Reimagining Gender in A Tale as Old as Time: Gender and Narrative Play in Young Adult Retellings of "Beauty and the Beast"

Janieke Koning
Supervisor: Dr. Roselinde Supheert
Second Assessor: Prof. Dr. Ann Rigney
rMA Comparative Literary Studies
Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands
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ABSTRACT

This thesis contributes to scholarship on retellings of the traditional literary fairy tales of "Beauty and the Beast", written by Madame de Villeneuve and Madame de Beaumont in the eighteenth century. I explore how socializing metanarratives of gender are re-conceptualized through narrative play in young adult retellings influenced by late-twentieth and early twenty-first century women's movements. Authors create a tension between existing metanarratives of gender, which are often antithetical to modern world views, such as the beauty myth, and the alternatives they offer in their retellings. They do this by creating critical distance through the invocation of similarity and difference. Consequently, sets of metanarratives are fighting for the implicit, invisible, socially dominant position in society.

This thesis discusses retellings by Robin McKinley, Alex Flinn, and the Walt Disney Company. They create a dialogue between traditional metanarratives, their retellings, and their intended adolescent audience. Their use of narrative techniques and strategies to alter traditional narrative patterns, motifs, characters, and plot lines determines whether these retellings disrupt or maintain traditional patriarchal metanarratives of gender, including those of feminine beauty, conduct, agency, and male-female relationships. I focus on the complexity with which retellings re-envision the traditional tales to alter existing metanarratives and how they use narrative strategies to do this. I argue that the more disruptive narrative strategies are to fairy tale structure and frames as opposed to motifs and characters, the more enabled the retelling is to battle traditional metanarratives of gender.

"There, there. It will soon be over."

-- J.M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*

but also,

"And they lived happily

(aside from a few normal disagreements,

misunderstandings, pouts, silent treatments,

and unexpected calamities)

ever after."

-- Jean Ferris, *Twice Upon a Marigold*

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INTRODUCTION

A petite brunette dressed in a golden-yellow ball gown and a hulking monster in an ill-fitting suit, dancing in a giant empty ballroom may for many people be the iconic image of "Beauty and the Beast."[1] The Walt Disney Company's animated adaptation, *Beauty and The Beast* (1991), from which this image stems, is one in a line of many adaptations of the famous fairy tale.[2] In March 2017, Disney released its live-action rendition, which sparked controversy when it was revealed that the film features an openly gay character with several short gay moments. The 129-minute film shows LeFou, a minor character in *Beauty and the Beast* (1991/2017) who serves as sidekick to the main antagonist Gaston, in several short scenes which could be interpreted as gay: intimately hugging his same-sex boss, expressing his affection for him, and dancing with another man, among others. These moments approximate nearly 4.5-minutes of footage. For this reason, several theatres in North America refused to show the film, Russia released the film with a 16+ rating, and in Malaysia, theatres were told to delay the first showings because Malaysia's Film Censorship Board had cut the footage from the film without the approval of the studio. Rather than stepping down, Disney insisted that the scenes remained in the film for all showings. Disney's resolve is more ground-breaking than the scenes themselves, as Brian Andersen points out in his review "Much Ado about LeFou": "Even more humorous to me […] is how the much-heralded gay moment[s] featuring villain-turned-good-guy LeFou [are] hardly a moment[s] at all." Andersen continues to say that "It's not the size of the representation in *Beauty and the Beast* that matters, because despite its barely there length, it's a massive step toward equality for a major studio film to include even a tiny bit of open queerness in such a huge family film." Many do not believe this is a step forward, however, for example, the national council of churches in Singapore,

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[1] I will refer to the general "Beauty and the Beast" tale, tale type 425C in the Aarne Thompson Index, with quotation marks. Specific adaptations will always be accompanied by the name of the author and/or the year of publication to avoid confusion.
[2] From here on, I will refer to The Walt Disney Company as Disney.

who released a statement, which, among other things, said, “They [The Walt Disney Company] see this as an attempt to influence young children and socialize them at an early age into thinking that the homosexual lifestyle is normal” (Palatino). Apparently, Disney is perceived to participate in a process to change culturally and socially dominant views on, in this case, homosexuality.

Fairy tales serve as “cultural treasures” (Sanders 82), which is one of the reasons they remain popular and are often retold. Fairy tales have held important cultural functions and continue to do so, such as “initiat[ing] children into aspects of a social heritage, transmitting many of a culture’s central values and assumptions and a body of shared allusions and experiences” (Stephens and McCallum 4). Fairy tales and their retellings are often informed by ideas, statements, values, and norms that are dominant in a particular society. In other words, they are informed by social metanarratives. This term was brought to prominence by Jean-François Lyotard in 1979, in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge.* A metanarrative, also referred to as a grand narrative or master narrative, is an “apparatus of legitimation [of knowledge]” (xxiv). For Lyotard, a metanarrative is a story which governs, unifies, and orders other, smaller stories and accounts of social life. John Stephens and Robyn McCallum describe it as “the implicit and usually invisible ideologies, systems and assumptions which operate globally in a society to order knowledge and experience” (3). Statements such as *homosexuality is not normal* and others such as *knowledge is the path to independence and personal development*, or *being yourself is more important than pleasing others*, carry “metanarrative force” (Stephens 209). Metanarratives may seem self-evident in a specific society and are readily accepted. Metanarratives thus underpin a “meaningful and desirable social picture” (210). Lyotard argued that postmodernity is defined by “incredulity toward metanarratives” (xxiv) and that local narratives emerged to take their place; metanarratives, however, remain influential (Stephens 209).

Dominant metanarratives remain so, invisibly and implicitly, by preventing marginal metanarratives from upsetting the cultural order. Particularly during the second half of the

twentieth century, many marginalized metanarratives have started actively engaging with and subverting dominant metanarratives (Stephens 209). For example, since the explosion of feminist movements in the 1960s Western, feminist metanarratives of gender are fighting patriarchal metanarratives of gender for the dominant position in society. Feminist critics have done much to undo patriarchal metanarratives of gender and many used fairy tales as case studies, because, as Marcia Lieberman explained, "Millions of women must surely have formed their pshycho-sexual self-concepts and their ideas of what they could or could not accomplish, what sort of behaviour would be rewarded, and of the nature of reward itself, in part from their favorite fairy tales" (385). Retellings of these fairy tales may to "offer the possibility of change, far beyond the boundaries of their improbable plots or fantastically illustrated pages" (Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde* xii). With each retelling, there is a chance that the possibility of change will be realized within the plot as well as in the world. Thus, retellings can reflect societal changes to metanarratives of gender, but they can also inspire these changes. Whereas "'They lived happily ever after' consoles us [as readers], [it] gives scant help compared to 'Listen, this is how it was before, but things could change – and they might'" (Warner, *Blonde* xxi).

Metanarratives are cultural and time-specific, and as societies' central values, norms, ideas and assumptions change, so too do their metanarratives. As Zipes argues in *Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale*: "The purpose of producing a revised fairy tale is to create something new that incorporates the critical and creative thinking of the producer and corresponds to changed demands and tastes of audiences. As a result of transformed values, the revised classical fairy tale seeks to alter the reader's views of traditional patterns, images and codes" (9). Changing metanarratives in fairy tale retellings allow authors to question socially and culturally dominant ideas which have become, in their eyes, outdated and unnecessary.

Young Adult Retellings and "Moments of Cultural Crisis"

Fairy tale retellings are particularly suited to challenge, and possibly subvert, metanarratives because fairy tales can be a vehicle for the enculturation and socializing of children: "[a]s children, we all hear fairy tales and read our lives into them. […] We never abandon fairy tales" (Zipes, *Happily Ever After* 1). Fairy tales have long been marketed towards children and they are generally seen as the quintessential form of children's literature. Fairy tale scholars such as Maria Tatar, Marina Warner, and Jack Zipes, however, have noted repeatedly that the socio-historical context of fairy tales is decidedly adult: "as an oral form, the fairy tale was […] never categorized as a 'children's' genre. Nor was it regarded as a genre for children when it was appropriated by educated upper-class writers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (3). For adults too, these tales were meant to invite reflection "upon mores, norms, and habits organized for the purpose of reinforcing a hierarchically arranged civilizing process in a particular society" (3).

Fairy tales have much to offer to the growing adolescent in terms of personal discovery. Many of the protagonists in fairy tales find themselves on the threshold between childhood and adulthood (Sanders 86; Bettelheim 73; Stephens and McCallum 5). Although I disagree with Bruno Bettelheim's universalistic approach to fairy tales, I do agree with his observation that "fairy tales depict in imaginary and symbolic form the essential steps in growing up and achieving an independent existence" (73). Protagonists leave the security of home and childhood to then get lost in the dangerous world outside, often symbolized by a forest, or in the case of "Beauty and the Beast," Beast's castle. The effect of the protagonist, Beauty in this case, leaving home is a psychological and physical change: to save her father, she must submit to the unknown. Literary text meant for a young adult audience, often denoted aged thirteen to eighteen (Talley 232), are inherently concerned with social metanarratives: they are "informed by the values and assumptions about adolescence that are dominant in the culture at the time of the text's production" (Zipes, *Encyclopedia* 214). The liminal state of adolescents and the considerable

physical and psychological changes that accompany this state are highly significant in the process of growing up (Talley 232). Young adult literature then is as potent and transformative as its protagonists (232).

Gender issues and metanarratives of gender feature prominently in young adult media, both visual and textual. Young adult retellings are a particularly interesting way for authors to challenge dominant social metanarratives of gender because these tales, in some form or other, are generally already familiar to their audiences. As a result, retellers have the advantage of the recognition value of the traditional tale because they "work with and within the traditional framework of the story, and, if they do it cleverly, the reader's pleasure is a mix of recognition and surprise" (De Vos and Altmann, *Then and Now* xxi). For young adults, this may be helpful when trying to understand, navigate, and change their psychological, social and cultural positions, within a particular society (Zipes, *Happily* 11). Retellers who address the social forces surrounding gender that affect young women and men create "ambivalence by simultaneously rejecting and embracing the fairy tale" (Haase 30). This ambivalence is a site of productivity because it creates "moment[s] of cultural crisis" (Stephens and McCallum 9) as socially dominant metanarratives that have informed the traditional fairy tale may give way to new metanarratives. These moments create a space in which "metanarratival and textual processes interact […] to reproduce or contest significance" (Stephens and McCallum 9).

Purpose of the Study and Selection of the Texts

According to Virginia Swain, the "Beauty and the Beast" tale "has always been a vehicle for its author's social and political messages or the popular ideas of the time" ("Beauty and the Beast" 107). Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve and Jean-Marie Leprince de Beaumont, two French, eighteenth century authors of the first literary versions of "Beauty and the Beast," wrote about their own social conditions, what could be changed, and what they considered important to a

young woman in their society, thus revealing the underlying metanarratives of gender, in particular. This thesis will explore the complexity with which recent authors of young adult retellings have adapted traditional fairy tale versions of “Beauty and the Beast” and their metanarratives of gender. It will explore how authors give significance to its story and its cultural and socializing functions for young adult audiences of the past four decades. Retellings which engage with traditional metanarratives often reveal the artifice and adaptability of these metanarratives through narrative transformation (Stephens and McCallum 4). According to Warner, “metamorphosis defines the fairy tale” (*Blonde* xv-xvi); not just because the characters undergo all kinds of transformations, whether they be physical, social, or emotional, but also because they undergo structural transformation in retellings. The aim of this thesis is to show how narrative strategies and processes interact with metanarratives of gender in retellings of “Beauty and the Beast” written after the explosion of feminist movements in the United States of America in the 1960s. I argue that the more disruptive narrative strategies are to fairy tale structure, motifs, and characters, the more enabled the retelling is to battle patriarchal metanarratives of gender. The interaction between destabilizing textual processes and conservative metanarratives creates moments of cultural crisis in which young adult audiences can question metanarratives presented in the traditional fairy tale, the retelling, and in contemporary society. The traditional fairy tale versions include Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve (1740), Jean-Marie Leprince de Beaumont (1756) and Disney’s animated adaptation (1991). The narrative processes include choice of setting, register, tense, point of view, and focalization, as well as metafictional strategies such as the use of storytelling within a novel. To examine the interaction between narrative play and metanarratives of gender, I will conduct a close reading of the material alongside earlier theoretical texts and criticism, with a particular interest in gender criticism. Through comparative analysis, I will examine approaches to metanarratives of gender in young adult retellings over the last few decades.

The abundance of “Beauty and the Beast” retellings necessitates criteria of selection. First, this thesis focusses on young adult retellings because of their socializing function and transformative nature; second, retellings have been selected that were published or released in recent decades to focus on the changes influenced by modern women’s movements; third, these retellings have gained a wide interest; thus (ongoing) popularity has been one of the criteria; fourth, all retellings originated in one particular society to ensure some consistency in metanarratives; and fifth, the selection is big enough to show possible differences but small enough to fit within the scope of this thesis. Thus, because my aim is to explore how adaptation of “Beauty and the Beast” and its pre-existing metanarratives has changed in the last few decades in one particular society, I will be looking at four American retellings of “Beauty and the Beast” in two different media. Not only have the texts been marketed towards a young adult audience, titular character Beauty is aged between fifteen and eighteen years old; the Beast, on the other hand, varies in age between twelve and around two hundred years, due to his enchantment. First, I will discuss *Beauty* (1978) and *Rose Daughter* (1997) by Robin McKinley, which is a unique pairing of two individual, non-serialized novelized retellings of “Beauty and the Beast” from the same author. Second, I will discuss *Beastly* (2007) by Alex Flinn, which was received remarkably well. *Beastly* was turned into a film in 2011 and spent nine weeks as number 1 on the *New York Times* Best Seller list for Children’s Paper Backs. It also made several reading lists for young adults throughout the US, including the ALA 2008 Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers (“2008”). Lastly, I will discuss Disney’s live-action remake *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), which was highly anticipated before its release and sparked controversy in March. Additionally, the film became the highest-grossing live-action musical film and the highest-grossing film of 2017 (“Musical”; “Yearly”).[3]

[3] This was last checked on August 25, 2017.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 will discuss the theoretical framework further, expanding on ideas of the fairy tale tradition, adaptation and intertextuality, metanarratives, and feminism and fairy tales. Additionally, it will outline which narratological features will be analyzed throughout this thesis. Chapter 2 will discuss the traditional fairy tales by Villeneuve and Beaumont, as well as Disney's 1991 animated film *Beauty and the Beast.* This chapter will outline traditional metanarratives and the narratological features that support them. Chapters 3 and 4 will discuss McKinley's retellings; as the novels are not part of a series but rather independent novels, these retellings will be discussed in separate chapters. Chapter 5 will discuss Flinn's *Beastly*. Chapter 6 will discuss Disney's live-action remake (2017). Finally, I will discuss the implications of the research in the conclusion, as well as the study's limitations and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 1

APPROACHES TO RETELLINGS AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Scholarship on fairy tales is as varied and diverse as the genre it studies, and although approaches vary significantly according to the scholars' purposes, they are "always underpinned and shaped by ideological assumptions about relationships between language, meaning, narrative, literature, society, and literary audiences" (McCallum 18). In *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, Robyn McCallum gives a concise overview of approaches to the literary fairy tale which emerged in the twentieth century, distinguishing folkloricist (17); structuralist (18); literary approaches (18); psychoanalyst (18-9); historicist, sociological, and ideological (19-20); and feminist approaches (20-1). For the purpose of this thesis, I will look more closely at adaptation theory and intertextuality in relation to fairy tales and retellings, ideologically feminist approaches to retellings, and literary approaches which combine stylistic analysis and an interest in fairy tales' thematic and cultural significance. To identify metanarratives of gender and the changes that are made to these metanarratives by narrative play, this chapter will establish the relationships that exist between fairy tales and retellings, followed by the influence of contemporary feminist criticism on narratological features as well as the metanarratives. First, in order to address the complicated relationship between oral folktales and literary fairy tales, I will give a brief overview of the development of literary fairy tales, their influence, and their relationship with the oral tradition.

