughout modern history (Barlow and Krentz, 1992). In fact, fairy tales are palimpsests of various kinds of narratives, since literary works "are built from systems, codes and traditions established by previous works of literature" (Allen, 2000). *Beauty and the Beast*, like *Cinderella*, has become a dense palimpsest of narratives that embody cultural anxieties and phobias (Tatar, 2017).

Romance: Thai and Western romance

Thai romance is similar to Western romance in that they originally appear in the form of folktales. In Western culture, romance as a genre appeared in the twelfth century in narrative poems, with aristocratic characters such as kings, queens, knights, ladies, etc. (Fuchs, 2004). In the same vein, traditional Thai romance was also written in a poetic form and can be referred to as royal tales because the stories are about love and the adventures of the various members of the royal family (Chitasophon, 1992). Specifically, these royal tales start with the displacement of the major character(s), especially the hero, while love and courtship are followed by separation, and then adventures and the return to rule the kingdom (Kongthong, 2006). Like Western romance, in traditional Thai romance aristocratic heroes encounter a series of adventures, while pursuing their quests. Typically, the tales engage with dominant ideologies that reflect ascendant religious or social beliefs.

Pamela Regis delineates eight narrative events which are: the social settings (society defined), the meeting between the protagonists (the meeting), the obstacles or the barriers to their reunion (the barrier), the attraction between them (the attraction), the declaration of love (the declaration), the point of ritual death when reunion or reconciliation seems impossible (the point of ritual death), overcoming of the obstacles (the recognition), and the promise to marry (the betrothal) (Regis, 2003). Moreover, Radway's structure of the ideal romance, starts when the heroine's social identity is destroyed, followed by her antagonistic reaction to an aristocratic male and ends when the heroine's identity is restored (Radway, 1984). In his book *Love and the Novel*, Paizis' module of romance is, to some extent, similar to that of Regis.

However, it provides thorough details developed from narratology for the analysis of romance structures that starts from the cover, and goes on to include settings, characterization, first meetings, obstacles and the solution. In a Thai context, Scot Barme, in his study of Thai films and fictions during the 1920s and early 1930s, asserts that themes of popular narratives involve arranged marriage, romance, social class and dynamic women with independent love (Barme, 2002). A Thai scholar, Chusak Pattarakulvananit, explains that romance is disdained for its unchangeable formula of “A man meets a woman. A woman is piqued. A man finds ways to reconcile. A woman becomes soft-hearted. A man becomes hard-hearted. A woman finds ways to reconcile. A man plays hard to reconcile. A woman seeks forgiveness from a man. A man forgives her. Finally, they marry.” (Pattarakulvanit, 2002, p. 25). Although his analysis of romance plots is a rather reductionist generalization, it reveals that in Thai culture, romance as a genre is regarded as too trivial to be seriously studied and there is a consequent lack of scrutiny of this genre.

Beauty and the Beast’s plot and motif:

Vladimir Propp contends that all fairy tales have one type of structure and they can be classified systematically (Propp, 1968). Propp’s “functions” are in fact “motifs,” The motifs studied in this paper are taken from Stith Thompson, because he provides exhaustive details, although Marina Warner comments in her book, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, that his categories lacks the evocation of pleasure (Warner, 1994, p. xxii). I find it practical and applicable because he offers sufficient elements for analysis, while still providing room for expansion. Thus, it is a valuable tool for study of a hypertext of *Beauty and the Beast*. This analysis will investigate motif D310: “Transformation: wild beast (mammal) to person,” and motif H300: “Marriage tests”.

