

The Development of Beauty and Beast Through 31 Revisions of the Tale

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Abstract

Although most are familiar with the Disney retelling of *Beauty and the Beast*, there are many other versions. These versions go all the way back to the 2nd century AD and all the way forward to the present. In these tales there is a trend from individuality and differences in the beginning, to uniformity in the middle, to a return to unique individual tales. This trend can be seen in the development of the characters of Beauty and Beast throughout the revisions, and by how the transformation at the end is portrayed. It can be linked to the beginning group being a sample of all the different kinds of Beauty and Beast tales available in many different regions. The middle section is representative of a need for a tale that is marketable to a wide audience of readers, and tells the basic tale of *Beauty and the Beast* with few unique elements. Finally, women revise and humanize the tales that populate the third group of revisions. They are writing in the 20th and 21st century in the science fiction and fantasy genres, and are working to solve the problems they see in the previous versions.

Introduction

Tales of beauties and beasts and how they affect one another have been around for centuries. Today, often the only version of a fairy tale children and even adults know is the Walt Disney version. To them, Beauty is an only child whose father is an inventor the townspeople ridicule, and she is pursued by the biggest jerk in town. However, the tale that was adapted into this was very different. There are, in truth, many, many versions of this tale going back hundreds of years. I too was introduced to it through Disney and in a Children's literature class I read some of the first written versions. I eventually found the area that totally captured my interest, modern revisions. These revisions deal with very strong Beauty and the Beast characters and how they address the pressures of society and the whims of fate. Through reading thirty-one versions of the tale I saw a pattern emerge, from diverse unique regional versions to a middle point in which one type of tale emerged, to the present in which that tale has been individualized by every author who has taken it upon herself/himself to make the tale his/her own.

Three Categories of Tales

The first category only has four tales in it. All four of these are unique in that they do not follow the conventions of the *Beauty and the Beast* tale we know today. These tales are *Cupid and Psyche*, *King Pig*, *Ricky of the Tuft*, and the *Dragon Prince*. These are included as Beauty and Beast tales that evolved in different regions of the world, Greece, France, Italy, and China, and are highly individualized. The Beast in these tales is very different from the Beast of Beaumont's tale that we have come to know best. In *Cupid and Psyche* he is Cupid the God of love, in *King Pig* he is a prince cursed to be

born a pig and remain one until he weds three times, in *Ricky of the Tuft* he is a brilliant prince born hideous, and the Dragon Prince is a powerful magical creature who can transform into a Dragon. What connects these tales to *Beauty and the Beast* is that the male protagonist who is ugly, or beastly, or perceived to be beastly is transformed or redeemed by a beautiful woman.

The second category is characterized by retellings (by Noziere, Cocteau, Mayer, D'Aulnoy, Kinski, Brett, Disney, Willard, Hooks, Vande Velde, and Boswell) of *Beauty and the Beast* based primarily on the fairy tales told by Madam de Villeneuve, Madam Le Prince de Beaumont, and the Brothers Grimm. In this version a father, down on his luck and lost in a woods, comes across an enchanted castle where he steals a rose for his youngest or only daughter. The master of the castle, Beast, is enraged and tells the father that if he does not bring his daughter to him Beast will eat him. The self-sacrificing daughter gives herself to the beast. He proceeds to ask for her hand in marriage every night; she keeps saying no. She returns home to console her grieving father, returns to the castle just in time to save Beast from dying of grief himself, and tells him she will marry him. He transforms into a prince and they go on to live happily ever after. Beast is a vague creature, tormented but kind, and Beauty is one dimensionally good and at times a bit dim. In this category are revisions up until the 1970s and children picture books and movies even after that time period.

The third category consists of modern, unique retellings (by Lee, Franklin, Lackey, Baker, McKinley, Wheeler, Wolfe, Block, Napoli, and DreamWorks) that, while still based on the Beaumont, Villeneuve, and Grimm tales, are individually developed and reregionalized. All of them have been written in the United States in the 20th and 21st

century. By reregionalized I mean that they have been taken out of the vague, timeless, placeless world of the fairy tale and given a concrete place and time. Examples of this are Mercedes Lackey's *The Fire Rose* set in California at the beginning of the 20th century, Donna Jo Napoli's *Beast* set in Persia and France after Persia has been converted to Islam, and Tanith Lee's *Beauty* set on Earth in the future. In these tales Beast is more complex and generally even has an identity beyond "Beast." Beauty is as one would expect her to be. She is more developed, a more flawed and real character who is an active participant in her future, rather than one who merely goes along with what fate has deemed to be her lot in life. Overall, the thirty-one tales discussed in this paper follow a general trend from individually unique stories, to general similar versions of the same tale, and then to a return to individuality.