Folktales to French Literary Fairy Tales: Orality and the Literary Tradition[4]

Scholars and critics have concerned themselves with defining the oral folk tale and the literary fairy tale for centuries, and although they are distinctly different, oral folk tales have had a formative influence on literary fairy tales. Some argue that "we might as well label any text or narrative that calls itself and is called a fairy tale as such since the average reader is not aware of the distinction between the oral and literary traditions" (Zipes, *Companion* xv). Folk and fairy tales' long history firmly bases them in the context of intertextuality, adaptation, and cultural inheritance: "One of the reasons fairy tale serve as cultural treasuries to which we endlessly return is that their stories and characters seem to transgress social, cultural, geographical, and temporal boundaries. They are eminently adaptable into new circumstances and context, making themselves available for 'other versions'" (Sanders 82-3). Literary fairy tales are part of an infinitely rich and inherently intertextual tradition. Julia Kristeva, who coined the term intertextuality, argues that "the notion of intertextuality replaces the notion of 'intersubjectivity' when we realize that meaning is not transferred directly from writer to reader but instead is mediated through, or filtered by, 'codes' imparted to the writer and reader by other texts" (69). Thus, "all texts invoke and rework other texts in a rich and ever-evolving cultural mosaic" (Sanders 17). Folktales, fairy tales, and their countless retellings are interdependent as part of a web of production and reception. Thus, the notion of intertextuality plays a key role to approach fairy tales and their retellings within a literary framework.

Literary fairy tales constitute a "transitional genre" (Bacchilega 3); they are "*literary* appropriation[s] […] which nevertheless continue to exhibit and reproduce some *folkloric*

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[4] The relationship between the oral and the literary traditions is, of course, much more elaborate and culturally diverse than I have explained here. Due to the fact, however, that this relationship is not in question in this thesis, the exploration of this relationship will remain brief. For a more thorough overview of this relationship I refer to *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre* by Jack Zipes, as well as many of his other works, or *Once Upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tale* by Marina Warner; if one is particularly interested in considering women in this history one could consider: *Twice Upon a Time: Women Writers and the History of the Fairy Tale* by Elizabeth Wanning Harries.

features" (3, original emphasis). Storytelling, talk, and the oral tradition are "key to understanding the rise and institution of the literary genre [of fairy tales]" (Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick* 69). Although the debate about the origin of oral tales falls outside of the scope of this thesis, it accepts the premise that literary fairy tales have their origin in oral transmission and that the development of literary fairy tales are the result of the development of print culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In oral culture, mnemonic devices, such as structures, rhythms, repetitions, formulaic phrases, patterns, and standardized settings and characters were used to compose tales on the spot (De Vos and Altmann, *New Tales* 4). These elements were known to tellers and audience, and come to mind easily. These underlying structural elements is what structuralists were interested in, represented most famously by Vladimir Propp's *The Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1928). His analysis of structural components in folktales and consequently fairy tales can be helpful to understand plot formation, even though his analysis disregarded origin, transmission, and social function all together and he confined his study to Russian tales only. He outlines thirty-one fundamental and constant functions that constitute a tale, which allow consistent analysis of plot structure. A function is the "act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action" (21). These functions are plot-based roles not defined by characters. Oral tales have created a horizon of expectation through these memetic, repetitive structural components. As these repetitions were formed by patriarchal metanarratives, structural components reinforce dominant metanarratives through each repetition in each retelling. Audiences of oral tales "would have recognized the formulaic phrases and story elements with pleasure and appreciated the skill of the teller who used them effectively" (De Vos and Altmann, *New Tales* 2-3), much like a contemporary audience would recognize elements of a literary fairy tale and anticipate and appreciate how skilled authors made use and differed from the known pattern to successfully achieve originality of expression.

As print culture developed in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, tales were gradually written down in a multitude of versions throughout Europe; however, to remain within the scope of this thesis, I will outline the history and development of "Beauty and the Beast" in France. Literary fairy tales in France began as salon tales (Zipes, *Stick* 1). Highly educated aristocratic women, who were "deprived of access to schools and universities […], began organizing gatherings in their homes to which they invited other women and gradually men to discuss art, literature, and topics important to them such as love, marriage, and freedom" (Zipes, *Beauties, Beasts, and Enchantments* 2). Many of the salon games included folk tales that had entertained these women when they were children. Art, literature, and writing were traditionally male domains (Korneeva 246). The salons offered these women the opportunity to playfully address serious issues as they provided a platform for women to engage in the social and political struggle for more rights and to "combat the arbitrary constraints placed on their lives in a patriarchal social system" (Zipes, *Beauties* 2). Additionally, salon women engaged in literary entertainment and played games to challenge each other to "improve the quality of their dialogues, remarks, and ideas about morals, manners, and education, and at times to question male standards that governed their lives" (3). Salon culture relied heavily on talk and conversation, adding another oral culture to the tradition. The conversations were not only meant to be amusing, although this was a primary function; they also "enabled women to picture themselves, social manners, and relations in a manner that represented their interests" (3). Gradually, the conversations transformed into literary forms and standards, culminating in what is now known as the literary fairy tale in the 1690s, as Madame Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, a French countess, coined the term fairy tale when she published her work *Les Contes de Fées* in 1697 (Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale* 33; *Stick* 69). Her title translates directly as 'tales of the fairies.' "Beauty and the Beast" is one of the few literary fairy tales first written down by women; although D'Aulnoy was one of the

first European authors to publish a collection of fairy tales, the formation of the traditional European fairy tale has almost exclusively been a male domain (*Irresistible* 33).

Adaptation, Intertextuality, and Retelling Fairy Tales

Fairy tale retellings as literary adaptations inhabit a field of which the terminology and vocabulary is readily changeable and volatile. Terminology in adaptation studies is various and rich, just like its field. It often lacks, however, clear definitions and distinctions, which leads to a "mass, or even mess, of terms and concepts" (Joosen 9). Definitions of terms are very similar and distinguishing between one term or concept and another is often very hard. Within fairy tale studies, particularly concerning fairy tale retelling, such a mass of terms is employed as well: "fairy-tale retelling, reversion, revision, reworking, parody, transformation, anti-fairy tale, postmodern fairy tale, fractured fairy tale, and recycled fairy tale" (9). For the purpose of this thesis, I have opted to work with the term retelling, which is often used for novel adaptations of fairy tales, mythologies, bible stories. and modern classics (Joosen 9; Stephens and McCallum 3). Additionally, the prefix re- indicates the interdependency: it indicates a relationship between retold texts and their source texts, also known as pre-texts. All retellings are characterized by their pre-texts. Stephens and McCallum define pre-texts for retellings as "known, or already given, 'stories,' however precisely or indeterminately evoked" (5), from both the literary as well as the oral traditions. Traditional fairy tales, however, occur in many different variants in various cultures, whether in the oral or literary tradition.[5] Each of these variants may participate in the process

[5] I accept Vanessa Joosen's argument in the use of traditional fairy tale as terms for fairy tale retelling's pre-texts: "I wish to avoid the association of 'high quality' implied in 'classic fairy tale' and because 'old fairy tale' suggests there was a moment of origin before the occurrence of fairy-tale [sic] retellings, which is not necessarily the case. 'Traditional fairy tales' continue to be written and published to date […]. More importantly, I try to avoid the term 'original fairy tale' wherever traditional tales or retellings are compared. […] What is, for instance, the original version of 'Little Red Riding Hood?' The best-known or most frequently reprinted version? The oldest written version? The oral versions on which the written versions were presumably based?" (9)

of retelling themselves; as Stephens and McCallum argue, “Even when there is a strong pre-text […], retellers are most likely to use intermediary versions – to produce a retelling of a retelling” (4). Authors of retellings may consciously and unconsciously allude to all pre-texts known to them and that intertextual knowledge is inevitably disparate. Referring to the relationship between text and pre-text as merely intertextuality is imprecise usage of the term (Sanders 24). The term intertextuality refers to a much larger process: audience and author are in a conversation with each other through the text, sharing a field of discourse created by the representation of characters, objects, events, and familiar storylines by the author and the audience’s response to this representation. This process creates “intertextual webs or signifying fields, rather than simplistic one-way lines of influence from source to adaptation” (Sanders 24). Knowledge of fairy tale conventions, for example, its rhythms, patterns, standardized plots and characters, and its formulaic form, are all part of the signifying field of fairy tale retellings. Retellings, then, are written in a continuous conversation between what is already known and what is new.

In the process of retelling, there is a desire “to make the relationship with the source explicit” (Sanders 22). In *Children’s Literature Comes of Age*, Maria Nikolajeva distinguishes between conscious and unconscious references as “open and hidden dialogues” (155). Retellings which establish an open, or explicit, dialogue with their pre-texts are “written intentionally so that readers recognize the original setting, the characters and the plot pattern” (155). Open dialogue presents itself in a variety of manners, most obviously in the repetition of tale patterns and motifs. Some authors use other ways to establish this dialogue between traditional tales and their own retelling, such as clear reference in the novels’ title, subtitle, tagline, cover art, or in character names, for example. Usually, it is more than brief allusion; authors practice what Linda Hutcheon calls “repetition with […] critical distance” (6), in which authors point towards difference rather than similarity (6).

Hutcheon argues that "the tension between the potentially conservative effect of repetition and the potentially revolutionary impact of difference" (xii) creates this critical distance, with which retelling authors spread their ideas of difference and similarity on poignant issues in a familiar setting (Butterworth-McDermott 134). Readers are expected to use this distance to reconsider the traditional text, including the metanarratives it purports. All retellings discussed in this thesis establish open dialogue with their pre-texts.

Retellings follow the aim of adaptation, which is "adding, supplementing, improvising, innovating […], not replication as such, but rather complication, expansion rather than contraction" (Sanders 12). In *Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale*, Zipes defines the relationship between retellings and pre-texts by proposing a pair of terms to classify retellings: duplication and revision. Duplication results in a recognizable "look-alike" (9). It provides a "near facsimile" of what we already know; it reproduces, reinforces, and re-establishes patterns, motifs, and conservative metanarratives of traditional fairy tales (9-10). The downside of duplication is that the new text does not challenge, threaten, or shock readers. In revision, on the other hand, critical distance allows authors to reconsider traditional metanarratives, images, and codes (9). The driving force behind revision is that there is something wrong in the traditional tale, that something in its metanarratives is antithetical to the dominant worldviews of the time or culture in which the retelling was written. However, "[r]evision for the sake of revision is not necessarily a change for the better or stimulating" (9).

This mass and mess of ideas and terms shows how fairy tale scholarship has been struggling to distinguish retellings in general and different types of retellings. The variety of terminology demonstrates that discussion of fairy tale retellings requires an understanding of their interdependency with other genres. This intertextual relationship as the web of production and reception dictates the interrelationships between author, audience, text, pre-

texts, and metanarratives in fairy tale retellings. This process of significance and interpretation influences and is influenced by each existing telling and retelling of a particular fairy tale. As Maria Tatar argues, "Just as every rewriting of a tale is an interpretation, so every interpretation is a rewriting" (xxvi).

Fairy Tales, Retellings, and Gender Criticism

Stephens and McCallum assert that gender is "one of the more recalcitrant elements of folktale" (201), which has persisted in the literary tradition. Folk- and fairy tales are a predominantly male domain, as the European fairy tale canon as it has been brought down, is largely established by Jacques Perrault, the brothers Grimm, and Hans Christian Anderson, none of whom included "Beauty and the Beast" in their original collections (Zipes, *Relentless Progress* 121; 125). "Beauty and the Beast," however, with its roots in salon tales, a predominantly female domain, was included in canon after all (125). Warner suggests that fairy tale retellings offered women a socially accepted way to speak about social constraint and power dynamics, particularly concerning gender (*Blonde* 24).

Fairy tales and retellings are created in "a cultural field of production [which] is a force field of conflicts in which various writers, artists, and groups of people contend for power" (Zipes, *Relentless* 122). Although gender is not the only contending subject, it was, and still is, by far the most prominent. Gender as a pervasive force in Western society perhaps functions as "the most primary method of social organization" (Lewis 1). Annabel Martín explains that gender "is a very complex term because it also deals with men and women understanding their psychological, social and cultural beings and how they understand themselves as entities, as social beings, in a society." In *Reviving Ophelia*, Mary Pipher states that American society is antagonistic towards girls, saying that young women "have long been evaluated on the basis of appearance and caught in myriad double binds: achieve, but not too

much; be polite, but be yourself; be feminine and adult; be aware of our cultural heritage, but don't comment on the sexism" (20). As fairy tales and their retellings can have a large impact on the development of gender identity and social initiation of children and young adults (Lieberman 385), it is important to examine the metanarratives which contend with one another in this cultural field (Zipes, *Relentless* 122; Kuykendal and Sturm 39).

The dominant Western metanarrative of gender is centered around the conflation of gender with the gender binary while seemingly promoting promotes "male values, social codes, literary standards, and needs" (Zipes, *Relentless* 125). The gender binary is naturalized as male/female, masculine/feminine, man/woman. It is often assumed that gender flows naturally from sex and that no distinction can be made between them. As a result, gender identity is as fixed and static as one's sex. The axiom of this metanarrative, that "there are two and only two genders, cohesively aligned to two and only two anatomical sexes" was, and sometimes still is, widely broadcasted in literature and popular media alike and strictly regulated (Lewis 3-4). This metanarrative purports that the binary is a result of naturally occurring and essential differences between the sexes, which are, it is implied, insurmountable. Of course, women and men are different; emotional, mental, and, generally most prominently evidenced, physical disparities do occur naturally. Men tend to be physically bigger and stronger, while women are smaller, physically less capable, and reproductively nurturing; women tend to be more emotionally aligned, where men are logical and calculating (Lewis 4). These biological differences are narratively conceptualized in a cultural metanarrative which alleges that these differences are untouched by culture and consequently uses them as the basis for assigned gender roles, or the gender myth: men are bigger and stronger, thus they are naturally suited serve as the provider, the hero, the head of the household, the authority; women are smaller and more nurturing, thus

they are adapted to stay at home, carry and care for children and the home. Women are represented as passive agents, obeying and following the lead of the men in their lives.