The investigation of the plot will mainly use the version based on Madame de Beaumont’s adaptation, because it is the most known version. The plot is simply about the grateful daughter of an unfortunate merchant who loses his property and is ordered by a grotesquely ugly Beast to send his daughter to stay at the Beast’s domain as a captive. The Beast is ugly, not cultured, and lacks intelligence. He is desperately needy for love because he is cursed. Beauty is beautiful, but she is not vain and superficial like her other two sisters, who represent female foils to epitomize the negativity in contradiction to Beauty’s positivity. She does not seek for love, but for knowledge; and through this quality she discovers the Beast’s truly intrinsic, virtuous nature. Because of Beauty’s love for him, Beast is transformed into a handsome prince and they eventually marry. The details of the plot will be examined in relation to the overall romance genre. In this paper, Paizis’ (1998) module of romance will be selectively employed to analyze the two selected novels: *Shattering the Swan’s Wings* (2017) and *Engraved with Love* (2017). They are selected for containing the *Beauty and the Beast* plot. Furthermore, the concepts of adaptation and intertextuality derived from Allen (2000), (especially the processes of text transportation, which include expurgation, excision, reduction and amplification) will be used in the analysis of these two novels.

Shattering the Swan's Wings and Engraved with Love: Beauty and the Beast's palimpsests

Shattering the Swan's Wings, was published in 2017 by Phimkham publishing house. It is the author's, Phimpisoot, nineteenth novel. It is a long novel with 536 pages. The novel starts by introducing the heroine and her current dilemma. Prowrumpha, a 26 year old heroine whose father is a royal family member, is proposed to by Mr. Brown, a nearly-retired American widower in exchange for her dead father's mansion and his debts. The heroine is in her dilemma because she is not willing to marry this fabulously wealthy old man; however, she wants to save her father's property. Significantly, her plight will progress into a conflict because the hero is Mr. Brown's only son. He is infuriated after knowing that his father will marry the heroine and he suspects that the heroine is a goal digger who will marry his father because of his money, not love. Knowing that the heroine and her friend need a business partner to invest in their accessories business, the hero makes a plan to disrupt his father's marriage. He calls his plan 'shattering the swan's wings'. The heroine is compared to a swan because of her elegance and social status. His plan is to seduce her and to make her change her mind about marrying his father and thus he will expose her.

Engraved with Love, 528-pages long, was also published in 2017 by the same publishing house. The author, Chomjan, is a new writer for the house. The first chapter immediately portrays the first meeting of the protagonists. The heroine, Salakjan, is meeting the hero at his office. She was told by her senior about his personal background and characteristics. However, the first meeting creates the conflict between them because the heroine feels humiliated while having a conversation with the arrogant hero, Thud, who has a real estate business that was passed on to him from his dead father. He wants an architect to design a new house for him, and the heroine is introduced to him by his close friend. She is similar to his ex-girlfriend who abandoned him; and thus, he has had bias towards her since their first meeting.

The settings of *Shattering the Swan's Wings* and *Engraved with Love* are similar to that of *Beauty and the Beast* in several aspects; however, with changes that correspond with their Thai cultural context, particularly in the opening and the final scenes. Time in both novels appears real. The opening scenes in *Shattering the Swan's Wings* and *Engraved with Love* are in the day time, without any specific details of time. In *Shattering the Swan's Wings*, Prowrumpha is looking after Mr. Brown's car, while feeling stressed and disheartened. Its function is to present the heroine's conflict through her conversation with her mother, who cheerfully insists that Mr. Brown is an eligible suitor for the heroine. It also serves to define the society of the heroine, especially her social status and her critical financial situation, which is developed as an interpersonal conflict between the protagonists. In line with Radway, the first chapter signifies that the heroine's identity is destroyed. In *Engraved with Love*, the heroine meets the hero and their conflict starts immediately after they meet. The first chapter also introduces two further characters who will play future roles as helper and villain: the heroine's senior and her boyfriend. In this regard, the time-structure of the two novels is different from that of *Beauty and the Beast*, which happens in the late evening. When the narrative is adapted as a modern Thai novel, an illusion of reality is needed to convince the reader to believe in its setting; while *Beauty and the Beast*, as a fairy tale, requires more a more mysterious ambience.