Culpability of the Beast

The nature of the instigation of the curse Beast carries is an area in which we see changes in how the tales depict his character. In some cases Beast is not at fault. Either the fairy is a capricious individual, or his parents did something to offend the fairy and he is merely used as a method of revenge for this offense. On the other hand, there are many cases in which it is due to lack of hospitality, rudeness, or some other offense done directly by Beast that he is cursed. In some cases there is no indication of who cursed Beast or why. This culpability on the part of Beast shapes his character and whether a reader views him sympathetically or not. Also, his culpability affects the efficacy of the curse. If he has done nothing wrong, what has the curse really accomplished? It seems that the point of a curse is that the victim of that curse has done something wrong and, in

the course of the curse, he will come to regret what he has done and become a better individual. This is of course assuming that the instigator cursed is the victim for a reason and not out of random anger. The degree to which Beast is guilty before he is cursed affects what, if anything the curse may have changed in his character.

In the first category of tales the beast character is devoid of guilt in all but one case. Cupid is not, in fact, a beast. He is only thought to be one by Psyche because he only comes to her at night and she never sees his face. The Dragon Prince, King Pig, and Ricky of the Tuft are all born with their beastliness. The Dragon Prince is born with the ability to become a dragon. Three fairies curse (although they claim it is a blessing) King Pig while he is in his mother's womb to remain a pig until he weds three times. Finally, Ricky of the Tuft is born naturally, humanly hideous and is blessed by a fairy at his birth to be brilliant. These tales are devoid of culpability on the part of either Beast or his parents. Also, at no point in the two tales in which fairies are involved (*King Pig* and *Ricky of the Tuft*) do they ever state that they are punishing anyone; rather, they seem to believe that they are helping instead of hurting. In all three of these cases the beast character is not viewed as a piteous creature; instead he is viewed as one with power who has confidence in himself. With Cupid and the Dragon Prince there really is no curse so the efficacy of it is not an issue. With King Prince and Ricky of the Tuft, however, both have spells cast upon them and they do serve a purpose, but not necessarily to change the character of those they have been cast upon. In *King Pig* the third "blessing," by the three fairies who had some scorn for humankind, on his mother Ersilia was "that she shall be the wisest among women, but that the son whom she shall conceive shall be born in the skin of a pig, with a pig's ways and manners" (Straparola 1). The spell on Ricky of the

Tuft, that he can bestow brains on anyone he loves, serves the purpose of someone as hideous as he is being able to find a mate.

Three different types of culpability categorize the second section. Although the majority of these tales are very similar, this is one area that varies widely. In the original three tales by Villeneuve, Beaumont, and Grimm there is no indication of the situation around Beast being cursed. The only time it is mentioned in any of the three is at the end of de Beaumont's tale Beast tells Beauty he was cursed by a "wicked fairy." However, this claim is suspect due to the only magical being in the tale being a lady who helps Beauty by giving her good dreams and reassuring her. If this is the same fairy who cursed Beast, she seems like the type who would have a purpose. Other than this contradiction in this tale, these three tales (Beaumont, Villeneuve, and Grimm), which are the tales the rest in this category are based upon, give little or no indication of how the curse begins. This leaves room for experimentation on the part of revisionists in this section, who in general change very little. With no evidence of why he was cursed there seems to be no purpose to fulfill. Beast is most likely the same man he was before he was cursed. D'Aulnoy and Willard leave this area blank as well. They give no indication of how Beast gains his beastly state, leading again to a purposeless curse.

Cocteau and Kinski both say that his parents do not believe in magic (Cocteau), or fairy tales (Kinski) and are punished by having their son turned into a beast. By linking the deed of offense to the parents these authors have made Beast a more sympathetic character. Due to no fault of his own, he is cursed to become a beast. The cause of the curse, a lack of belief, is obviously changed. Beast's parents would have no trouble believing in magic or fairy tales after seeing their son turned into a beast.

Brett and Boswell use the instigator as a kind of fate. Brett states that “a meddlesome fairy, displeased with people trusting too much in appearances” curses Beast. Boswell’s instigator was an “evil witch who was angry.” This is another case in which Beast is not guilty of any crime, but rather of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, which again makes him a sympathetic character. This could have happened to anyone who was around when these magical beings got fed up with what was going on around them. Although the direction of these curses was random the purpose behind them was fulfilled for the instigator. By turning a good man into a beast, and making his release contingent upon a beautiful woman marrying him, the first fairy creates a situation in which if the curse is fulfilled someone will learn not to trust too much in appearance. The second fairy, by turning someone into a beast, expressed his or her anger and moved on, therefore, fulfilling his or her purpose in cursing Beast.