As feminist critics brought gender issues in literature to the foreground in the second half of the twentieth century, fairy tales and retellings were used to enculturate and socialize. Authors of fairy tale retellings influenced by modern women's movements sought to oppose the representation of women as passive agents and offer alternatives. Authors may "point to possible destinies, possible happy outcomes, [and] they successfully involve their hearer or reader in identifying with the protagonists" (Warner, *Blonde* 23). Often, unlike their pre-texts, retellings advocate "a means of escaping imposed limits and prescribed destiny" (24), and thus suggest an alternative way of being. Although opposing, feminist metanarratives have already started to destabilize the dominant patriarchal metanarrative, through a vast amount of criticism, fairy tales, and retellings alike, it remains authoritative in many young adult retellings (Stephens and McCallum 3; 201).

In addition to the interdependency of the fairy tale genre, the debate about fairy tales and metanarratives of gender pivots on the diversity of theories on (experiencing) culture. In telling and retelling fairy tales, one has to consider the difference between "supposed universality of human experience" as opposed to "culturally relative" experience (Stephens and McCallum 202-3). Bruno Bettelheim's monumental *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (1976), one of the most influential texts relating gender and fairy tale, is often quoted as the model for modern universalist approaches to fairy tales. Marcia Lieberman's seminal article "'Some Day My Prince Will Come': Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale" (1972) argues the opposite. Both Lieberman and Bettelheim discuss the modern canon, arguing that children can read the meaning of their lives into these well-known, popular tales, through form, content, and known symbols (Lieberman 383-4; Bettelheim 6-8). They differ, however, on the nature of the social

influence the tales have on children. Bettelheim argues, that fairy tales are specifically non-gendered in their depiction of life as rites of passage (226), depicting several pathways to the same result:

> Even when a girl is depicted as turning inward in her struggle to become herself, and a boy as aggressively dealing with the external world, these two *together* symbolize the two ways in which one has to gain selfhood: through learning to understand and master the inner as well as the outer world. In this sense the male and female heroes are again projections onto two different figure of two (artificially) separated aspects of one and the same process which *everybody* has to undergo in growing up. (227, original emphasis)

Bettelheim claims that fairy tales offer children a universal depiction of the human experience, which is applicable to everyone. Bettelheim's work is in part a response to an awareness of sexual stereotyping in the 1970s (227). Feminist critics of fairy tales, such as Lieberman, strongly disagree with this assertion, and instead argue that fairy tales present different paradigms of growth "which are products of gendered social practices" (Stephens and McCallum 204). She argued that representations of women based on this conservative metanarrative fortified limiting notions of femininity, enculturating young girl readers into passive roles devised under patriarchy (Lieberman 384-6).

Feminist retellers took to reveal gender stereotypes in the confines of the fairy tales and offered alternatives to prescribed societal modes of behavior (Stephens and McCallum 122). They sought to oppose representations of women as passive agents and other forms of sexual stereotyping. Explicitly revealing this practice and offering opposing gender roles for women in fairy tales and fairy tale retellings became and remains dominant, as can been seen, for example, in Carson Levine's 1997 retelling of "Cinderella," *Ella Enchanted*: the heroine, Ella, is shown to struggle with the curse of obedience that was put on her as a baby

and her path to learning to act and decide for herself. Many other retellings produced in film in the late 1990s and early 2000s still portrayed this kind of subversion, such as *Ever After* (1998) and the *Shrek* franchise (2001-2007).

Zipes argues that, as fairy tales and feminism were “co-opted by the mass media” (*Relentless* 129), fairy tales became commodities in the US, commercialized to preach for everyone to rise above yet accept gender stereotypes. This was particularly evident in late 1980s and early 1990s Disney film releases, such as *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1990), and *Aladdin* (1992), which introduced “Hollywood’s cunning domestication of feminism itself” (Warner, *Blonde* 313). Courageous female protagonists in retold, canonized fairy tales managed to withstand one disaster after another without the support of their societies, overcoming prejudice against (Zipes, *Relentless* 124). Rather than a structural and significant breakdown of dominant ideologies, however, individual achievement became the tell-tale sign of gender equality. These personal actions did not challenge or change dominant gender metanarratives based in patriarchy. Women were encouraged to “internalize a patriarchal construction of female functions and the notion that conforming to this construction brings the rewards of marriage, wealth, and well-being” (Stephens and McCallum 205). This led many critics, not just feminist critics, to believe that the rites of passage as presented in fairy tales are indeed “socially determined, conservative, repressive and limiting” (204-5). Contemporary retellings then always carry at least “a double potentiality” (205), either they duplicate traditional metanarratives of gender, or, by stressing gender-specificity, can show how metanarratives are culturally specific and adaptable to changing views and norms.

Contemporary theory on gender helps authors positively tackle this double potentiality, since our understanding of gender and gender in narrative has significantly changed since the 1970s. Authors and readers alike may ask different questions about gender

in retellings and their pre-texts than over forty years ago. Judith Butler's criticism in particular has changed the field. In *Undoing Gender* (2004) which builds on her work in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Butler defines gender as "the apparatus by which the production and normalization of masculine and feminine take place along with interstitial forms of hormonal, chromosomal, psychic, and performative that gender assumes" (42). Gender is a "doing […] in part, without one's knowing and without one's willing, it is not for that reason automatic of mechanic" (*Undoing Gender* 1); rather, it is an active part of everyday life in a scene marked by limitation. It is a constant repetition of social norms. Gender is simultaneously an "undoing," in which, ascribing to a gender, a person becomes defined and limited. According to Butler, gender is relational; it is a social norm which produces recognition of and for others: we are partly "gendered *for* others" (25; original emphasis). In this manner, gender becomes a "regulatory norm" (53), it regulates and produces behavior and social relationships (53). Gender, defined by its metanarratives, regulates behavior and relationships and is produced through repetitive regulation of behavior, actions, and performance (53); similarly, fairy tales rely on the repetition of highly codified characters, structures, and narrative forms. Retelling fairy tales is structurally analogues to the "stylized repetition of acts [over time]" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 179). It is precisely fairy tales' formulaic forms that inform, reinforce, and naturalize Western metanarratives in each tale. This problematizes how authors may subvert metanarratives of gender in retellings while maintaining traditional fairy tale conventions. It is not surprising, then, that feminist literary scholars are interested in the relationships between gender, society, narrative, language, and meaning in literary adaptations of fairy tales. Gender is integral and it is taught, and as Sally Robinson, in *Engendering the Subject: Gender and Self-Representation in Contemporary Women's Fiction* (1991), argues "gender is produced *through* narrative processes, not prior to them" (198).

Narrative Strategies and Reconsidering Pre-Existing Metanarratives of Gender

According to Stephens and McCallum, in fairy tales, “characters are not complex and do not develop; interactions between participants are likewise limited and formulaic; and action is often stereotyped and repetitive” (203). These conventions enable authors and audiences to remember what has gone before and to anticipate what is to come. The intertextual dialogue between pre-texts and retellings allows authors to use these expectations and address the metanarratives. Retellings can disrupt or maintain expectations through narrative strategies. Stock characters, archetypes, formulaic dialogue, and repetitive action confirms gender inevitability, “imprison[ing] male and female in stock definitions” (Warner, *Blonde* 279); destabilizing these conventions through narrative play enables new conceptualizations of gender in fairy tales.

Narrative strategies meant to elaborate, combine, collapse, discontinue, or deconstruct fairy tale conventions to stress difference (Joosen 12-6; Stephens and McCallum 221) include: alteration of setting and time; attitude to the supernatural; character development; character versus action; style; and narratological features (Joosen 12-6). Additionally, metafictional strategies which draw explicit attention to the constructedness of a text will be discussed. All strategies will be discussed below.

Fairy tale convention dictates that somewhere in a country far away there once was someone long ago to whom this story happened. Traditional fairy tale setting is indeterminate, close yet remote, somewhere and nowhere; traditional fairy tale time is undetermined, recognizable yet long ago, always and never (Joosen 12-3; Nikolojeva 122). Fairy tale time and setting is “indefinite […] both time and place are beyond our reach” (Joosen 12-3). Breaking with this convention, ascribing a specific time and place to a retelling, alters readers’ experience and the way they relate to the tale in question. Retellings may be updated to make the tales more “‘relevant’ or comprehensible to a new audience”

(Sanders 19). Fairy tales typically make use of a fictional nowhere place in nowhere time in the past (a palace, a forest, a nameless kingdom, once upon a time) to look towards a present and future reality (Warner, *Blonde* xvi): "[the tales'] conclusions, their 'happy endings' do not always bring about total closure, but make promises, prophecies […] their mood is optative – announcing what might be" (xvi). Challenging this convention, invoking a modern setting and modern time, requires authors and readers to adjust their expectations and allow contemporary debates or happenings to enter their field of reception. This critical distance allows readers to consider the pre-texts' conventions, its metanarratives, the retellings difference, and how these metanarratives have changed, or not changed.

Retellings also "renegotiate the boundary between magic and realism" (Joosen 13). Combining generic conventions with those of the fairy tale genre, for example those of realist school stories, to construct a new tale allows authors to explore contemporary issues poignant to young adult audiences. The introduction of magic in an otherwise realist fictional novel offers authors and readers a way to grapple with reality which would otherwise be impossible, offering possibilities for other happy endings or character developments. A reader's attention is drawn to similarity and difference simultaneously. On the other hand, realistic explanations may be offered for magical occurrences, leaving doubt about the protagonist's credibility, or magic may be absent altogether. Renegotiating this boundary expands the field of production and reception to include not just fairy tale conventions but other generic conventions as well as contemporary critical developments.

Elaboration of fairy tale characterization is "achieved most often by offering a revised point of view from the 'original,' adding hypothetical motivation, or voicing the silenced and the marginalized" (Sanders 19). This puts characters and actions in perspective (Joosen 14). Intricate character development inevitably places fairy tale plot and structures in the background. Retellings often offer complex, round characters instead of conventional

flat characters; action and process are sometimes left out to give room to this character development. Events may be narrated after the fact by a character, which tells readers more about the character than about their actions: an intertextual reference in the title might sometimes be enough to establish the dialogue between text and pre-text, while the text itself solely focusses on, for example, the inner monologue of one of the characters (Joosen 15).

Repetitive style in fairy tales is used to reaffirm their dominant metanarratives. In retellings, fixed formulas, motifs, and symbols may be retained but subtly altered. As metanarratives of gender and gendered identities rely heavily on plot structures in fairy tales, disrupting these by omitting part of the plot or the structure allows authors to draw attention to the difference and what it does to the tale and the metanarratives simultaneously. One way to do this is to change the expected outcome of the fairy tale, which is common for postmodern or fractured fairy tales (De Vos and Altmann, *Then and Now* xxi; Bacchilega 20-1). As a result, critical distance is created through a readers' loss of recognition.

Narratological features are often the most obvious disruptions to fairy tale conventions and as such they have the power to be the most significant. Fairy tales are written in a "linear manner and by an omniscient, third-person narrator who carries no distinguishing mark (gender, race, class, individuality)" (Joosen 13). A multitude of retellings is told in first person to elaborate characterization. An author's choice to voice one character but not another can have a significant impact on gender conceptualizations; after all, authors choose who their readers will align with during their reading experience through focalization, voice, and characterization (De Vos and Altmann, *Then and Now* xxi). Shifts in focalization and narration may decenter stories, especially when determining whose interests are served and addressed (Stephens and McCallum 10). In Disney's *Maleficent* (2014), for example, character development and narratological features work together to give the evil witch in "Sleeping Beauty" a story that makes her sympathetic and better understandable.

Stephens and McCallum argue that register, “a variety of language defined according to situation of use” (10), plays a distinctive role in focalization and reader alignment in novels. Register may show who is privileged through linguistic cues, who is judged and who is judging, or who is taking effective action (12). It also gives information on who to listen to, who to trust, and where to ask questions (12).

Retelling authors sometimes choose to be explicitly or implicitly metafictional.[6] These strategies actively disrupt fairy tale plots and structures by drawing attention to the construction and structure of retellings and traditional fairy tales. This encourages readers to note how retellings support, complicate or undermine traditional metanarratives. Metafictional approaches may be explicit; characters may comment on their own circumstance as being in a fictional story or even tell the audience that the text they are reading is a fairy tale. Other authors choose to be less conspicuous and, for example, allow characters to tell stories which suspend or subvert the iconic happy ending before their own tale ends in a similar manner (De Vos and Altmann, *Then and Now* xxi). Another device may be to use a frame narrative, in which it is not necessarily one particular story on which the author comments, but rather on the act of storytelling or writing and the implications for other narrative processes.

Each of these strategies can be used separately, but more often than not, strategies are combined for a more disruptive force. By analyzing the interaction between a retelling’s narrative strategies, metanarratival development and gender conceptualization, this thesis will attempt to discern if, how, and why metanarratives of gender have adapted over the last few decades influenced by modern women’s movements.

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[6] For the purpose of this thesis, metafictionality is defined as the “quality of disclosing the functionality of a narrative” (Neumann and Nünning). This is opposed to narratological metanarrativity, unrelated to the term metanarrative as I have used it throughout this thesis, which are “those forms of self-reflexive narration in which aspects of narration are addressed in the narratorial discourse” (Neumann and Nünning). Metafictionality concerns the constructedness of the text, whereas metanarrativity refers to “a narrator’s reflections on the act or process of narration” (Neumann and Nünning).

CHAPTER 2

METANARRATIVES OF GENDER IN TRADITIONAL FAIRY TALES: VILLENEUVE (1740), BEAUMONT (1756), AND DISNEY (1991)

Elizabeth Wanning Harries identifies the two most popular strands of fairy tales in the eighteenth century as the fantastic romance for adults and the didactic tale for children: "Fairy tales existed simultaneously […] in two literary fields" (80). These two strands are particularly interesting in the literary history of "Beauty and the Beast," as the tale bridges this divide. Villeneuve's *Beauty and the Beast* (1740) was written as a salon tale and thus intended for an adult audience, while Beaumont's *Beauty and the Beast* (1756) had an educational aim, teaching young girls about "the conduct of courtship, marriage, and family relationships" (Korneeva 234). Villeneuve, for her adult audience, could already be more subversive towards the metanarratives in her society, while Beaumont remains within the premise of an educational project in which metanarratives have to be plainly explicated for its socializing purposes. Disney's 1991 and 2017 films bridge this divide in a similar manner, to some extent. The animated film (1991) remains within the domain of the children's tale, while the live-action film (2017) has effectively stepped into a liminal state: the film appeals to and is meant for both children and adults. All the retellings in this thesis bridge the divide and inhabit this liminal state much like their intended audience (Talley 232).