Another significant factor for the narrative is place, because it connotes values for the text and the reader (Paizis, 1998, p.64). However, the places for all three narratives are not all alike. In *Beauty and the Beast*, the heroine is removed from her father's farmhouse to the Beast's castle, which is an exotic place and signifies the higher social mobility of Beauty. The final scene also takes place at the Beast's castle; thus, the Beast's castle connotes as a utopia and Beauty's departure to his place is patrilocal: a fundamental basis in Western marriage. The first meeting in *Engraved with Love* is also at the hero's property; however, the final scene is at a hospital. The opening scene shows the coming of the heroine into the hero's realm because he is her new employer. By working at his construction site, she gradually realizes that his house (that she designs) is a utopian place – a promising place for happiness and true love. In the final chapter, the story suggests that the heroine has had to move in to live with him after his declaration of love and his marriage proposal at the hospital – a place at which the hero knows he cannot lose her. Again, her displacement to this realm represents a patrilocal move. Contrastively, in *Shattering the Swan's Wings*, the heroine's mansion is the place for both the opening and the ending scenes. Instead of being exotic and utopian for the heroine, as in other romance fictions, the locale becomes utopian and exotic for the American hero, whose mother is half Thai. For Justin, Powrumpha's mansion is where his quest is achieved, and it signifies the true love that he desperately seeks for. Significantly, the hero's removal to the heroine's abode suggests a matrilocal move, which is regarded as a more traditional Thai practice. Possibly, the author may intend to adjust the plot in order to attract her readers with a surprise – and it works. Indeed, the three heroines achieve higher social and financial positions and localizations; in fact, the indicators of place are signs that give a portrait of economic stability and the overall emotional development of the protagonists.

The Beast's curse and his quest for true love are important elements to the plot. In Madame de Beaumont's eighteenth-century version, it is a wicked fairy who casts a spell over him and only when a virtuous woman loves him for himself will the spell will be broken. In *Shattering the Swan's Wings*, Justin is portrayed as an Alpha male, who possesses everything but true love. In fact, the curse is on him because "Previously, he used money to buy love. In so doing, he was never loved by anyone" (Phimpisoot, 2017, p. 81). He is portrayed as a selfish man who thinks about his own desires until the heroine teaches him that he should first give love to a person if he wants it in return. The story implies that he is cursed by his behavior of buying sex with money. He explains to his friend that he is not promiscuous because he has only one partner at a time, but that he stays with a woman just for sex and can leave a woman once he gets bored with her. This only strengthens his loneliness. In *Engraved with Love*, Thud is cursed by his previous love experiences. His girlfriend has deserted him without good reason and he develops a pathological hatred towards women. In fact, he fears to love and then to be abandoned. Once he meets the heroine and learns about her qualities, he becomes a man infused with affection because the heroine teaches him about true love.

Accordingly, the plot of an obligated daughter who is willing to substitute her father's imprisonment is amplified. Although Powrumpha's father has already died, the encounter between her and Justin commences from her obligation to her father. However as a more realistic character, she has intensely had an internal conflict throughout the story; whether to accept marriage proposals to save her father's

mansion or not. In this regard, the representation of the heroine is more realistic and in unison with most Thai romantic fictions in the twentieth century, in that the heroines are more likely to accept the heroes' financial support and to become imprisoned in the heroes' realms as signs of obligation from the very first chapters as Beauty. Salakjan in *Engraved with Love*, whose father is also dead, goes to work for the hero mainly because her boss, who she respects like a father and a brother, summons her to. Her boss is symbolized as her father who influences her to go to meet the hero, just like in Beauty's case. Essentially, the representations of Prowrumpha and Salakjan connote the image of a career woman who struggles to find a stable position in her career. Thus, the value of women portrayed in the novels indicates that besides femininity, a modern woman must show capability and eagerness to work – unlike in traditional romance – where the heroine's work is more regarded as an ornament.