The third type of situation in which Beast is cursed is when something he, personally, did offend a magical being. In both Mayer and Disney’s tales, Beast is cursed for not having passed a kind of test of goodwill and hospitality. Both Beasts turn away an ugly old woman who asks for hospitality at his door. She turns out to be a witch or a fairy who turns him into a beast to experience others judging him on appearances alone. This curse and purpose is completely fulfilled. Beast learns to be hospitable because otherwise he will have no company. This can be seen in how he invites in Beauty’s father from the bitter storm and feeds and shelters him. He also learns what it is like to be on the other side of a hideous appearance and have others disgusted and scared of him. In *Snowbear Whittington*, he is at fault for his beastliness, for it is punishment for picking snow roses guarded by the winter witch. He learns the lesson immediately that he

should not have picked the roses. But he must still wait for Nell to come along and save him from the curse. The final tale in this category by Vande Velde also has Beast at fault. He is disgustingly rude and messy so his mother turns him into a beast so his appearance will match his behavior. This is somewhat tongue in cheek, but also illustrates a culpable beast. Here the purpose of the curse is also fulfilled; Beast becomes a cleaner, more polite individual. In these cases in which Beast is at fault, the point of the curse is understandable. There is logic behind turning someone into a beast who judged others by appearances or who acts like a beast, and the curse acts as a learning experience. This makes Beast an unsympathetic character at first, in that it seems he got what he deserved, and sympathy for him grows only when he has learned his lesson and begins to understand the purpose of his punishment.

The third set of tales are for the most part characterized by Beasts who are either born as they are and encounter a lack of acceptance from society that forces them into the curse of isolation, or Beasts who are cursed for their actions but have a background that explains their behavior. The main difference between this group and the last is the length of background and explanation about Beast's past and how he got into his current situation. Although this has always been a tale with two protagonists, for the majority of its existence it has also primarily followed Beauty, given her background and looked at things from her point of view. While these tales still pay a good deal of attention to Beauty, they also focus on Beast as an individual, and an important part of this is telling the tale of how he became what he is when we meet him in the story.

Six of these tales are of Beasts born as creatures society considers beasts and are, therefore, shunned by society. Carter's Tiger is a magnificent tiger who lives in a castle

of animated machines, with a simian retainer who translates for him. He is anything but the pitiable creature so many Beasts before him have been. His animal nature is instead captivating and magnificent. Lee's alien beast is yet another who is as he is supposed to be, born an alien of unutterable beauty that is too much for humans to accept. Due to this inability, he hides his face when in human company and lives isolated from humanity.

Vincent, in the 1987 television show *Beauty and the Beast*, is also born as he is to human parents who cannot accept his appearance and leave him to die. He now lives with other outcasts in the abandoned tunnels beneath the streets of New York. Wolfe presents, in fairy tale form, a situation that exists today. Drew is born human to a human father but is cast out as beastly when her lesbian sexuality is revealed. Finally, in the DreamWorks movie *Shrek*, *Shrek* is born an ogre, a creature feared and loathed by society at large, which retreats from society because of its reaction to him.

All of these beings are born as something that causes society to cast them out. The curse they suffer from is the curse of transgressing societal norms. Because these individuals do not fit in with what is believed to be right and natural in society they are shunned by society as a whole. There is no purpose behind this shunning but it does have a beneficial effect on the Beast characters in these tales. It gives them an empathy with other outcasts and an understanding that what society deems wrong is not the only way to look at things. This is illustrated in Drew making a safe place for the Old Ones on her property. *Shrek* makes friends, albeit reluctantly, with the obnoxious Donkey. Vincent accepts Catherine the way she is before she has plastic surgery on her scars, a surgery her father and fiancé seem to think is essential as soon as she returns home. Although these individuals may have turned into good people anyway, the experience of being shunned

by society has given them a deeper understanding of judging people by their actions rather than by society's standards.

The second set within this group are those who, because of who they are and have become through their background, have brought their curse upon themselves. In McKinley's *Beauty* a magician irritated by their goodness curses William's family in the past. But the family is too good for the curse to stick until William, a young man with a wild streak who has a tendency to break the rules, comes along. He is bad enough for the curse to be triggered. Through the curse, he learns to curb his wild streak. Lackey's Jason Cameron becomes the victim of pride. He believes he is a good enough magician to bend nature and take on the form of a wolf, and in the course of the attempt is caught in between man and wolf form. Although he is still rather prideful, his accident has taught him that he does have limits. Baker's Beast, Peter, follows the course of being rude to an enchantress in disguise. But, unlike former tales, his attitude is explained by his childhood as the spoiled only son on a movie mogul, who then lost his parents and is raised by servants. Also, when he is rude to the enchantress in disguise he is still only a child and can, perhaps, be forgiven a bit of rudeness. He is taught the same lesson as previously discussed, how to be hospitable, and what it is like to be the one with the unattractive face. In McKinley's *Rose Daughter* Beast is a sorcerer philosopher in search of truth who is turned into a beast by the guardians of first and last truth and isolated by the jealousy of the Magician Strix. This is also a type of pride, the belief that it is possible to find the ultimate truth in the world. Through this consequence of his actions, he learns that there are some truths that should not be discovered, because the price is too high. When Wheeler's Snake Man, Monsieur Aspic, is supposed to take his

place as a voodoo priest of the right hand magic, his lack of faith in himself because of his appearance, leads him to reject his place and live in isolation. After this period of isolation, with the help of Bonita he learns to accept his appearance, regain his self-confidence and take his place as a priest of the right hand magic. Prince Orasmyn in Napoli's *Beast* knowingly lets a camel that had suffered be sacrificed and is punished for this transgression of Muslim guidelines by a Peri turning him into a lion. While a lion, Orasmyn holds on to his humanity through his faith and becomes a better Muslim for it.