This chapter will provide the analyses of gender conceptualization and narrative techniques used in Madame de Villeneuve's foundational tale, published in 1740; Madame de Beaumont's abridged version of Villeneuve's tale, published in 1756; and Disney's animated film, released in 1991. The inclusion of Disney's animated film as a pre-text rather than a retelling of "Beauty and the Beast" requires some explanation, as the film is both with regards to recent retellings. In *Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale*, Jack Zipes states "It was not

once upon a time, but in a certain time in history, before anyone knew what was happening, Walt Disney cast a spell on the fairy tale, and it has been held captive ever since" (72). Disney used the most up-to-date technology to "appropriate the European fairy tales" into American society (72). This hold on fairy tales still remains, as is particularly evident in contemporary society in which many will associate well-known fairy tales such as "Snow White," "Cinderella," and "Beauty and the Beast" with their Disney films rather than their literary fairy tales. Disney's "spell," and later that of his company, has not completely dismantled the significances of the traditional tale and replaced them with new meanings, but Disney's impact on fairy tales has undoubtedly revolutionized the way in which audiences consider fairy tales (72-4). Even though Beaumont's *Beauty and the Beast* (1756) is the best-known literary version of the tale in the Western tradition, younger generations will scarcely know the literary fairy tale but rather refer to the Disney film (Zipes, *Myth* 72). Disney has supplanted literary fairy tales as the authoritative tales for contemporary audiences. In this way, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) has a significant impact on retellings produced after its release, including some of the retellings discussed in this thesis, most obviously, Disney's 2017 remake of their own classic. This chapter will show how each of these pre-texts presents the metanarratives of gender dominant at the moment of their production. Even though this chapter will move from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century, it outlines which metanarratives retellings of the second half of the twentieth century had to compete with, as modern women's movements became most prominent from the 1960s. Consequently, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) may already show change in dominant Western metanarratives.

Villeneuve's *Beauty and the Beast* (1740): From Salon Tale to Fairy Tale

Seventeenth Century Salon Tales and Villeneuve's *Beauty and the Beast*

Villeneuve utilizes many of the characteristics of popular salon tales of half a century before the publication of her *Beauty and the Beast* (Hearne 2). She wrote it for the entertainment of her court and salon friends (2). The establishment of the literary fairy tale in the 1690s contributed to the conventionalization of fairy tale structure, exposition of dominant metanarratives, and intended audience (Zipes, *Myth* 29), changing the initial social function of these tales. Through the conversations in salons, fairy tale discourse became "regularized and accepted among women and slowly by men" (Zipes, *Myth* 23). Consequently, when Villeneuve wrote her tale, what had been subversive in salon tales had become standard and suited to "the taste and values of the dominant classes and the regime" (Zipes, *Beauties* 11). As Villeneuve had lost the orality and subversion of salon tales, *Beauty and the Beast (1740)* reflects "the dilemma of women writers, who extolled so-called female virtues that actually tended to reinforce the roles that men appreciated and cultivated for them" (Zipes, *Relentless* 125). Fairy tales produced in the eighteenth century, then, had been reshaped to conform to socially dominant metanarratives of gender. The quiet subversion of the salon no longer dominated the social setting, which is becomes clear in *Beauty and the Beast.* The tale is remarkably long, as it spans roughly two-hundred pages, depending on the edition of the tale. In this manner, the tale no longer resembles the playfulness and quick-thinking that was needed in the games played in the salon, in which a speaker was given a motif they had to work into their tales (Zipes, *Myth* 24).

The almost novel-length fairy tale features a broad cast of characters: the merchant, or Beauty's (step)father; his twelve children, including Beauty as the youngest child; the Beast, or the Unknown, or the Prince; the Dream Lady, or the Good Fairy; a queen, or the prince's mother; the King of the Happy Isles, or Beauty's father; the Queen of the Happy Isles, or

Beauty's mother and the Good Fairy's sister; the Bad Fairy; the Mother of the Seasons, a fairy; and the Queen of Fairies and her daughter. This is a long and confusing list, as each of the characters is extensively described if not developed (Hearne 21), which provides much of the tale's length. Villeneuve's tale intricately combines the story of Beauty and the Beast with extensive descriptions of Beauty's entertainments in the palace; a dream sequence in which the Prince, as the Unknown, and the Good Fairy appear to Beauty while she stays at the Beast's castle, encouraging her not to be deceived by appearances, and through which she falls in love with the Prince; and the additional extensive explanations of Beauty's and Beast's backgrounds which tie the stories together. Nearly half of Villeneuve's tale is a complex exposition of the Prince's curse and Beauty's true heritage, as she turns out to have been adopted by a merchant without either of them knowing. In this exposition, every detail is accounted for by Villeneuve. The story is told by a third person omniscient narrator, but readers can clearly identify the author and her intentions in the character of the Good Fairy. Focalization through the Good Fairy, who explains all the intricately interwoven stories of Beauty, Beast, and their respective parents, defines Beauty within a patriarchal frame of characterization through her relationships with her father first and then the Beast. The Good Fairy has orchestrated everything and Beauty's central conflict becomes the reconciliation of love and duty. Her virtue and her sense of duty and gratitude define her relationship both with her adopted father and the Beast. Beauty receives the expected and patriarchal rewards of marriage, wealth, and security by virtue of her beauty and her refusal to be deceived by appearances. Villeneuve's attention to detail and explanation allows her, for example, to ascribe the father's weakness of giving up his daughter to the Beast to the prophecy that his daughter Beauty would save his life, bring him wealth, and honor him (Villeneuve 222; Hearne 23).

Revealing Metanarratives by Framing Tales

La Jeune Américaine ou les Contes Marins was a collection of various fairy tales written by Villeneuve, of which *Beauty and the Beast* is the most well-known. The other tales and the conversation between characters in the narrative surrounding the tales, the primary narrative, all serve to frame and position the moral and social lessons. Framing collections like this was a popular strategy among eighteenth-century fairy tale authors (Harries 106). Each of the told stories within the primary narrative becomes part of the frame for the other stories within the volume (Harries 106; Stephens and McCallum 214). Frame narratives intrinsically draw attention to the processes and practices of storytelling. In the eighteenth century, women writers were still "very conscious of how talk and conversation formed the basis of their tales and continually embedded their tales within frame narratives that highlighted the exchange of literary fairy tales and dialogue" (Zipes, *Stick* 76).

Women authors of fairy tales, such as d'Aulnoy, produced a different kind of orality from their male counterparts. Rather than attempting to imitate "an illiterate or uneducated voice" (Harries 47) to appeal to the oral tradition, salon tales, and the fairy tales derived from them, instead appealed to the character of the animated conversations held in salons (47). These frames reproduce the ambiance and carefully formulated pleasantries of salon culture. As such, these tales are part of "an ongoing exchange that is part of their meaning and value" (69). Through this structure, fairy tales enter an open dialogue with the oral tradition and the preservation of story tellers allows authors to reproduce the effect of a salon tale in their written work. *Conteuses* were writing against the dominant metanarrative which was forming as they wrote: "the equation of the oral with the unformed and primitive, the equation of the written with the sophisticated" (71). As women were primarily associated with the oral tradition, the *conteuses* explicitly place their written fairy tales in an oral, conversational frame, suggesting that "the oral can be progressive, and that the written can and often must

bear the traces of tradition and myth" (71). They challenged, albeit implicitly, the assumption that the language of sophistication and learning was separated from the everyday language they encountered at court and in salons. In such a way, they challenged that patriarchal assumption that "women's language is necessarily trivial and childish" (71).

Within Villeneuve's *Beauty and the Beast* frame, a young girl's chambermaid is telling stories to entertain her mistress on their sea voyage to Saint Domingue (Swain, "Villeneuve" 1013). The girl is about to be married, and this is one of the situational indicators which influence Villeneuve's metanarrative of gender. The young woman's marital situation accounts for Villeneuve's open reference to sex, as she has Beast ask Beauty to sleep with him every single night, rather than marry him (1013). Villeneuve thus points toward the sexualization that women face and the threat of rape, even within their marriages (1013). The chambermaid attempts her lady's apprehension towards the arranged marriage by defining Beauty in the context of her bravery and duty and the deception of appearances (1013). Although the socialization and self-realization of this young woman dictates the significance of the tale, Villeneuve adherence to and simultaneous disruption of dominant metanarratives of gender are ambivalent. Beauty, by her continuous deferral of Beast's frank request, exercises an unusual power on her own behalf for a woman in that time (1013; Hearne 24).

Beast's Curse and Beauty's Relationships

It is emphasized that Beast was cursed, in both senses of the French word bête, a physical animal and unintelligent; he had to rely on his good nature to find someone to break the curse. This is all revealed in the Good Fairy's explanatory backstories, in which Beast's predicaments and motivations are revealed to readers. The Prince was initially cursed into being a Beast for rejecting the amorous advances of a malicious Fairy, while Beauty was punished, by the same Fairy, for her fairy mother's transgressions with her mortal father and

cursed to marry a Beast who Beauty thinks will eat her. Whereas Beast was cursed for making his own decision, Beauty's curse was brought down on her with no mistake of her own. Both Beast and his mother learn right after his transformation that despair is not the answer:

> My mother was determined to stab herself, and I to fling myself into the adjacent moat. Without revealing our intentions to each other, we were on the verge of carrying out these fatal projects when out of nowhere appeared a female whose majestic mien inspired with us profound respect. She reminded us that it was cowardice to succumb even to the greatest misfortune. 'There is no evil that cannot be overcome with time and courage.' (Villeneuve 204)

The Good Fairy orders Beast to remain in the palace and his mother to stay away until Beauty chooses to stay with the Beast. The Beast's passivity and Beauty's agency in the relationship as opposed to the decisions that cause their curse underscore the possibility of choice for women, but only within the setting of their relations. Their lives, on the other hand, are not their own possession. This outlines the eighteenth-century emphasis on personal freedom, which salon women tentatively suggested should be extended to women (Swain, "Beauty and the Beast" 107): "[Beauty's] sister could not imagine what fortunate miracle had brought about her liberty until the royal fairy informed her that she owed her happiness solely to her own courage, which had induced her to risk her own life to save another's" (Villeneuve 226).

Villeneuve's representation of Beauty's and Beast's mothers undermines her attempts to extended this kind of freedom to Beauty, however. Beauty's mother is an independent, powerful fairy, part of an entire nation of fairy women who have agency in their own lives. She chose gave up her power and place to marry a mortal man, for which she is eventually imprisoned. Beast's mother is an autonomous, active queen who wages war to save her kingdom. She has to leave her son in the care of another woman, abandoning her traditionally defined gender roles. These women contrast Beauty, who is praised for submissive self-

sacrificial behavior, compliance, and solemn devotion (Harries 73; Saxena 201). Villeneuve seems to indicate that "embracing alternatives outside dominant gender codes comes at the cost of one's humanity" (Saxena 201). This is also represented in the ordeal of both Beauty's mother and Beast's mother: whereas Beauty's mother loses her child for accepting the love of a man, Beast's mother loses hers for wandering into the realm of war, kingship, and masculine dominance. On the other hand, Beauty's behavior accumulates in the traditional happy ending: marriage, wealth, and love. Although Villeneuve attempts to empower her female characters, she does so within the frame of a patriarchal metanarrative.

Additionally, the traditional value of beauty is of the utmost importance. Beauty has become archetypal due to being named after an abstract quality. This is emphasized in the English translations. The first article present in the French title is dropped in the English translation: La Belle becomes Beauty rather than the Beauty, turning it into a name rather than a description (Hearne 27). Although the emphasis is on the combination of the young girl's beauty, duty, and gratitude, the overall impression remains: a girl should be beautiful to be married to a kind Prince. Moreover, she also shows that a girl's only possibility to get what she desires is through marriage: after all, soon after she accepts the Beast's proposal, he turns into her desired Unknown. The narrative of femininity within the metanarrative of gender purported in *Beauty and the Beast* (1740) is that for women, passivity, beauty, and ultimately compliance lead to happiness through marriage.

Metanarratives of Gender Presented in Opposites

Villeneuve presents her metanarratives of gender in dialectics: appearance and reality, duty and affection, humanity and monstrosity, and vanity and virtue. The confrontation and sometimes reconciliation between these opposites is already suggested by the title of the tale and eponymous main characters. Beauty is continuously disconnected from reality through

the entertainment offered to her in the Beast's palace: she becomes lost in music, theatre windows, and performing animals. Her dreams, which acquaint her with the Good Fairy and the Prince in his human form also confuse reality and appearance for her, as she begins to wonder if the dreams are real or an idle illusion to keep her from boredom. In the dreams, she is explicitly warned to "beware of allowing [her]self to be swayed by appearances" (Villeneuve 170). This convolution of appearance and reality coincides with Beauty's struggles to come to terms with her own desire and her sense of duty (Hearne 24). Beauty is grateful to the Beast for his generosity towards her and her family, but her desire lies with the Unknown of her dreams: "[t]orn between affection and gratitude, she could not lean to the one without doing injustice to the other" (Villeneuve 187). The combination of the dreams and her continuous presence with the Beast eventually moves her towards the realization that she must sacrifice her own desire and do her duty to make herself happy: she learns to find her happiness in gratitude rather than affection. She proves her honorable conduct and choice when she recoils from the Unknown when he suggests the Beast should be killed, and in the dream the Unknown attempts to do so until Beauty stops him (179). Afterwards, Beauty is urged by the Good Fairy to continue this path: "Be a model of female generosity. Show yourself to be as wise as you are charming. Don't hesitate to sacrifice your passion to your duty. Take the true path to happiness, and you'll be blessed, provided you're not misled by deceiving appearances" (180). Paradoxically, through her rejection of the Unknown, reality and appearance are reconciled as well as her duty and desire as the Beast transforms into the Unknown, the Prince. Beauty, then, is as a beauty does: true beauty cannot be found in appearances but in virtuous and desirable behavior which is inspired by gratitude and duty.

Villeneuve, and later Beaumont as well, plays with the concepts of humanity and monstrosity, female and male. Readers are presented with a decidedly human woman, Beauty, and an animal-like man, the Beast. Beauty and the Beast, however, are not opposites in this

case. Beauty recognizes that the Beast's "heart is humane" and that "this monster is one only in form" (182), and when Beauty asks the Beast to leave for two months to visit her family, he accuses her of being "inhumane" (181). Yet again, the civilizing function of women on men is underscored by this dialectic, as Beauty humanizes Beast and under his influence, she briefly succumbs to savageness.

Beaumont's *Beauty and the Beast* (1756): From Salon to Nursery

Educational Purposes and the Establishment of a Children's Tale

Villeneuve's tale is foundational for any "Beauty and the Beast" tale, but it is Beaumont's abridged and edited version, published sixteen years later, that is the most influential. This may be due to Villeneuve's intricate plot, winding explanations, and convoluted descriptions. As Hearne indicates, although Villeneuve's plot is "mechanically ingenious" (23), "these machinations may become tedious" (24). Beaumont recognized the value of the tale, but decided to disentangle and shorten the story to a short fairy tale first published in *Le Magazin des Enfants* in 1756 (Zipes, *Beauties* 231), translated as *The Young Misses Magazine* in 1783 in England. The cast was significantly reduced as Beauty's and Beast's backstories were cut. Only the merchant-father, his six children, including Beauty as the youngest child, the Beast/Prince, Beauty's sisters' husbands, and a fairy helper remain. With these characters only Villeneuve's elemental plot remains.