Beauty and Beast: Characterisation of the protagonists

As signs, the characters in *Shattering the Swan's Wings* and *Engraved with Love* are appropriated to produce meanings that fit into current social contexts. In the romance genre, the protagonist's name is of importance, particularly for the heroine, because it indicates social status and also different positions or roles in the narrative. In *Shattering the Swan's Wings*, the heroine's name, Prowrumpha, which means an angel, connotes her social status, morality, and femininity. She is described by the hero as "Sweetly beautiful, gentle, real Thai, gracious" (Phimpisoot, 2017, p. 80). A three-syllable name is a conventional length in a Thai context and Salakjan, the heroine's name in *Engraved with Love*, also follows this conventional pattern. Moreover, Prowrumpha is called by others as "Ying Prow" (Lady Prow) because of her aristocratic family connections, which also signals her quality. The name of the heroine in *Engraved with Love* marks the essence of the title of the novel because the word *salak* means to engrave. Notably, the sound of her name, like Prowrumpha, also indicates phonetic harmony and femininity.

The heroines in *Shattering the Swan's Wings* and *Engraved with Love* are portrayed as modern women, whose identity is derived through their social roles or careers. In both novels, the protagonists' meetings occur due to professional reasons. The heroine in *Shattering the Swan's Wings* has a business meeting with the hero because she and her cousin need more venture for their accessories business and the hero shows interest in investing his capital in their business. In *Engraved with Love*, the first meeting between the protagonists is also about work. The heroine comes to meet the hero because her boss wants to help her earn some extra money. As portrayed in these two novels, the heroines are educated. Prowrumpha, is an aristocratic lady, who graduated with a degree in music from England. She opened a music school after graduation and has become a business partner with her cousin in order to find money to support her family, which includes her mother and a few servants. Salakjan is from a lower-middle class family with a degree in architecture and her boss guarantees her excellent ability to the hero. Like Prowrumpha, she is the breadwinner of her family, which includes her mother and two siblings. However, they are depicted as having more inferior jobs and a more precarious financial situation when compared to the heroes. To some extent, this suggests the lower worldly-power of the heroines; the heroes are more economically powerful, just like Beast.

Like other fairy tales, characters such as Beauty and Beast are signs created for specific functions, and according to Tatar it “encodes messages about how we manage social and cultural anxieties about romance, marriage, and “the other.”” (Tatar, 2017, p. ix). According to Paizis, the anxieties in romance are presented as imbalances between power and quality which are structured as conflicts (Paizis, 1998, p. 75). Moreover, they can be regarded as tests of marriage because characters have to demonstrate their inner qualities. In *Beauty and the Beast*, the conflicts are not only between the powerful and the worthy, but between inner quality and outer appearance as portrayed through Beast. He is described with adjectival phrases such as ‘dreadful,’ ‘perilous,’ ‘horrible figure,’ and ‘monster’ without more concentrated details of his appearance being supplied, while Beauty has been referred to as “the beautiful child” since she was little and is called “Beauty” for short. Although she stays peacefully at the Beast’s castle for three months, she never accepts his marriage proposal until she gets over his appearance and accepts his true identity of being a virtuous king. In this regards, the metamorphosis of Beast can be understood as a sign, a change in Beauty’s perception and attitudes towards him. Beauty herself is also a signifier of a grateful woman who possesses the archetypal quality of self-sacrifice for her guardian, in this case her father, while Beast is a signifier of the dangerous “Other” who she is obliged to live with. To bring a denouement, she needs to overcome such a conflict in order to create a happy life with him.