These men/woman are cursed or curse themselves through a logical set of events that are only available in these tales in which the character of the beast is fully developed, with a past that gives his actions motivation. Many pages are devoted to Beast, his past, and how his motivations are shaped. This contrasts the line or less used in previous versions to talk about him. When readers see the actions that lead to the current actions of a character like the beast, even when the current action is seemingly cruel or rude there is an understanding of why that character is doing what he is doing.

Through the revisions Beast develops from a clear individual with clear motivations and purpose. He becomes a vague half formed character who comes into the tale halfway through and whose actions are at times unfathomable, and is finally a character who is, once again, well defined with a background that if perhaps does not make up for some of his actions at least makes them understandable and shows logically how this character came to be where he is now. This background also helps to show what effect the curse has had on the beast character within the tale and how he has developed from beginning to end.

An intriguing fact is that in many cases Beast does not seem to have been changed by his long years of imprisonment, but rather is angry and rude and is only redeemed by spending time in Beauty's company. This suggests that it is not the curse of being a beast and isolated that redeems him but Beauty. If Beauty had come along while he was a human perhaps she could have redeemed him even then, thus making the entire transformation and existence as a beast seem pointless. One might argue that it is his experience as a beast that paves the way for Beauty's change on his temperament. This can be shown in the majority of the tales. Beast invites Beauty's father in out of the cold bitter night and offers him shelter and food. One might argue that Beast has become hospitable because he knows that a beautiful maiden will set him free and it is only that knowledge that makes him receptive. However, he invites Beauty's father in before he knows he has a daughter. This suggests at least some change in the attitude of the beast. However, the question still exists: if Beauty had been an older married woman with the same temperament and attitude would she have had any affect on Beast whatsoever?

Beauty

This brings us to the question of Beauty. In the years this tale has been told there has been a definite shift in society and how it views women, especially in the time when the third category of tales analyzed was being written. This change in the way women are viewed by society is reflected by a change in how active or passive Beauty is. She goes from passively following the fate set out for her to actively taking a part in her story by making conscious choices. Her character also becomes more complex, but in a different way than Beast's. Beauty has generally come with a great deal of background as the

character the tale typically revolves around. However, she has also been one dimensionally, good and dutiful. This may not sound bad, but it is a way of putting female characters on a pedestal that makes them a model for what women should be in society. This can be seen especially in Beaumont's tale, due to her writing it for a girl's finishing school. Later tales make Beauty a fallible character with multiple sides, which makes her more human. We are made human by our flaws, not our perfections. Another important aspect of her character is the concept of beauty and the importance of her character's beauty within the tale.

In the first category each story is a little different in relation to Beauty, due to their different countries of origin and coming from different oral traditions. Psyche is a very passive character; she follows the advice of the oracle, throws herself off a cliff to appease Aphrodite, and follows the suggestions of her sisters to look at Cupid at night. She is shown as a good character, but foolish, because she listens to her spiteful sisters over the man she has come to love. Her Beauty is an essential element on the tale because without it Aphrodite would never have become jealous of her, and Cupid would not have fallen in love with her on sight and refused to kill her as his mother wished. Melinda, in *King Pig*, passively goes to the castle and the husband that has killed her two sisters before her. She is described as "humble, modest, and amiable" not even flinching at her husband's disgusting appearance, and the only time she disobeys anyone is when she tells her in-laws that her husband can turn into a man. But she only disobeys her husband in this because she is so good she cannot bear her in-laws' suffering. She is described as more beautiful than her sisters and she is a better person than they are. This correlation is common in many tales. As though there is a one to one ratio between a woman's beauty

and her goodness and it is the beauty that causes the goodness. The princess in *Ricky of the Tuft* is a little less passive in that she tries to get out of her deal with Ricky and almost marries another man. But in the end, she follows the path the fairy expects her to and ends up with Ricky. She is described as very stupid before she meets Ricky and is not completely good, because before she meets Ricky again she plans to betray him. This shows a rather devious side of her personality. However, this deviousness is still rather shallow and leaves her once again as a one-dimensional character. Her beauty is very important because of her ability to bestow her looks on the one she loves, which complements Ricky's ability to bestow his brains on the one he loves. In *The Dragon Prince* Seven is the youngest of her siblings and also the most beautiful and a good and dutiful daughter to her father. She too follows fate and goes with the Dragon Prince because she is dutiful and feels she must save her father. Her goodness also leads her to save the snake, the Dragon Prince in a different form, from her sister. Her goodness also lets her see the humanity in the Dragon Prince and win over his heart. All of these female characters follow fate and end up in the right situation because that fate led them there, not because they made a conscious choice to change anything. Melinda and Seven are one-dimensional characters in their goodness, and Psyche and the Princess are also one-dimensional characters in what is perceived as their female foolishness, deviousness and stupidity.