Additionally, Beaumont adapted the tale in such a way that it became overtly didactic. On the title page of the fourth edition of *The Young Misses Magazine*, she writes: "Each Lady is made to speak according to her particular Genius, Temper and Inclination; Their several Faults are pointed out, and the easy Way to mend them, as well as to think, and speak, and act appropriately; no less Care being taken to form their Hearts to Goodness, than to enlighten their Understandings with useful knowledge" (Hearne 190). While Villeneuve's Good Fairy

conveys moral and social lessons through Beauty's Dreams and Beauty's and Beast's ancestry and backstories, Beaumont teaches these lessons through the characters themselves and their actions. This simplifies the tale and streamlines its plot to make it easier to understand. Contrary to Villeneuve's intricately interwoven tales, Beaumont's tale is a simple sequence of cause and effect (Hearne 28). Each event and its effect on the characters is meticulously described, and each sequence of cause and effect leading to the next, ultimately resulting in the structural and inevitable outcome of marriage (Propp 40). She wastes no space on details of time, place, or decoration. Beaumont's third-person omniscient point of view enriches this formal style (Hearne 28). It draws attention to the story's didactic impulse: the emphasis is on teaching, explanation, and comprehension. Beaumont's attitude to the supernatural emphasizes this: her tale features only four magical objects, each has a limited but structurally important role. The rose motivates the plot as Beauty asks for it, the father steals it, and the Beast demands restitution. When leaving the Beast's castle, the father receives a magical chest of wealth as part of the exchange between the father and the Beast. Beauty is tempted to go home, which almost kills the Beast, by a magic mirror which shows her father's loneliness, and lastly, Beauty saves the Beast and resolve the tale by the magic ring given to her.

Revealing Metanarratives by Framing Tales: The Importance of Conduct

Like Villeneuve, Beaumont uses a frame in *The Young Misses Magazine* which explicates some of the metanarratives her tale conveys. Beaumont's *Beauty and the Beast* is framed with conversations between a governess, Mrs. Affable, and her young charges, including Lady Witty and Lady Charlotte. These conversations, which constitute the primary narrative, function as a situational indicator. The conversations encourage ladies as well as readers to think about the tale's moral and social lessons. Additionally, Beaumont provides an example for governesses of teaching female virtue (Korneeva 233).

Beaumont has shifted the tale's focus to "conduct rather than on adventurous circumstance" (Korneeva 234), especially "the conduct of courtship, marriage, and family relationships" (234). The focus on choice, vanity, and pride has disappeared as Beaumont obscures the reason for Beast's transformation by expunging his backstory. It is only said that "a wicked fairy condemned [him] to remain in this form until a beautiful girl consented to marry [him]" (Beaumont 244). Although the reason for his transformation remains unknown, the importance of beauty for young women remains in this tale, even when Beaumont has shifted the focus to conduct. It does not matter that a man, the Beast, is hideous and unintelligent, as long as he is virtuous and kind, but a woman, Beauty, needs to beautiful, well-read, and well-behaved. Beauty's honorable conduct of taking her father's place and her respectful attitude towards the Beast despite his lack in beauty and intelligence are rewarded with a gentle Beast and ultimately a handsome Prince: "Then [Beast] married Beauty, who lived with him a long time in perfect happiness because their relationship was founded on virtue" (Beaumont 245). Her sisters' jealousy and malice, on the other hand, are punished with a life as statues observing Beauty's happiness. After Mrs. Affable has finished telling the story of Beauty and the Beast, Lady Charlotte asks: "And were her two sisters always statues?" to which Mrs. Affable answers, "Yes, my dear, because their hearts were never changed" (Hearne 203). Through these conversations, "we see an intelligent governess preparing her charges for […] wifely duty, readying them to find the male spouse a beast at first, but beneath the rough and uncivilized exterior a good man" (Warner, *Blonde* 294).

Sister, Wife, Mother, Woman: Female Relationships in *Beauty and the Beast*

Beaumont's narrative opens with the depiction of a wealthy merchant, with three daughters and three sons. The merchant's wife and the children's mother has died before the tale begins. The merchant suddenly loses his fortune, causing the girls' suitors to abandon them and the

city's society to shun all of them. They are forced to move to a small country house, where the merchant and his sons farm the land and the youngest daughter learns domestic tasks. Beauty is the only one of the sisters to display strength of mind:

> Beauty rose at four o'clock every morning and occupied herself by cleaning the house and preparing breakfast for the family. At first she had a great deal of difficulty because she was not accustomed to working like a servant. But after two months she became stronger, and the hard work improved her health. […] On the other hand, her two sisters were bored to death. They rose at ten, took walks the entire day, and entertained themselves by bemoaning the loss of their beautiful clothes and the fine company they used to have. (Beaumont 234)

Beauty and her sisters represent virtue and vanity, respectively. Beaumont illustrates proper conduct through Beauty by contrasting her with the sisters. While she is dedicated to her father, loves to read, and is cheerful in their adversity, her sisters are arrogant, complain constantly, and belittle their little sisters. Beaumont has regulated her metanarratives by offering her readers a positive role model while also describing undesired behavior (Stephens and McCallum 4).

The contrast between Beauty and her sisters contributes to the traditional metanarrative of gender which rely on the impossibility of female bonding (Saxena 200). Both Villeneuve and Beaumont advocate that a woman should be more than her appearance, "who would excel in qualities that differentiate her in terms other than her family's wealth and title" (Korneeva 245), and present readers with virtuous Beauty in opposition of her jealous sisters. In Beaumont's tale, the merchant recognizes Beauty's superiority as well: "The good merchant […] knew that Beauty was more suited to stand out in company than they were. He admired the virtues of this young girl – especially her patience, for her sisters were not content merely to let her do all the work in the house, but also insulted her every

chance they had" (Beaumont 234). Jealousy, envy, and malice mark the relationship between the women in fairy tales, whether this be daughters and stepmothers, sisters, or rivals (Saxena 200). As Beaumont taught young girls, this metanarrative of gender, which advocates the impossibility of female bonding, is particularly damaging.

These relationships are equally difficult in Villeneuve's *Beauty and the Beast*; Beauty's five sisters are jealous of the attention she receives when she returns from the Beast's castle, from their own suitors. This causes them to be unkind and impatient for her to return, but never openly hostile (Villeneuve 154; 156; 160-1; 185-9; 228). Villeneuve on the other hand, implicitly commented on the absurdity of this aspect of the metanarrative as salons were based on female relationships.

The Girl, the Father, and the Monster: Beauty, Beast, and Patriarchy

The rivalry between the sisters and the absence of a mother causes the father, and later the Beast, to become the center of Beauty's world (Saxena 200). In the absence of her mother, Beauty's selfhood is dominated by her father and then by her suitor, "the symbolic denominators of a patriarchal culture" (198). Beauty is isolated in a world which is completely enclosed by patriarchal metanarratives. Beauty and Beast stand as the signifiers that construct and support established Western metanarratives of gender based on patriarchy; they have become archetypes (196). They represent opposites of conduct, as presented in their names as well. The Beast is presented as the figurehead of masculinity, as Beauty is presented as the figurehead of femininity: Beauty and Beast are presented, along the binary which informs the Western metanarrative of gender, as two sides of the same coin.

Beast is established as a "desiring hero in search of a bride able to break the evil spell by wedding him" (Korneeva 236), and as a result Beauty is reduced to a desirable object. The Beast learns of this desirable object in his conversation with the merchant: "'Pardon me, my

lord,' [the merchant said], 'I didn't think that I'd offend you by plucking a rose. One of my daughters has asked me to bring her one.' 'I'm not called 'lord' but Beast. I prefer that people speak their minds, so don't think that you can move me by flattery,' replied the monster" (Beaumont 236). Beast's masculine desire is legitimized through his exchange with Beauty's father. Beauty's depiction as completely her father's daughter make it natural for her to sacrifice herself in his stead: "I intend to offer myself to placate [Beast's] fury, and I feel fortunate to be in a position to save my father and prove my affection for him" (237). Thus, Beauty's self-sacrifice is legitimized through her "willingness to acknowledge superior male authority" (Korneeva 241). As Beast replaces her father as the patriarch in her life, the resulting marriage can be seen as "the basic form of gift exchange, where women function as the most precious gift" (Korneeva 239). Indeed, the merchant is not sent home emptyhanded when he first leaves the Beast's castle. Instead, he receives generous gifts to bring to his family. This exchange is not established between the Beast, a man, and Beauty, a woman, but between the Beast and another man, the merchant.

The emphasis on Beauty's choice to sacrifice herself both subverts the metanarratives because she makes her own choice, but the metanarrative is simultaneously reaffirmed through her willingness to become an object of exchange (Saxena 199). Beauty has internalized the expectations of traditional gender roles which is supported by the civilizing outcome of Beauty's sacrifice: the moment she accepts the gender roles assigned to her and the moment she accepts Beast's otherness, "the beast turns out to be a familiar creature, a prince, an extension of the constraining cultural code that structures her life" (Saxena 199). The emphasis on female sacrificial behaviors and self-denial, in combination with the previously mentioned negative sister-relationship, establishes and reinforces male dominance and patriarchal metanarratives of gender. Beauty has become "independently submissive" (Saxena 198), or in other words, chosen to sacrifice herself; first to her father, then to the

Beast. Presenting and rewarding self-sacrificial behaviors and self-denial on the one hand and negative female relationships on the other hand "exonerates men" (Korneeva 245) of any of the injustice. As a result, this fairy tale is a "romance story patriarchy would like to hear" (Saxena 199).

Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (1991): From Nursery to Cinema

Shifting Focus: Beast and the Beauty

The film opens with the story of the Beast's curse, narrated and depicted in stained glass (figure 1-4). As the stained glass comes into view, an anonymous male voiceover begins to speak: "Once upon a time in a faraway land a young prince lived in a shining castle. Although he had everything his heart desired, the prince was spoilt, selfish and unkind" (1991, 00:01:20-35). The young prince spurns an old, ugly beggar woman, who was an enchantress in disguise (figure 1 and 2). She punishes the prince for his indiscretion and turns him into "a hideous Beast" (00:02:20; figure 3 and 4). Because he has "no love in his heart" (00:02:15-17), she curses him in such a way that the only way to break it is for him to "learn to love another and earn her love in return" (00:02:48-51). This opening scene firmly establishes Beast as the main protagonist, focusing on his predicament and his journey. As the transformation is no longer a punishment for rejecting an evil fairy's amorous advances but

Figure 1 The Prince rejecting the beggar woman (Disney, 1991, 00:01:49)

Figure 2 The beggar woman turns herself into a beautiful Enchantress (Disney, 1991, 00:02:09)

Figure 3 The Prince transforming into the Beast (Disney, 1991, 00:02:20a)

Figure 4 The Beast is revealed (Disney, 1991, 00:02:20b)

rather a punishment for a serious character flaw, it is B east who needs to learn, grow, and change during the film. By presenting the Beast's curse first and focusing on his transformation and unfavorable disposition, Disney has turned the story away from the lovers' learning, understanding, and changing each other; instead, the romance plot remains, and the story, from beginning to end, is about falling in love. Additionally, this opening sequence invokes traditional fairy tale conventions and expectations through their indication of "Once upon a time in a faraway land" (00:01:20-4). These conventions are tied to traditional metanarratives through structural inevitability for characters. To add to that, the sequence is narrated by a male voice and carries male judgement in the "old woman's ugliness" (00:02:03-4), her "haggard appearance" (00:01:48-9), and her beauty as an Enchantress. Even though these outward appearances are central to the Beast's curse, his appearance as a Prince remains undescribed until he transforms into a beast.

As the title appears on-screen, viewers are left to ponder the question Beast keeps asking himself, as told by the narrator, in despair: "Who could ever learn to love a beast?" (00:03:13-18). As the title fades, the audience sees a small cottage, and out of the door steps Belle. This, of course, immediately answers the question, and the outcome of the story becomes inevitable. Belle is kind, intelligent, strong-willed, refusing her brutish suitor Gaston, self-aware, brave, and beautiful (Warner, "Beasts" 10). Although the village people call her "strange" (00:04:33-5), "a funny girl" (00:04:45-6), and "peculiar" (00:05:36-7),

Belle, unlike preceding Beauties, is already perfect (De Vos and Altmann, *Then and Now* 42). It is not Belle who needs to change, but her environment: as soon as she exchanges the town for a castle, and Gaston for the Beast, her characteristics make sense. This becomes clear in Belle's opening song, in which she sings, "[t]here must be more than this provincial life" (00:04:58-05:03). First, she looks for this in the books that she reads, then finds it when she gives up her own dreams of "adventure in the great wide somewhere" (00:20:28-39) to save her father and comes to live with the Beast. Belle's interest in books and adventures outside the village, although separating her from the rest of the village, is not used to make Belle more intelligent or wise, but rather to prepare her for the action and dénouement of her own story. This is a traditional device in romance tales, which is exemplified in Belle's same opening song, as she sings that her favorite part is "where [the female protagonist] meets prince charming, but she won't discover that it's him till chapter three" (00:05:51-06:16). Her favorite parts of the stories that she reads are the romances (00:05:47-); all she can learn from this is that her own prince might someday come, too (De Vos and Altmann, *Then and Now* 42).

Additionally, in the extended edition of the film, Disney included a scene in which Beast has forgotten how to read and Belle teaches him. In this scene reading is used to further knowledge and intelligence, albeit Beast's. However, it turns out to be about Belle and Beast reading together to further their romantic relationship, which is "a crucial indication that Belle's quest for adventure and education will be swallowed by the romance plot" (Cummins 25). Her love for books and adventure and her intelligence are not a resource to make Belle a well-rounded or virtuous individual; instead, these characteristics are manipulated to break the Beast's curse (Cummins 24). This view of Belle as being nothing more than a tool in the Beast's transformation is never more evident than when she first enters the castle. While her father's entrance merely roused curiosity, Belle's entrance is answered with disbelief and

excitement, as Lumière, an enchanted candlestick, says, "It's a girl! […] Don't you see, she's the one. The girl we have been waiting for. She has come to break the spell!" (00:22:22-22:31). Belle is forced into a love story "that robs her of self-determination and individuality" (Cummins 22): her identity is reduced to being a solution to the Beast's curse instead. Thus, Disney has given Beauty's story, whether it is didactic or romantic or both, to Beast: "We can schematize [*Beauty and the Beast*] as 'Beast gets girl, Beast loses girl, Beast gets girl back.' […] 'The Beast was the guy with the problem'" (Cummins 23-4), illustrated first and foremost in the film's opening. Structurally, Belle is no longer the heroine but rather has turned into a support character to Beast.

Flirting with Feminism?: Female Bonding and Male Rivalry

The 1991 Belle is no longer an active protagonist: she does not motivate the plot by asking her father for a rose, as is the case in both Villeneuve and Beaumont. Instead, her affection and care for her father, Maurice, rather drives the plot (Cummins 25). She tends to him and she is the only significant person in his life. Maurice is an inventor behaving irresponsibly and erratically, eventually getting himself lost in the woods. Unlike in the traditional tales, after being caught by the Beast, Maurice does not even make it home to Belle: she has to go out looking for him (De Vos and Altmann, *Then and Now* 42). Like a mother figure, she takes his place in the Beast's castle, ensuring his safety. Then, she must save him again when Gaston threatens to send him to an asylum unless Belle marries Gaston.