Like Beauty, the heroines in *Shattering the Swan’s Wings* and *Engraved with Love* have to manifest their qualities in order to transform Beasts, (the heroes), into princes. As mentioned previously, to prove their inner qualities is the marriage test. In *Shattering the Swan’s Wings*, Justin suspects that Prowrumpha is a gold-digger and that she will marry his father for money, not love; so he decides to intervene. Knowing that Prowrumpha needs 200 million baht to pay to save her mansion, Justin offers the money to her and expects that she will instantly accept it. However, she declines his financial offer and ensuing marriage proposal. He also asks about Mr. Brown, his father, and is surprised to find out that she never says any bad things about his father. Evidently, Prowrumpha has fine manners, proper deeds and a strong sense of femininity. Like Beauty in Madame de Beaumont’s version, she refuses the hero’s request to marry him, saying that she is not ready for it. The heroine in *Engraved with Love* wins the hero’s heart from sincerity. He finds her beautiful when she presents a blueprint of his house in the middle of the story. He is impressed with her empathy and sensibility, and the reader is told that “It is the first time he admires someone who is not his mother” (Chomjan, 2017, p. 223). More specifically, both Prowrumpha and Salakjan are sexually inexperienced and they are not aware of their beauty and its effect on others. Thus, they do not make an effort to attract any man and do not realize that they are capable of passionate sexual compulsion. This quality represents an ideal image of woman, especially in Thai society, where good women should reserve their bodies and virginity as they are closely intertwined with morality. The heroine’s innocence and inexperience are regarded more important in *Engraved with Love*, because the hero was betrayed by his ex-girlfriend before and his heart is already wounded. Therefore, besides her upright personality, she has to prove her feminine and sexual qualities in order to become successful in transforming the hero’s emotional indifference. The story reveals that Salakjan has her first kiss with the hero through his forcing her to comply. With her boyfriend, she occasionally allows holding hands and a hug. Accordingly, the heroine in *Shattering the Swan’s Wings*

has to undergo the same circumstances to transform the hero's sexual promiscuity into an expression of love, affection, and a promise of marital fidelity.

As signifiers of the focal point of the narrative, the heroes are positioned at the top of the pyramid. The focus of the heroes, especially in romance, is in a hierarchical position: thus, aristocratic sounding names are not as important as economic security or social attributes. Therefore, both Justin and Thud from *Shattering the Swan's Wings* and *Engraved with Love* are emphatically portrayed as astonishingly successful businessmen. Justin is an investor who is particularly keen on real estate business, while Thud is an affluent entrepreneur. However, like the heroines, Justine and Thud need to undergo the marriage test, to prove their inner qualities. Subsequently, in both novels the male protagonists' success is not a result of luck or a fluke, but hard-work. The success of the heroes implies their personal and professional integrity. Justin is portrayed as having a millionaire father; however, his affluence comes from his strategic vision and good intuition and thus; his decision-making is always sharp and brings him profits. Likewise, Thud is described as workaholic, because his father is dead and has left the family business for him since Thud was about twenty. It is narrated that he had to fight fiercely to sustain his prosperity and become a real estate lord. Although the heroes' wealth is guaranteed, it does not mean that the heroines will succumb to their advances. They must show signs of affection and compassion to ensure that they have the ability to love. In this regard, the heroes are required to efface any romantic anxieties and violence that may derive from their beastlike behavior.

More specifically, beastliness is symbolic. Unlike Beast, Justin and Thud's appearances are portrayed handsome. In the Thai version of the religious belief of Karma, one's appearance is based on his/her good deeds from a previous life. Thus, Thai literature, especially romance, rarely presents hideous heroes, and that explains why they are not portrayed with scars or deformed faces such as in contemporary Western romance narratives. Instead, they are beastlike because of how they appear to the heroines in their very first meetings. Thus, like Beast, they are regarded as monstrously powerful "Others" by the heroines. In *Shattering the Swan's Wings*, although Justin has a half Thai-half American mother, his appearance and mindset are totally different from a Thai lady like Prowrumpha. He is absolutely 'a stranger' to her. Thud, in *Engraved with Love*, is depicted as a calculating businessman who appears unfriendly and unkind to the heroine from their first meeting like a villain. Indeed, they both appear monstrous because they possess the qualities of both a hero and villain. In *Shattering the Swan's Wings*, Justin seduces Prowrumpha to fall in love with him so that she will not marry his father. In *Engraved with Love*, Thud is contemptuous and even compels Salakjan to have sex with him. Being deceitful and contemptuous are both similar attributes to the villain's attributes. Yet, Justin and Thud are both justified in their conduct. It is revealed later that Justin's father wants Prowrumpha for Justin, not for himself. He knows that Justin is too American and too stubborn for an arranged marriage, so he sets a plan for the protagonists to meet. In this regard, the story is in line with Barne's observation that for a Thai aristocrat, an arranged marriage is inevitable. As for Thud, he was hurt before by his ex-girlfriend, so his attitude towards women is unavoidably negative. Specifically, Thud in *Engraved with Love* is compared to a monster, a tiger, and Satan by the heroine for his improper and fierce conduct.