In the second group of tales Beauty's uniform goodness, which comes from being beautiful, leads her to sacrifice herself for her father, and feel pity for the Beast. But she does not act on her own to save him; instead she is only prodded into saving the Beast when he is at death's door. None of the Beautys in these tales rage against the fate of

going to the Beast. They are afraid at first, but easily lose that fear because their goodness allows them to see Beast's humanity. There are two elements that occur in some of these tales that reiterate Beauty's passive, one-dimensional character and how her beauty is an important factor in the tale. The first of these factors is found in the tales written by Villeneuve, d'Aulnoy, Mayer and Boswell. Beauty has dreams once she is in Beast's castle of a witch and a young prince. The witch tells her all will be well if she learns to look beneath the surface of things and the young prince asks her to free him from his imprisonment. She dreams of them often and they keep reiterating these points. After she refuses Beast's proposal, the prince asks her why she will not free him. In none of these tales does she ever suspect that Beast and the prince are one and the same. Instead she suspects that Beast is holding the prince captive. The presence of the witch, the enchanted castle, and a beast that can talk and think like a man suggests the presence of magic; but still she never suspects that the prince is Beast. This is not such a large leap in logic, but it is never made. She makes little or no effort to work out the nature of the prince's imprisonment. Instead she goes on in the tale, only freeing Beast when she thinks him near death. This shows her passivity; She lets things happen and does what seems best, making as few real decisions as possible.

The second element in some of these tales, those by Cocteau, Kinski, and Disney, is the interjection of a suitor. The suitor points to the importance of Beauty's beauty. Because she is beautiful she could have any man she wants. As pointed out in Disney's tale, Gaston is considered a prime catch by the rest of the town. The point is that someone as beautiful as Beauty would choose Beast, not because she could have no other man, but because she saw beneath his outer shell.

The third group of tales is filled with Beautys who are active, complex players in the tale who are not always beautiful, or whose beauty is not an important element in the tale. Because they are active complex players, it is their personality and brains that are important in the redemption of the beast not their beauty. In McKinley's *Beauty* Beauty's complex personality can be seen in how she deals with the revelation of being able to hear her ephemeral servants. She shows cleverness in that she does not reveal her knowledge of their conscious existence. She believes, correctly, that by listening to them she can learn more about the castle, about what she was brought there to do, and what kind of enchantment is lying on the place. Here Beauty is dealt with in a unique way. When she first comes to the castle she is in an awkward stage in which none of her features fit and she feels that she is the ugly duckling of the family. As she lives in the castle and grows and develops as a person she grows and develops in loveliness as well. This shows that beauty can be found in a complete and confident individual who has come into her own personality. In Carter's *The Courtship of Mr. Lyon* Beauty's fallibility and, therefore, her humanity is shown through her becoming spoiled when her father becomes rich again and they move to the city. She shows her active participation in the tale when she chooses to leave her life of wealth and privilege to return to Beast. Also, one can see where the importance of beauty is eclipsed by personality, because when she goes to the city and becomes spoiled she is less beautiful. Her beauty before was described as having an "inner light...a look of absolute sweetness and absolute gravity" (41, 44). Here, unlike in Beaumont's tale, goodness makes one beautiful rather than beauty making one good. In *The Tiger's Bride* Beauty has the courage to go to the Tiger and lay herself bare to him, literally, after she has seen him in all his feline splendor.

What makes this different from what Beautys in the previous sections did is that Beast is not dying and for a woman of the upper classes in the past, taking off your clothes for a stranger makes you more vulnerable to them than accepting a marriage proposal, which is what previous Beautys did. Also, to this Beauty her beauty is a curse. Without it she would not have been valuable enough for her father to use her as collateral in a card game. Her multi-dimensional personality is shown through her railing against the fate that brought her to this place. Also, she shows her spirit when she refuses the Tiger's request, saying that he could rape her but she would never remove her clothes for him. In Lee's *Beauty*, Estár shows her complexity through her ability to grow and become more at peace with herself throughout the story. In the beginning she feels unfinished and as though she does not fit with her family. By the end she has come into her own and feels as if she fits in the life she has chosen. In the previous groups not only is Beauty one-dimensionally good she is also stagnant. She does not grow or change at all throughout the story. The lack of importance placed on Estár's looks is shown by the fact that her outer shell is an accident of fate. She only looks like the woman and man she thought were her parents because her mother is reckless and miscarries her first child giving the aliens the opportunity to transplant Estár into her womb. Even if she had been hideous she would have been the person chosen by the giving of the green rose. In the television show, *Beauty and the Beast*, Catherine shows how she is an active character by reacting to the attack with the decision to become an investigator for the DA's office and help others in need. Her beauty is shown as an unimportant factor because when Vincent found her, her beauty was marred by the attack. In Lackey's *The Fire Rose* Rosalind is not beautiful. She is in fact somewhat nerdy with spectacles and clothes from the Sears