The Beast's enchanted household staff has tried to teach the Beast good manners ever since his transformations, but his demeanor and disposition have not changed: he is still "spoilt, selfish, and unkind" (00:01:34-5) when Belle first meets him. When Belle does not come down to dinner the first night, the conversation between the Beast and his staff

illustrates this. Lumière, Coggsworth, and Mrs. Potts[7] try to teach the Beast to be polite to Belle, so she will stay and break the curse. Coggsworth tells him that Belle is not coming down for dinner and as a response, he bounds, on all fours, up to her room, where he aggressively knocks on the door, yelling, “I thought I told you to come down to dinner!” (00:34:38-35:04). As the Beast remains angry at her, Lumière says to him, tentatively, “Master, I could be wrong, but that may not be the best way to win the girl’s affections,” to which Coggsworth adds, “Please, attempt to be a gentleman” (00:35:08-17). This corrective behavior from the staff has no effect on the Beast, but Beauty’s presence and her caring nature does. She teaches him how to eat like a human being and encourages him to feed the birds to make him more gentle (00:54:00-55:48). In the traditional tales, unintelligent and a physical beast, but still gentle and kind in his demeanor. Disney’s Beast, on the other hand, is scary, unintelligent, and mean: there is nothing left for Belle to fall in love with or feel gratitude for. It is only after the Beast has already started to change under her caring presence that Belle can see a future with him. The lyricists have attempted to keep the lesson for Belle, too. She sings, “There’s something sweet and almost kind but he was mean and he was coarse and unrefined. And now he’s dear and so unsure, I wonder why I didn’t see it there before?” (00:54:45-55:01), which should remind her of the deception of appearances. The fact is, however, as it is presented in the film, this gentleness was simply not there before, and thus, while changing the Beast, Belle remains unchanged.

Disney’s introduction of Gaston, Belle’s suitor in her village, brings a staple of romance to the tale: male rivalry. Gaston serves as a foil to the Beast. He is the external representation of the Beast’s character flaws: pride, vanity, selfishness, cruelty (Jeffords 169).

[7] Before the Beast’s curse and the household staff and was transformed into household objects, Lumière was the headwaiter, Coggsworth was the major domo, and Mrs Potts the head housekeeper. During the Beast’s enchantment, Lumière is an animated candelabra, Coggsworth an animated clock, and Mrs Potts an animated teapot. They, and other staff like them, serve as staff and confidantes to the Beast.

Figure 5 Gaston's first appearance, after he has shot a duck from the sky. His other hunting trophies are lying at his feet (Disney, 1991, 00:06:42)

Figure 6 Gaston falling to his death after stabbing the Beast in the back, while Beauty saves the Beast from falling, too (Disney, 1991, 01:20:09)

Gaston is an exaggerated representation of masculinity (figure 5). His hyper-masculine appearance, demeanor, and opinions firmly establish him as the antagonist and the opposite of the Beast. He wants Belle because she does not want him, she is the only one who does not swoon at the sight of him, and he tries to control her through violence, diminishing and destroying what she loves (Jeffords 170). Gaston's behavior culminates in his stabbing the Beast in the back. The Beast's previously spared Gaston's life and while Gaston's devious counter-attack results in his own death, the Beast is saved by Belle (figure 6).

Beauty becomes a spectator of the male rivalry, a prize when the two men are fighting over her (Warner, "Beasts" 10). The message is clear: may the best man win, and Disney clearly favors the Beast's new brand of masculinity over Gaston's hyper masculinity (Jeffords 170): Gaston is a beast in a man's shape and he remains so, while the Beast is a man in a beast's shape who changes. The Beast's appearance as "strong […], protective […], domineering […], and overpowering […]" (Jeffords 171) works against him because he is not physically a man, while Gaston's appearance matches the dominant cultural metanarrative. In presenting Gaston and the Beast in opposition, not just in demeanor and opinion but in appearance as well, Disney may suggest that the metanarrative of gender which describes men to be as Gaston has reached its limit and is slowly being replaced by a different metanarrative which favors a gentler, kinder, and more understanding masculinity (Jeffords 171). Beauty's femininity, on the other hand, remains within the boundaries of a patriarchal metanarrative of

gender: as in Villeneuve and Beaumont, her virtue lies with the redeeming power of her love, her socializing ability, and her nurturing character rather than being an independent, well-rounded individual. Although "flirt[ing] with feminism" (Saxena 200), the film remains firmly based in patriarchy. Belle responds to the actions of the men in her life. Disney's adaptation "concerns maleness, its various faces and masks, and, in the spirit of romance, it offers hope of regeneration within the unregenerate male" (Warner, "Beasts" 10). Belle's father, her suitor, and her prince all represent their own brand of masculinity and Belle's true value is not her intelligence or her independence but being a civilizing and nurturing force.

When Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* was released, the film was praised for its innovative portrayal of its heroine, Belle, without diminishing the classic Disney delight. Janet Maslin, in *The New York Times*, asserted that Beauty is "a smart, independent heroine […] who makes a conspicuously better role model than the marriage-minded Disney heroines of the past." Seemingly breaking with the metanarratives of gender presented in Villeneuve and Beaumont, Beauty is smart, bookish, and stands up for herself. She is not interested a marriage to her brutish suitor Gaston. However, she still finds her happiness in her marriage with a prince and thus, Disney perpetuates the idea that "true happiness for women exists only in the arms of a prince" (Cummins 22) and their mission is to find it. Disney accentuates "the most sentimental and romantic aspects of the story at the expense of its moral and psychological complexity" (23). Belle is better developed than earlier Disney heroines, the tale itself has been reduced to a romance tale with courtship as action and marriage as dénouement.

CHAPTER 3 – RIGHTING A WRONG:
ROBIN MCKINLEY'S *BEAUTY* (1978)

Robin McKinley (b. 1952) is well-known and praised for her feminist revision of traditional tales in general, not just fairy tales. The reason for her feminist thematic core are often ascribed to her own dissatisfaction: "Frustrated with passive heroines in the books with which she grew up, McKinley righted this wrong in her own work" (Perry xvi). All of McKinley's retellings engage a dialogue with her pre-texts. McKinley's first novel's full title, *Beauty: A Retelling of the Story of Beauty and the Beast*, immediately establishes an intertextual relationship with the traditional tale. This opens the conversation between what is already present and what is new for readers; their attention is drawn to the changes in the story and how this affects to story's metanarratives.

Beauty is an excellent example of elaboration in fairy tale retelling. The novel, covering about three years' time, is divided into three parts. Part one (7-65) establishes the background, introduces Beauty's family, and narrates the family's financial loss, the move to the countryside, father's departure to the city and his return with a rose. Part two (67-109) covers father's story, Beauty's decision to take her father's place, Beauty's last month at her family's residence, and it ends with her and her father leaving for the Beast's castle. Part three, comprising more than half the book (111-271), narrates Beauty's life at the Beast's castle, her visit home which she overstays, her declaration of love, and the Beast's transformation. These instances are core elements of the traditional "Beauty and the Beast" stories by Villeneuve and Beaumont, yet all of them have been made new through elaboration. McKinley has made some significant changes to the traditional story which may indirectly and directly intervene with its metanarratives of gender. She is influenced mainly by Beaumont's didactic tale, as she focusses on the subversion of socially determined and approved conduct, but much of her elaboration is inspired by Villeneuve's tale.

McKinley wrote *Beauty* during the second wave of feminism, which was concerned with expanding gender equality across the social and corporate worlds, while maintaining a woman's right to remain feminine (Flanagan, "Gender Studies" 28). Authors started to reimagine traditional folktales in a feminist tradition, rewriting and amending gender stereotypes and roles. They were actively trying to "redress patriarchal discursive practices through the concept of 'equal opportunity' and the reassessment of masculine superiority" (29-30). *Beauty*, a result of McKinley's involvement with feminism, was praised for its feminist interpretation of the traditional tale.

Attitude to the Traditional: First Person Narrator, YA Literature, and Register

Beauty's first person limited narration focusses the tale on Beauty. Unlike in Villeneuve and Beaumont, *Beauty* presents the story one-sided and mediated through the experiences of Beauty. This change makes the story of "Beauty and the Beast" completely Beauty's story: readers are introduced to her narrative, her thoughts, and her development. The updating of the narration makes the retelling immediate for McKinley's intended audience. The first person narrator creates a greater sense of authenticity for the intended audience of young adults, as direct access to Beauty's thoughts, emotions, and motivations creates close intimacy between readers and the protagonist. Beauty, however, is naive and unknowing and "life experience is about to change that, but the protagonist is unaware" (Roxburgh 7). As she grows and changes, Beauty becomes self-aware, with a new perception of herself and her life. As a result, her narration becomes more reliable: "Typically in the young adult novel, the narrator transforms from unreliable to reliable" (7). Her acknowledging of her affection for the Beast, for example, better enables her to understand what has happened to her: "My thoughts went back to the evening just past, of the scene around the parlour fire, when I had tried to plead for my Beast against my family's animosity. I knew now what it was that had

happened. I couldn't tell them that here, at home with them again, I had learnt what I had successfully ignored these last weeks at the castle" (McKinley, *Beauty* 237). With Beauty, her readers are encouraged to learn from Beauty's misconceptions about herself, the Beast, and the metanarratives that control them.

Beauty struggles with problems her young adult readers may recognize: insecurities about her physical beauty, her name, her family, her first kiss, feeling like the whole world is watching her grow up, and what it means to be herself. The novel presents as a coming-of-age story; first person narration allows Beauty to find her own place and her own way. For young adult readers, a lack of distance from the events and a limited point of view which does not provide multiple perspectives on events and characters creates the opportunity for them to grow with the young adult, first person narrator, who can make "perceptive observations and startling claims about the world around them" (Tilghman). It may allow adolescents to reinterpret their view on adult concepts, which may ultimately lead to mature realizations, both in characters as well as in readers. Beauty's revelatory tone authenticates her teen voice and draws readers into the narrator's inner life, which may reveal the metanarratives of gender with which she is struggling, the ones she maintains, and the ones she overcomes. Beauty is a confident girl, though at times insecure about herself and her physical beauty; a courageous young woman, although sometimes scared of the world she finds herself in; she is bookish and intelligent, but nurturing and animal-loving, too; and, most importantly, she is a girl who takes initiative in defining her own world.

First person narration, however, may dwindle into exposition (Roxburgh 7-8). McKinley uses wonder and humor to prevent this, particularly in her elaborations of Beauty's experiences in the new worlds she encounters. McKinley's vivid scenes in the Beast's castle, which are largely drawn from Villeneuve's narrative (1740), keep Beauty's narrative from becoming too moralizing. Additionally, she uses these scenes to characterize Beauty and her

development throughout the novel. Greatheart, Beauty's beloved horse, has come with her to the Beast's castle, for example, and when Beauty forces a confrontation between the two beasts, the scene is enthralling: Greatheart runs scared at first, but Beauty's perseverance eventually brings the two of them together, to the Beast's surprise and Beauty's satisfaction (McKinley, *Beauty* 167-172). Beauty's wonder at her new surroundings and the new things that she discovers in the castle every day alleviate her contemplation and add humor, for example when the Beast shows Beauty the castle's library. Beauty's discovery of future books in the library, for example, and her attempt to understand Robert Browning and Rudyard Kipling are quite funny:

> 'I didn't know there were so many books in the *world*,' I said caressingly, and the Beast's answer was heard only in my ear and did not register in my brain: 'Well, in fact, there aren't,' he said. […] 'This library is – well –' He paused. 'Most of these books haven't been written yet.' I looked at him stupidly, *Kim* still in my hand. 'But don't worry, they will be,' he said. He paused again. 'You might try the Browning,' he suggested gently. (165)

Being unable to grasp the idea of holding books that have not been written yet, Beauty instead focuses on what is in front of her: "My dazed brain grasped at something more easily sensible. 'You – you do read then,' I said, and added before thought: You can turn pages?' The earth quaking rumble that served the Beast for a chuckle washed over me briefly, lifting the hair on the back of my neck" (166). For Beauty, even the horrifying Beast becomes mundane now that she can no longer comprehend her magical surroundings, which initiates her process of becoming aware of others despite their appearance.

As Beauty gets more used to her new surroundings, she is invited into the Beast's world, and as she does so she becomes more aware of its magic. This is encouraged by her relationship with the invisible handmaids she initially calls breezes. As she gets more

comfortable, she learns that the breezes are actually called Bessie and Lydia. The humorous encounters between Bessie and Lydia and Beauty interrupt her worrying when she first arrives in the castle:

> The breeze […] combed my hair and strung a jade-green ribbon through it, and then presented me with a pale-green dress with yards and yards of frothy billowing skirt sewn all over with tiny winking diamonds. 'Ha,' I said. 'I will wear nothing of the kind.'
>
> The breeze and I had quite a little struggle after that over what I would put on – my old clothes had disappeared while I bathed – by the end of which my hair had escaped its ribbon, and the breeze was racing around the room whistling angrily to itself. (127)

These confrontations not only alleviate the diary-like style, McKinley also uses these scenes to introduce Beauty to Beast's world and allows Beast to welcome her. When Beauty introduces Greatheart to the Beast, she is asking him to be gentle with him, because Greatheart is the only reminder of her old life. When Beast shows Beauty the library, he is hoping that she sees all the books that still have to be written, because if she does not, she still is unable to enter his world.

McKinley uses demotic register, which is "grounded in the mundane" (Stephens and McCallum 11), to voice Beauty. This allows readers to identify with Beauty and share her experiences (Roxburgh 9; Tilghman) and it separates her from the Beast's world. Beauty's voice drives her character, who drives the plot, and her voice is distinct from those of other characters in dialogue. Father, the Beast, and to a certain extent Gervain, Beauty's sister's husband, use a more formal, epic register in dialogue. When Beauty meets the Beast, she attempts to establish a hierarchy through adjusting her demotic register to a more formal, almost epic register: "'Good evening, milord,' I said. […] 'Obliged! Milord, you gave me no

choice. I could not let my father die for the sake of a silly rose'" (McKinley *Beauty* 129). In this manner, McKinley uses register to set the mood and tone for the interpersonal relationships presented in the novel (Tilghman). Beauty addresses the Beast in a more formal manner but remains in her own demotic register as she refers to the "silly rose" (McKinley, *Beauty* 129) she had requested. This separation through register destabilizes the metanarratives of gender. Even though Beast is linguistically privileged, as epic register is often associated with prestige (Stephens and McCallum 12), the privilege is lost because readers have been identifying with Beauty's demotic register from the start: epic register makes the Beast the odd man out.

McKinley's first person narration, vivid descriptions, and choice for demotic register blend "drama with detail" (Hearne 107). The dialogue is natural and the descriptions are "in turn specific and suggestive" (107). McKinley leaves part of Beauty's life up to the imagination of the reader, allowing them to luxuriate in her wish-fulfilling life at the palace and leaving room for personal imaginings. While the marvels of the palace, as in Villeneuve's work, are described in explicit detail, the appearance of the Beast is left hazy. The tension created by the lack of the Beast's physical appearance also draws attention to Beauty's insecurities about her own physical appearance. Through these elaborations, McKinley updates the tale to make it immediate to contemporary young adult readers.