Conclusion

Basically, narratives reflect lived experience of the contexts in which they are told. In the eighteenth century, Madame de Beaumont's *Beauty and the Beast* may have helped young women cope with their removal from their houses to their unfamiliar spouses' residences and also to teach them how to tame wild men like Beat. Similarly, *Shattering the Swan's Wings* and *Engraved with Love* indicate different lived experiences in the twenty-first century Thai context. As discussed above, the plot elements and motifs of *Beauty and the Beast* are modified to suit a Thai context and the genre of Thai romance. Places in the novels are changed to connote sociocultural values. Although the female protagonists in *Shattering the Swan's Wings* and *Engraved with Love* are portrayed in line with Radway's analysis of ideal heroines to include elements such as compassion, kindness, and understanding (Radway, 1984, p. 127); the portrayal of the female protagonists in both novels suggests changes in that their jobs are not just women's ornaments. However, these career women are not portrayed as aggressive because they still maintain their feminine credentials and the traditional female values of Thai women – the keys to prove that they can also take a conjugal role. The portrayal of the male protagonists is adapted to fit the images of the New Man that have sprung up during the last decade of the twentieth century. Similar to the analysis of the Beast's curse in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* in 1991 by Susan Jeffords (Jeffords, 1995), the curse of the male protagonists is that they must learn to love to prove that they are eligible suitors. The heroines also need to comprehend that they cannot judge a book by its cover because the heroes are not innately callous and selfish, but they are victimized and therefore the women should understand and help them.

In general, the adaptation of *Beauty and the Beast* in *Shattering the Swan's Wings* and *Engraved with Love* include both similarities and differences, which are regarded as elements of pleasure from adaptations (Hutcheon, 2006). *Shattering the Swan's Wings* presents several dissimilarities to its hypotext when compared to *Engraved with Love*, as can be seen in the displacement of the protagonist and the otherness of the hero. Essentially, the hero is regarded as the main focalizer, as signaled in the title. *Engraved with Love*'s plot is more similar to the traditional formula of romance, especially in its characterisation. Moreover, as in general romance, the story focuses more on the heroine, because she is the main focalizer. Further, the story throughout is Salakjan's, telling of her morality and sensibility, her love and devotion to her job, and her ability to transform a villain-like hero.

As palimpsests *Shattering the Swan's Wings* and *Engraved with Love* transform *Beauty and the Beast* to a certain degree. They maintain a plot of female obligation and male transformation through female love and as such *Beauty and the Beast* characterisation in both novels remains the same. This is because there are still signifiers of ideal women and men, however with some added layers of meanings. The reinterpretation of male transformation is in line with a neo-romance genre that it is not about actual appearance, or exterior ugliness, but about personality attributes. Thus, the portrayal of the male protagonists is beastlike because their conducts are more like those of a villain. Accordingly, the curse is adapted and is not caused by a wicked fairy but is due to their inherent attributes. As in *Beauty and the Beast*, the transformation of the male protagonists depends on female protagonists because it is their marriage test that is to prove their inner qualities. However, in present day

romance, not only do female protagonists need to prove their inner qualities, but also male protagonists need to prove theirs too. Male protagonists are shown to have more active roles when compared to Beast in order to achieve true love. Regarding these changes, *Beauty and the Beast* is a fundamental story that can be rewritten, reinterpreted, and retold in new contexts to reflect various messages or codes about gender relations, which are dynamic. Its subsequent adaptations will always delineate new sociocultural meanings about gender relations and romantic love, because both Beauty and Beast are signifiers of the continuing cultural transmission of meaning.

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