Robuck catalog. She is definitely not a passive character, making her own way after her father dies, and dealing with the reality of Jason's situation and the existence of magic without turning away. She also has the strength of will to go to an Earth Mage for help with Jason's condition against his wishes. She also engineers a meeting between Jason and his horse whom he has missed a great deal in the months since his spell went awry. Bonnie, in Baker's *The Rose*, stands up to Peter's temper tantrums and refuses to be cowed by his spoiled ways. She goes out on her bike to find her father when she believes he lost his way, and can be just as stubborn and bullheaded as Peter. In McKinley's second tale, *Rose Daughter*, beauty does not seem to be an issue. Beauty is described by her personality as a savior of lost souls, who consoles those in shock from her sister's treatment, and cares for those who are left behind by life for not fitting in as they should. Her complexity is shown in the way that she cannot do everything. She is not perfect. Only with the help of her sisters, Lionheart and Jeweltongue, do things work out after their fall from grace. They are a team, each having a part to play. By showing that Beauty cannot do everything by herself McKinley is showing her humanity. Wheeler's Bonita has the strength of will to go with a man her religion tells her is evil, because of his belief in voodoo, and has the courage to find out about his beliefs and in the end become his wife in act as well as in word. Wolfe's Angelique goes against the "right" of society, accepting Drew's sexuality without prejudice. She also actively pursues Drew and forces her to reveal herself to Angelique without letting her retreat back into the bitterness she has built up over the years. Here is another instance in which beauty is not an issue because Drew's beauty rivals that of Angelique. Block's Beauty has an awareness of the tale she is in and uses the fairy tale forces as a way to escape her situation at home, with a

father who is smothering her. Instead of bowing to fate, she uses it to achieve her own purposes. Fiona in *Shrek* is also aware of being in a fairy tale and is actively using it to break the spell on her. She is not a passive participant in the tale, which she shows by fighting off the bandits that try to rob them on the road. Also, Shrek prefers her Ogress form to her beautiful human form, which displays the unimportance of her beauty. Finally, in Napoli's *Beast*, Beauty has little indication that Orasmyn is anything but a beast bespelled to be intelligent. She also has repeated dreams of him killing her and does not know he is dying when she decides to return to the mansion. She has three reasons to stay at home with her father and never return, but she actively chooses to return and even seems pleased by her decision. The lack of importance placed on her beauty is shown through Beast not knowing of it when he asked her father to bring her.

In this section one can see how Beauty has become an active participant in the tale. She makes decisions on her own, without fate or society urging her and even goes against those prejudices at times. An important element is that she often chooses to save Beast before he is at his last breath. Her character is intelligent, brave, strong willed, sometimes spoiled, and above all human and complex. In these tales her beauty, rather than being an advantage is either meaningless or a disadvantage. A key element in these tales is that Beauty comes to love Beast despite his appearance. Beast also comes to view Beauty's personality, intelligence, and strength of will as more important than her beauty.

Transformation

The transformation is the final aspect of the tale that really shows how it has evolved over the years through many retellings. Three elements of the transformation are

important when comparing change in these three groups of tales. The first element is how the transformation comes about. Many elements are used in the tales as points on which the transformation occurs: sex, marriage, love, acceptance of self or of the “other,” and the factor that spurs the transformation reflects what is valued in relationships by the author and the society when the tale is told. The nature of the transformation (who is transformed and whether there is any transformation at all) is the second element that reflects changing trends. The change is most often physical. But there are cases in which the change is psychological, in which the character evolving accepts an aspect of his/her own psyche and changes an attitude rather than physically changing his/her body. Also, there are cases in which Beauty is transformed rather than Beast, and then cases where no transformation occurs at all.

Each transformation in the first section is different. Cupid is never actually a beast. Psyche thinks he is a beast because he only comes to her at night to protect his identity. Also, the Dragon Prince is a powerful being who can transform from human to dragon form at will. Seven’s ability to see with her heart rather than her eyes allowed a change in his life to occur, because he would never be alone again. In *King Pig* marrying for the third time allows the prince to transform between pig and man forms at will. Ricky of the Tuft becomes more attractive when the princess loves him because she is charmed to make whomever she loves attractive and he makes her smarter with the charm placed on him at birth to make whomever he loves smarter. In these last three it is ability to see truth, love, and marriage that trigger a change in some way. Each of these was most likely highly valued in the societies in which these tales arose.

In the second group of tales the transformation always happens to Beast. He always becomes the man he was before he became a beast. In seven of the fourteen tales (Villeneuve, Beaumont, d'Aulnoy, Brett, Willard, Velde, and Mayer) the trigger for the transformation is Beauty telling Beast that she will marry him. In five of the remaining tales (Cocteau, Kinski, Disney, Boswell, and Hooks) the trigger is Beauty telling Beast she loves him. In Noziere's play a kiss is what begins the transformation; this is related to the theatre being a visual media where a kiss works as a means of relating Beauty's love and acceptance of Beast. The final tale is the Grimm version where the transformation begins with Beauty pouring water on Beast's prone form. This has to do with a regional difference in the tale. Germanic fables have a tradition about the transformative power of water. Overall, in these tales transformation is something that happens to Beast, he becomes a man, and it is triggered by love or marriage. This trend points to love and marriage being important messages in the societies these tales are directed toward. The early tales occurred in a time when love and marriage went together and marriage is how relationships were supposed to end. In later tales directed to children love and marriage are emphasized as the ideal in a relationship and the model for what authors want children to see as a good relationship. They are reiterating social ideals.