Honour and Beauty: Metanarratives of Gender and Naming Conventions

Another fairy tale convention McKinley uses to expose and subvert fairy tale structure and its influence on the traditional metanarrative of gender is the link between names and characterization. McKinley exploits this convention by simultaneously adhering to it and subverting it. Characters in fairy tales often embody the characteristic they are named after (Doughty 97), whereas McKinley chooses to move her characters' characterization beyond their names. McKinley's expansion of traditional naming conventions allows her to subvert

traditional characterization, exposing its effect on the metanarratives. *Beauty* opens as follows, "I was the youngest of three daughters. Our literal-minded mother named us Grace, Hope, and Honour, but few people except perhaps the abbot who had baptized all three of us remembered my given name" (9). Honour's father "had some difficulty trying to make the concept of honor understandable to a five-year-old. I heard him out, but with an expression of deepening disgust; and when he was finished I said: 'Huh! I'd rather be Beauty'" (9). From the beginning, McKinley attempts to make Beauty more than just a beauty, but Beauty's choice to be known as such is entirely her own. Her nickname, according to herself, becomes increasingly inappropriate: "I don't know what happened to me [when I grew up]. […] I was thin, awkward, and undersized, with big long-fingered hands and huge feet […] and while I came to hate the name [Beauty], I was too proud to ask that it be discarded" (10-11). Her sisters, on the other hand, are "as good-hearted as they were beautiful" (11), and they "went on being innocently and ravishingly lovely, with every eligible young man – and many more that were neither – dying of love for them" (10). Beauty, then, is battling the metanarrative of gender which dictates beauty as one of women's defining; this metanarrative implies that her beauty is essential in bringing her the happiness of love. Beauty realizes, however, that her father's "generous blindness" allows her to "talk to him openly, about [her] dreams for the future, without fear of his pitying or doubting [her] motives" (11). Beauty is smart and well-educated, she loves reading, and she would like to go to university, while going to university was reserved for men only. Her governesses pity Beauty for these qualities, but Beauty "worked and studied with passionate dedication, lived in hope, and avoided society and mirrors" (12), as not to be reminded of the judgement of her beauty and aspirations. This is the metanarrative of femininity in which Beauty is caught, but she and her sisters, escape when they move to the countryside.

In Blue Hill, the village where Gervain takes up a vacancy as blacksmith, Beauty can develop from an awkward fifteen-year-old into a young woman ready for her own adventure. Their new house is located "beyond the edge of town and isolated from it by the eyeless backs of the houses" (38). Beauty no longer shies away from society because country folk "see and accept only exactly what is standing in front of them" (Perry 70); although her name has travelled with her, the village people treat her differently from her sisters, exactly as Beauty thinks should be the case. Beauty believes that she does not compare to her beautiful sisters and in Blue Hill she reimagines herself as a boy, completely opposite of them: "Grace and Hope divided the house-work between them, and I did what was left over, the odds and ends that were neither house-work nor shop-work; and often thought that it would have been much more convenient if I had been boy – not in the least because I already looked like one" (McKinley, *Beauty* 47). Influenced by her new chores, she was "becoming more boy than girl, it seemed; and perhaps since I was short and plain and had no figure to speak of the townsfolk found my ambiguous position easy enough to accept" (48). After a few years in Blue Hill, she is welcomed into adulthood and the adult world, which is regulated by patriarchal metanarratives, "at the expense of her [feminine] gender identity" (Perry 70).

McKinley cleverly subverts the metanarrative of feminine beauty by changing the nature of Beauty's name, a nickname rather than her given name. The emphasis on this change from the novel's opening onward attracts and simultaneously diverts attention from the importance of beauty because readers are constantly reminded by Beauty herself that her given name is Honour. Just as with her sisters, change and challenge help her grow into, in her case, both her names, but honor permeates the novel; it has replaced Beaumont's gratitude as the primary motive. The OED defines it as "great respect, esteem, or reverence received, gained, or enjoyed" (1a) and "a fine sense of […] what is considered to be morally right or just" (2a). Additionally, it gives the following definition "with reference to a woman" (7):

"virtue as regards sexual morality; chastity; virginity; a reputation for this, one's good name" (7). Rather than holding Beauty to a different standard of honorability, one specifically indicated for women, Beauty's honor originates in her conduct, not her sexuality. By naming her heroine both Beauty and Honour, while not holding her to traditionally feminine definitions, McKinley blurs the gender binary. Like Beaumont chose to focus on conduct rather than disposition, McKinley specifies honorable conduct for both men and women instead of gender-specificity to achieve a good marriage.

Gervain, the father, the Beast, and Beauty all display honor of their own. Gervain helps out the Huston family in their most precarious situation saying that "he would be honored if [they] would throw [their] fortune in with his. […] and [they] were not to think that any obligation fell on Hope to marry him as a reward for any trifling service such as he might be able to render to [them]" (McKinley, *Beauty* 22-3). Gervain offers respect, an opportunity, and a new sense of pride to the Huston family, expecting nothing in return. He does this because he believes it is the right thing to do, and the Huston family can accept without feeling dishonored. To sharpen the focus on honor in Beauty's story of maturation, McKinley has altered the father's weakness and his sense of self-preservation present in Beaumont and Villeneuve. Beauty's father displays the same kind of honor as Gervain when he is confronted by the Beast: "'You may think me lacking in honour, but I am not such a cruel father that I would buy my own life with the life of one of my daughters'" (84). Instead, Beauty is given full agency over her own decision, to the point where she forcibly decides her own fate. Beauty's honor resides in her ability to take responsibility for her own actions and bear the consequences, as well as knowing that what she wants to do, and ultimately does, is the right thing to do. This is exemplified when she chooses to take her father's place and refuses to let her sister Grace step in: "'No,' [she] said, 'The rose was for me. […] We are not asking that I be killed in [father's] stead, but that I be allowed to save [his] life'" (89-90). In the divide

between McKinley's heroine's names, she attempts to bridge the gap between traditional self-sacrificial behavior prescribed by the metanarrative of gender and the disruptive idea that a definition of honor relies on one's gender.

Beauty has inhabited the space between gendered identities far longer, however. She was already blurring gender boundaries within her family. After Mr. Huston had lost his wealth, the city mansion and all the family possession went into auction. Afterwards, Ruth, a servant, "came down the scullery stairs now and said, 'Excuse me, Mr. Huston; there's a man here to see Miss Beauty.' 'All right,' I said, wondering who it might be. 'You might as well send him down here.'" (29). Proper conduct dictated that Beauty would have let her father speak, not in the least because Ruth addressed him in the first place. Beauty, however, takes the initiative here, because the man has come to see *her*, not her father. This small demonstration of power is further developed in the isolation of Blue Hill, but Beauty has internalized her society's constructs of femininity and decided that she does not fit in. Instead of this power enriching her femininity, Beauty accepts that her confidence fits better in her role as a boy.

The divide between beauty and honor Beauty/Honour creates for herself is one that she, as the tale develops, learns to overcome. It is only when Beauty leaves for the castle that she is given the complete, isolated space to grow into herself. When Beauty first comes to the castle, Beast concisely explains what Beauty's father could not: the meaning of honor. Beast argues that he would have sent her father home if Beauty had not taken his place, when Beauty asks if she came for nothing, Beast answers:

> No. Not what you would count as nothing. He would have returned to you, and you would have been glad, but you also would have been ashamed, because you had sent him, as you thought, to his death. Your shame would have grown until you came to hate the sight of your father, because he reminded you of a

> deed you hated, and hated yourself for. In time it would have ruined your peace and happiness, and at last your mind and heart. (130)

Honor is what Beauty owes herself: honesty, courage, and respect (De Vos and Altmann, *Then and Now* 17-8). In the castle of the Beast, Beauty is, for the first time, confronted with someone who believes her to be beautiful and honorable at the same time, guiding her to maturity and adulthood while nurturing her feminine gender identity rather than excluding it. In return, Beauty guides Beast back into a society which has shunned him for his monstrosity. The following conversation between the Beast and Beauty also exemplifies how the Beast sees Beauty and how Beauty sees herself:

> 'I am a Beast, and a Beast has no honor. But you may trust my word: you are safe here' […]
>
> 'I – er – I hope you weren't misled by my foolish nickname,' I said. What if he was angry at being cheated of Beauty, and killed me for tricking him?
>
> 'Misled?' he said. 'No. I think your name suits you very well. […] You say that Beauty is your nickname?' he said after a moment. 'What is your given name?'
>
> 'Honour,' I said.
>
> Something that might have been a smile exposed too many long white teeth. 'I welcome Beauty and Honour both, then,' he said. 'Indeed, I am very fortunate.' (132-3)

Beauty's relationships are all marked by honor; an initial misconception of her honor develops into to self-awareness, just as her misconception of her beauty develops into self-assurance. Thus, *Beauty* exhibits a continuous theme of interpersonal relationships based on love, honor, and awareness on various levels: within oneself, within communities, and between two people. McKinley makes use of traditional fairy tale conventions, but subverts

both the conventions and the structure tied to them to destabilize metanarratives of gender. By stressing difference rather than similarity in her application of these conventions, McKinley encourages readers to question their own expectations regarding fairy tale conventions and their connection to metanarratives of gender which privilege male, masculine, man.

Beauty and the Beast: Mirrors in Development

Beauty is definitely Beauty's story, evidenced through her first person narration as well as the emphasis on her (physical) development, but the Beast takes up a key role in Beauty's development. Unlike in Villeneuve and Beaumont, the Beast is no longer tormented by his state but rather has resigned to it (De Vos and Altmann, *Then and Now* 17). The Beast's struggle, which takes place alongside Beauty in Villeneuve and Beaumont, has taken place before *Beauty* begins: the Beast has already spent two hundred years as a Beast (McKinley, *Beauty* 152), which are not narrated and remain unknown. In this time, he has learned and accepted "the limitations and implications of his physical form" (De Vos and Altmann, *Then and Now* 17). He has resigned himself to his beastly characteristics and tries to protect Beauty from them. When Beauty has just arrived in the castle, the doors to her room are locked, and Beast explains: "I am a Beast, and I cannot always behave prettily – even for you" (McKinley, *Beauty* 148). Beauty recognizes that the Beast's resignation "born of long silent hopeless years [which] sat heavily on him" (148). His curse was placed on his family generations before him, for being "overpious, and overzealous in impressing their neighbours with their piety" (264). If their virtue was true, the curse would not stick. The magician left the curse in place, waiting for the first misstep to be taken within the family, and, says the Beast, "unfortunately for me, at last, that erring foot was mine" (264). *Beauty*'s Beast is punished for his own transgressions, but before Beauty's arrival, he has resigned himself to his beastliness.

McKinley draws most heavily on Beaumont's didactic tale, but Villeneuve's elaborations remain ingrained in her retelling as well. The portrait of the Beast as a man, for example, is taken from the dream sequence presented by Villeneuve. In Villeneuve's version, in a series of dreams the Good Fairy and the Prince visit Beauty, and through these dreams she falls in love with the Prince and also learns to look past appearances and rely on her gratitude to the Beast. Through the portrait of the Beast as he was, McKinley prepares both Beauty and readers for the Beast's transformation at the end of the book (De Vos and Altmann, *Then and Now* 18), invoking the expectation of the transformation throughout. McKinley, however, duplicates this particular strand from Villeneuve's story, including its teleological ending in the Beast's transformation. Unfortunately, this also implicitly maintains metanarratives bound to this structure. Conversations between Beauty and the Beast about the portrait indicate that while Beauty's sense of awareness is still growing, the Beast has already accepted that beauty is not everything. The portrait, for Beauty, has captured a man whose "beauty was extraordinary, even in this good-looking family; and the passion of his expression made him loom above me like a godling. I looked away at last, no longer afraid, but ashamed, remembering the undersized, sallow, snub-nosed creature he looked down upon" (McKinley, *Beauty* 162). When Beast asks her what she thinks of the man in the portrait, she answers, "'I think he died young'" (162), and in a sense, she is right: the man who the Beast was died after his transformation. The portrait lingers in Beauty's mind, but she does not push to find out why, instead she becomes "afraid again, as [she] stared at the Beast, afraid much as [she] had been on the first night" (163). This realization is almost immediately followed by a change of heart, delineating that "[h]e was not the awful master here, but [her] friend and companion within the spellbound castle […] As he stared down at [her] [she] knew his eyes were kind, and a little anxious, even though [she] could not read the rest of his dark face. [She] smiled at him, the handsome family forgotten" (163-4). As Beauty learns to

appreciate and love Beast's character despite his appearance, she inadvertently learns to love herself more and to become self-aware through Beast's eyes.

Beauty is self-deprecating of her physical appearance and has grown apprehensive of mirrors (Hearne 105). This unites Beauty and the Beast. The absence of mirrors in the castle indicates that although the Beast is no longer tormented by his state of being, he has not yet come to terms with his physical deformity, his lost humanity. Beauty, on the other hand, avoids mirrors because she thinks she cannot compete with her sisters (Perry 72). Despite neither of them being capable of genuine self-reflection, they do care about what the other thinks of them:

> The Beast turned back to me. I could look at him fairly steadily this time. After a moment he said harshly: 'I am very ugly, am I not?'
>
> 'You are certainly, uh, very hairy,' I said.
>
> 'You are being polite,' he said.
>
> 'Well, yes,' I conceded. 'But then you called me beautiful, last night.'
>
> He made a noise somewhere between a road and a bark, and after an anxious minute, I decided it was probably a laugh. 'You do not believe me then?' he inquired.
>
> 'Well – no,' I said, hesitantly, wondering if this might anger him. 'Any number of mirrors have told me otherwise.'
>
> 'You will find no mirrors here,' he said, 'for I cannot bear them: nor any quiet water in ponds. And since I am the only one who sees you, why are you not then beautiful?' (McKinley, *Beauty* 145-6).

The lack of mirrors denies both characters to witness their developments. Instead they function as mirrors to each other, establishing an equally beneficial relationship between them: McKinley mirrors Beauty's growth to awareness with that of the Beast (Perry 67-70).

The Beast, his world, and its magic, support Beauty in her development and Beauty in turn helps the Beast to come to terms with himself. They expand their awareness and alter their perceptions of each other and themselves to grow into adult society and out of isolation. Beauty's physical growth of seven inches in as many months parallels her inward growth (De Vos and Altmann, *Then and Now* 17) and Beast's physical transformation exemplifies his development.

Essential Sisterly Love

McKinley has maintained many of the components present in Beaumont and Villeneuve, but has updated them and offers alternatives to the metanarratives associated with them to fit with a contemporary audience and advocate change. Beauty is a well-educated young woman, with a healthy relationship with her father and her two sisters, who has to learn to become self-aware. Her independence from her father and the positive female relationship between her and her sisters is exemplified in McKinley's shift away from her motive to return home: rather than returning to take care of her father in poor health, she returns home to tell Grace her lost-at-sea fiancé has finally returned. In this way, McKinley subverts this patriarchal tool, which intends to convince women the most beneficial relationships they will have are with men. Beauty's sisters in *Beauty* are instrumental to her happiness. The sisters' traditional villainy, as presented in Villeneuve's and Beaumont's tales, is omitted. The three girls, instead, have a close relationship with one another based on love and understanding and all three of them have relationships in which the men complement their characters rather than taking their autonomy. The positive relationship between the sisters provides each of them with agency as opposed to the traditional tales, in which the sisters' jealousy "shifted the onus of responsibility away from Beauty's self-determined choices" (Hearne 105). Instead, all focus is now on Beauty's development towards the examples set by her sisters. It is, then, neither

Beauty's father nor her envious sisters who cause Beast to take center stage in Beauty's life, but rather her choice to allow him to do so: she realizes that she has learned more about herself from him and with him while she was learning about him. Beauty is not sacrificing herself or her virtues by being with the Beast. Instead, she is enhancing them, as she is his. When home, she becomes aware that, after all, she has changed, both physically and mentally: "I did not belong here, and I should not stay. I tried to hide my impatience, but my family watched me unhappily, and uncomprehendingly, till I could not meet anyone's eyes […] 'I *must* [leave]. I'm sorry. Please try to understand. I promised.' Father tried to smile, but didn't quite manage it. 'You were well named,' he said" (251). Finally, then, Beauty has grown into her given name through her relationship with the Beast.