The third set of tales changes things around a great deal. These authors rewrite what makes a happy ending. To do this they change every aspect of the transformation. Four, however, do not fit in to this trend for various reasons. McKinley, in *Beauty*, while fleshing out the characters does not really change the basic tenets of the transformation and ends with Beast transforming into a man when Beauty tell him she loves him and will marry him. This was early in McKinley's career and she told a good tale but did not

really change anything drastically until her later version. You can see how she evolved by the change in how her second version ended. In the end of *Rose Daughter* Beauty is given the choice to live with Beast as a man in his mansion always in the public eye with the threat of other magician's jealousies hanging over their heads, or to live with him as a beast in Rose Cottage near her family and live out their days in peaceful anonymity. Beauty chooses the latter option. There is no transformation at the end of this tale but there is a happy ending with Beauty and Beast living on in happiness. Carter's two versions also have an evolution in terms of the transformation. In *The Courtship of Mr. Lyon* Beauty cries and says she loves Beast and will never leave him, and he transforms into Mr. Lyon. In *The Tiger's Bride* Tiger licks the human skin off Beauty's back and she becomes a tiger. This implies that it is not Tiger who is under a curse of beastliness; it is Beauty who is under a curse of humanity. Baker's *The Rose* is another revised tale in which the end transformation does not change. Bonita tells Peter she loves him and he transforms back into a man. This ending is due to *The Rose* being purely in the romance genre, which tends to stick to more traditional happy endings. The final tale that sticks to the traditional transformation at the end is Napoli's *Beast*. In this case the primary focus of the tale is on Orasmyn and the life he has before he comes to France and meets Beauty. Beauty is not even introduced until the last third of the tale. Orasmyn's past is more important than anything that happens after he gets to France, including the transformation.

Like Angelique in *Tiger's Bride*, in *Shrek* Fiona is the one who transforms. The message this brings across reiterates the point that what is on the inside is what matters. Fiona transforms permanently into the form that matches the one she loves.

An overwhelming trend in this third group is found in those revisions like *Rose Daughter* where there is no physical transformation. In Lee's *Beauty*, the television show, Lackey's *The Fire Rose*, Wheeler's *Skin so Green and Fine*, and Wolfe's *Roses and Thorns* neither Beauty nor Beast change physically at the end of the tale. Rather than a physical transformation, there is either a release from physical or mental isolation. Estar realizes who she is and connects with others when she accepts who she is (Lee). Vincent gets out from underground and connects with the outside world through Catherine (Franklin). Jason gets out of his house, reenters the circle of masters, and travels to places where his appearance is not unusual, with the help of Rosalind (Lackey). Michel reunites with his voodoo congregation after Bonita helps him to accept himself (Wheeler). With Angelique's help Drew learns to accept her own sexuality, loses her bitterness and faces the past (Wolfe). In two of these cases sex is the turning point when Michel and Drew finally believe that Bonita and Angelique really accept them as they are (Wheeler and Wolfe). This reflects a change in what society sees as important in relationships, from focusing mainly on marriage and love to a point where making love can be just as important.

The final tale by Fransesca Lia Block reflects a concept hinted at in some of the tales from the second section. In many cases, when Beast changes back into a man Beauty feels some consternation. This handsome man is not the man she fell in love with. Some cases solved this by the man being the one she has been dreaming of all this time as mentioned above. But in other cases this is a man Beauty has never met and she does not feel as if she knows him. Beast is the man she fell in love with in her dreams. But other tales gloss over this, and in the end she accepts the change and is even happy about it. In

Francesca Lia Block's *Beast* Beast's physical change also reflects a personality change. He can no longer read her mind and feel what she feels. By becoming human Beast has lost aspects of his character that Beauty was attracted to. This seems to be a reflection on current ideas of marriage. As soon as you make things official things start to change and you're not married to the person you got to know while you were dating him.

The way these three groups portray the transformation reflects the values of society at the time they were written. In the first group the different transformations or lack thereof reflect varying values in the societies they arose in. In the second group value is placed on love and marriage and an actual physical transformation by Beast is an essential part of the tale. In the third group less value is placed on being human. Twice Beauty transforms into a beast. Repeatedly there is no physical transformation, and once the traditional transformation ends not in joy but in disappointment. Rather than stressing the importance of physical transformation these tales stress the value of being at peace with yourself no matter what your outer form is. Also, marriage is given less value and the physical act of love is given transformational status, reflecting a rise in its importance in society.

Conclusion

What has not yet been isolated is what in the past and in the present has caused such distinctions between these three groups of tales. First of all, the first section is, as mentioned above, one in which the tales are very unique and often even have little in common with each other, let alone the rest of the tales analyzed. This is due to status as Beauty and Beast tales, but not actually as *Beauty and the Beast* tales. They represent the

genre that *Beauty and the Beast* fits into, but is only one example of. These are all other subsets of the Beauty and Beast type of tale. At one time children in Italy would have been as or more likely to know the tale of *King Pig* as they would be to know the tale of *Beauty and the Beast*. In this time, oral tales were much more common. When these tales were told they were only told in particular areas and could be very regionally oriented to have more relevance to the listeners. For example, to relate the tale of *Beauty and the Beast* to a particular region and make it cogent to the audience a storyteller would change things to make it more familiar. Beauty's father would be a merchant of some good that was often traded in that area, and Beast would be described in relation to some well-known animal. A specific example in one of these tales is when Straparola begins his tale of *King Pig* with the words "Galeotto, King of Anglia, has a son who is born in the shape of a pig" (1). Here he uses a name and a place that would have been familiar to his audience, but has little relevance to an audience reading his tale today. These regionalized differences are what make these tales so different from those in the next section.

The reason we know this particular tale so well is that it was picked up by three separate recorders of folklore, at three different points, in a very similar form, at a time when literature was being much more widely published and read. These three recorders were Beaumont, Villeneuve, and Grimm. Through the years these have been the versions that have been retold through novels, plays, children's books, short stories, and movies, and this particular Beauty and Beast tale has become much better known than any other in our society. Beaumont, Villeneuve, and Grimm begin the middle section of tales and every other tale in that section is almost an exact replica of one of those tales. These

versions arose in a time when an interest in the roots and relationships between myths and fairy tales was being investigated. The Grimms for example, were interested in “revealing the similarities of ancient mythical content [with the fairy tales found in Germany and]...The first step was to recover the material” (Crick xvi). Part of this recovery was finding the basic story of a tale like *Beauty and the Beast*, which was told slightly differently in different areas of one country. The result of this attempt to find the basic tale behind those commonly heard is the *Beauty and the Beast* we know today. Other children’s books and plays and movies written later are so similar to those that came before because they were writing to pass on the same tale to different audiences. Their purpose was to be accurate and pass on the tale as it had been written previously.

A reason this vague fairy tale world and characters came about and was the tale to become popularized was the widespread circulation of written materials. Because these tales were read in other countries and translated into other languages, a more general tale that people of multiple cultures and ethnicities could relate to was the type of tale that became widespread. An example of how this works is that Beauty is often described as beautiful but in a general way such as: “the youngest daughter was the most beautiful” (Grimm 1). With this type of description anyone reading this tale in any area of the world could project his/her idea of beauty onto Beauty’s character, whether that be a thin, blue eyed, pale blonde or a voluptuous, black eyed, bronzed brunette.

The third set of modern revisions of the tale, in which things are changed drastically in many areas, came about in conjunction with the rise in popularity of science-fiction and fantasy, the rise in female authors in these genres, and the rethinking and rewriting of traditional elements to fit modern ideals of romance, gender equality,

and feminism. Female authors wrote all of the modern revisions except for the movie *Shrek* and the 1987 television show. In today's world fairy tales are given to children to read and as they grow. In general boys reject the fairy tale for more masculine pastimes and for girls "they[the fairy tales] [become] part of the...private world of growing up female" (Warner XIV). Through this rewriting they deal with problems they see in the tale: a passive Beauty, an underdeveloped Beast, and an ending transformation that has a great deal of underused potential. This group can be divided up even further by the way these authors deal with the tale in relation to the feminist movement. In the first subsection (both McKinleys, Carter's Lyon, Lackey, Baker, Wheeler, Wolfe, and Napoli) develop the tales as romances, but follow the ideals of first wave feminism. First wave feminism was concerned with equality embodied in the suffrage movement of the eve of the 20th century (Buechler 2). In these tales as shown above Beauty becomes a real character with depth and human flaws. This makes sense; by making Beauty a stronger more human character these women are making her the equal of any man. In this sense the development of Beast character is understandable. By developing Beast these authors are making him into a character worthy of Beauty's love. In this quest for equality Wolfe's tale might be the most equal of all, by making the only person worthy of Angelique's love be Drew, another woman.

In the second subsection, Carter's Tiger, Lee, and Block, follow in the path of the second wave of feminism. In this movement women like Helene Cixous were interested in not just legal and political equality, but the "need to rethink and revise the symbolic dimensions of their lives...to explore new mythic and symbolic paradigms that would allow women to think beyond their traditional roles" (Santoro 5). These tales reject

traditional romance and reflect relationships that are quite out of the ordinary. Examples of this are the culmination of the relationship in *The Tiger's Bride* in which Tiger licks away Beauty's humanity, and in Lee's *Beauty* in which the alien is destined to be Estár's mate genetically rather than romantically. In both sections these women have revised *Beauty and the Beast* into forms with deeper and more real reflections of humanity and its possibilities.

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