Marriage and the Beauty Myth

McKinley maintained the metanarrative that the ultimate happiness for a woman lies in marriage. Like Beaumont's Beast, McKinley's Beast asks Beauty to marry him every night. Every night, he receives the same answers, "No, Beast." McKinley has changed, however, that Beauty and Beast grow to appreciate themselves through their appreciation of the other: their relationships is based on equality and mutual appreciation. Beauty establishes "her sense of self in partnership with Beast […] and acknowledge[s] her preference for their shared vision" (Perry 74).

Their mutual awareness, however, is also based in their own ideas about beauty. As Beast transforms back into his handsome human form, Beauty immediately returns to the fragmented self-image of her adolescence (Perry 74): "'I can't marry *you*,' I burst out, and the smile left [Beast's] face as if it had been cut off, and his eyes were dark and sad. I blundered on: 'Look at you. You should marry a queen or something, a duchess at least, not a dull drab little nothing like myself. I haven't anything – no dowry, not even a title to hide behind'"

(McKinley, *Beauty* 265). Transformed-Beast counters her by saying, “You suffer from the oddest misapprehensions about your appearance” (265). McKinley lays strong foundations for breaking with the metanarrative of feminine beauty, but in the end shows readers that Beauty has indeed become physically beautiful:

> The girl in the mirror wasn’t I, I was sure of it, in spite of the fact that the man in golden velvet was holding my hand as he was holding the girl’s. She was tall […]. Her hair was a pale coppery red, and her eyes, strangest of all, weren’t muddy hazel [as described before], but clear and amber, with flecks of green. And the dress did look lovely on her, in spite of the fact that she was blushing furiously […]. I leant closer, fascinated. No, there, it *was* I, after all: The quirck of the eyebrows was still there […] and I recognized the high wide cheekbones […] and the mouth was still higher on one side than the other. (266-7)

In this manner, Beauty enters adulthood through better understanding of herself, the Beast, and her surroundings. This understanding is both individual as well as in partnership with another. Her gendered identity is re-established when she sees herself as beautiful as she has completed her feminine coming-of-age. Both Beauty and Beast have learned to see in the absence of mirrors and they are rewarded by seeing past the physical appearance. Metanarratives of gender as well as gendered identities rely heavily on plot and structure in fairy tale; McKinley’s adherence to traditional fairy tale structures which dictate Beauty’s beauty and the Beast’s transformation into a beautiful prince reaffirm traditional metanarratives of beauty. Although the interpersonal relationships portrayed are progressively constructive, *Beauty* remains trapped in patriarchal metanarratives of femininity and beauty.

CHAPTER 4 – RIGHTING A WRONG AGAIN: ROBIN MCKINLEY'S *ROSE DAUGHTER* (1997)

Rose Daughter is often said to be a more mature young adult novel, which is unsurprising, as McKinley was 24 when she wrote *Beauty* and 43 when she wrote her second retelling of "Beauty and the Beast." She remained invested in her feminist ideals, and in *Rose Daughter*, she vastly changes her characterization, and especially that of the three sisters, to challenge dominant metanarratives of gender once again. During the 1990s, children's and young adult literature "incipiently started to engage with third-wave feminism, which recognizes the identity as plural (rejecting essentialist notions of feminine identity) and conceptualizes masculinity and femininity as relational, rather than oppositional" (Flanagan, "Gender Studies" 30). In her second retelling of "Beauty and the Beast," McKinley is influenced by this movement as well as eco-feminism, which links the domination of nature to the oppression of women (Flanagan, "Gender Studies" 30; Perry 66). She elaborates on and centralizes the motif of the rose and Beauty's connection to the natural world. Alterations to fairy tale characterization, plots, and motifs underpin McKinley's retelling, and they intend to show readers changing attitudes towards the more-than-human world.

Attitude to the Traditional: Third Person Narration Displacing the Patriarch

Rose Daughter is a third person narrative, which allows McKinley to explore all characters more in-depth while maintaining, even expanding, the emotional impact of the story. McKinley's shift from first person in *Beauty* to third person narration in *Rose Daughter* is significant because it indicates a shift to a larger perspective. *Rose Daughter* displays how third person narration can increase the emotional impact of the story on readers (Doughty 97). Although the novel is focalized primarily through Beauty, it does, at times, offer the points of view of the father and the sisters. Particularly, the novel's point of view switches when, after

news has come that one of his ships has returned, father travels back to the city. Readers go with him, instead of remaining with Beauty as was the case in *Beauty*. This provides readers with necessary motivation for his actions. This introduction to the father's interiority enriches his character. Before the father leaves, he asks his daughters if he can bring something for them. Both Lionheart and Jeweltongue tell him to bring nothing but himself back, safely. Beauty, however, notices "He looked so sad that [she] cast her mind round for something she could suggest. […] Whatever it was, it needed to be something small, that would not burden him on the way. […] She gave a little laugh that was mostly a sob. 'You could bring me a rose'" (McKinley, *Rose* 63). She merely asks her father for a rose "because she wants him to have a small quest for her, though she has no expectation of receiving the rose since they are hard to grow and the weather has been so miserable" (Doughty 99). His inability to care for his daughters in any significant way undermines the traditional gender roles ascribed to father-daughter relationships, and as a result, Beauty's attempt to make her father feel useful, motivates the plot. As the point of view shifts to the father on his journey, this episode adds information about the events of the story and the father's motivations for his action. He is caught in a blizzard and inexplicably drawn to the castle by the Beast to save him. As he prepares to leave the Beast's castle, "He turned towards the door and then paused, looking back at the breakfast table. The remains of his breakfast were still there, as was the rose in the silver vase. He remembered Beauty's sad, half-joking wish, and plucked the rose out of the vase, and put it into the breast of his coat" (McKinley, *Rose* 71). Father grabs the opportunity to care for his daughter but, as he thinks, dooms her instead. He gets caught by the Beast, tells him of his daughter's wish, and then, involuntarily, offers the Beast some of her beautiful wreaths to "replace what he stole" (74). Instead, the Beast, who never focalizes, demands his daughter, and after a short exchange, leaving father no choice but to return to Rose Cottage with his predicament: his own life or that of his daughter. In offering readers the father's

perspective McKinley uses third person narration to undermine traditional fairy tale characterization. This kind of subversion would be impossible in third person limited and first person narration, unless, of course, when the father focalizes instead of (one of) the titular characters. Father's initial financial ruin, his love of Rose Cottage's soberness, his fear of the Beast and his unwillingness to sacrifice his daughter in his stead collide and result in an ineffective, though loving, patriarch.

Metafictional Storytelling and the Oral Tradition

In *Rose Daughter*, McKinley implicitly comments on the process of storytelling, the construction of tales, and the impact of formulaic structures on story outcomes (Doughty 105); this allows her intervene indirectly with metanarratives of gender by drawing attention to the discrepancies between constructed narratives. She manipulates the storytelling tradition to show "how this revision [of her own] is part of the story-telling chain" (105). This way, McKinley enters a metafictional dialogue with the "Beauty and the Beast" tradition: she shows her readers that the tale is part of a long tradition, and that each retelling is the stylized repetitions of various core elements of a fairy tale within the fairy tale genre. These stylized repetitions in turn perform and model metanarratives within each retelling (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 54). By drawing attention to this structure and the constructedness of tales, she urges readers to question formulaic structures of fairy tales and their effect on the conceptualization of gender and gender relations.

One of the instances in which McKinley comments on the formulaic structures of fairy tales and fairy tale archetypes is when Beauty is in the Beast's castle and she wonders about her place in this story. Implicitly, Beauty is wondering about the gender roles which are ascribed to men and women in fairy tales as well as about the teleological structure of these tales:

> This is a story like any nursery tale of magic? Where any maiden will do, any – any – monster, any hero, so long as they meet the right mysterious old woman and discover the right enchanted doors during the right haunted midnights…' […] Well, I cannot know that, can I? I can only do what I can do – what I can guess to try – because I am the only one who is here. *I* am the one who is here. Perhaps it will make a good nursery tale someday. (McKinley, *Rose* 192)

Beauty's concern is that any girl could have replaced her and that she is controlled by pre-destined story structures. However, instead of being manipulated by the narrative, she manipulates the narrative to fit her own desires. She frees herself from the traditional metanarratives of gender carried by traditional fairy tale structure. (Doughty 101). She does not allow herself to be a pawn in the story, but claims her own agency. In this case, Beauty has become aware of her place and her ability to shape her own story, and a metafictional element like this encourages readers to be aware of gender performativity in their own lives.

Another, and even more significant, instance in which McKinley uses storytelling to comment on structure and metanarrative takes place when she reveals the Beast's story. His story and the explanation of his curse are revealed in three different accounts that must be compared and sorted through, not just by the readers but also by Beauty. The first two versions Beauty witnesses in a kind of dream-state: Jeweltongue and her father attend a literary night organized by Mrs. Oldhouse, who tells the tale of how magic disappeared from the village. She is portrayed as an old woman, whose credibility is reduced due to her slowly deteriorating senses. Mrs. Oldhouse is followed by Jack Trueword, who speaks in "an authoritative, carrying voice, which rode over the storm like a practiced actor's over hecklers" (McKinley, *Rose* 219). He is cast as the villain in the room, and his story is told from the point of view of the villain in Mrs. Oldhouse's story. The interpretations of events, though similar, vary greatly through this shift in point of view. Through this mechanism, McKinley,

too, draws attention to the shift in narration and point of view between her own two retellings. The contrast between Jack Trueword and Mrs. Oldhouse functions to emphasize how different tellers shape and alter their stories, and how they change over time as well: "Just as what Jack Trueword tells holds a basic connection to Mrs. Oldhouse's story, so too does McKinley's *Rose Daughter* (and *Beauty* before it) hold the basic connection to 'Beauty and the Beast'" (Doughty 102).

The third version of the story is made explicit to Beauty through her own questioning. After she has expressed her love for the Beast, the Beast does not transform immediately (273); instead, McKinley reveals this third version as told by a witch who is also a participant of the story. As Beauty had determined herself to be the protagonist of her own story rather than a pawn of fate, the witch gives Beauty a choice in its ending. McKinley breaks completely with fairy tale conventions as she gives Beauty a choice in her own destiny: the "final cataclysm" (*Rose* 274) is not a transformation the Beast undergoes, but a choice Beauty has to make. Beauty may turn the Beast into who he was, enjoy his wealth and influence, or take him back to Longchance as he is and live a quiet life (274-5). Beauty answers, "'I think you are not telling me all of this story'" (275). At last, the witch reveals the third version, but only in response to the questions that Beauty asks. It is a compilation of Mrs. Oldhouse's story, Jack Trueword's story, and the witch's own experiences as participant in the actual events. This shift in perspective offers an eyewitness account of the story, whereas Mrs. Oldhouse and Jack Trueword's reveal how tales change under influence of time, retellings, and speculation. The witch validates and negates parts of each story, and then forces Beauty to make the choice. It is only when she learns that "[their] names shall be spoken in fear and in dread, for no single human being, nor even the wisest married pair, can see the best way to dispense justice for people beyond their own ken" (281), Beauty chooses "Longchance, and the little goodness among the people we know" (281). In the Beast's thwarted transformation,

McKinley moves beyond exposure of the workings of fairy tale structure and instead offers new possibilities (Lacey 41).

A Process of Becoming: Mother, Sisters, Names, and Roses

As in *Beauty*, McKinley exposes fairy tale structure and its influence on metanarrative through simultaneous adherence and subversion of naming conventions. McKinley extends this tradition in such a manner that she reshapes the metanarrative of gender: contrasting civilization with nature, linking the suppression of multi-faceted, fluid feminine identities with the oppression of the natural. She does this by contrasting the city and its influence on Beauty and her family with Longchance and its natural freedoms. McKinley defines the city by portraying the family and their relationships negatively while emphasizing the apparent isolation of Beauty. The three sisters, and their father, live as strangers in their house in the city after their mother dies: each has their own environment, their own hobbies, and they barely interact. Their mother's memory, however, pervades in many aspects of their lives and the family as whole, but her physical absence and a father who retreats into his grief after her death interferes with their experience of family as a unit. Instead, they live separate lives, with separate interests, barely ever intersecting with one another.

This is expanded through the sisters' names and their implied destinies. McKinley uses the naming conventions common to fairy tales to advance a theme of becoming in each character. As McKinley explicates the meaning of each the girls' names, she writes: "They were all beautiful; all three took after their mother. But the eldest one was as brave as she had been, and her name was Lionheart. The second one was as clever as she had been, and her name was Jeweltongue. The youngest child was called Beauty" (*Rose* 6-7). Lionheart and Jeweltongue throw themselves into a socialite lifestyle to preserve their mother through emulation. They surround themselves with the "brightness and ardour of [their] mother's

personality" (1), but find this is a superficial and dissatisfying life. In the city, Jeweltongue displays and flaunts her wit and intelligence. She is known as a smart girl of "notorious acuteness" (7), an intellectual with a taste for modern philosophy, and books bound in calf-leather. She is known in the city for her salons, but she has a tendency towards cruelty as she belittles her companions and those who seek her attention. Eventually, she finds someone just like herself and "affiance[s] herself to the Baron of Grandiloquence" (11). Lionheart is reckless in her behavior, has a temper, and is easily distracted. She prefers hunting and horseback riding and tends to be destructive to her natural environment. Eventually, she becomes engaged to the Duke of Dauntless, "who owned six thousand of the finest hunting acres in the entire country, and much else besides" (10-11), and is only slightly less rich than her sister Jeweltongue's Baron. Together, Jeweltongue and Lionheart organize many parties, and they, "over the course of several seasons, became famous as the finest in the city, as fine as their mother's had been. Perhaps not quite so grand as the mayor's, but perhaps more enjoyable; the mayor's daughters were, after all, rather plain" (10).

Beauty, on the other hand, notably lacks further connection with her mother or a pre-destined character trait in comparison to her sisters. She is a beauty and this idealized virtue of femininity separates her from her sisters; not due to a lack of beauty, or her belief that she is not beautiful, as is the case in *Beauty*, but because she is left undefined by other characteristics. Her beauty makes her invisible compared to her sisters and her mother, because it is the only attribute that binds them, which McKinley uses to further her theme of self-realization and overcoming self-denial. Beauty is pushed to the background as the simple of omission characterization bound to Beauty's name leaves an opening Beauty must fill on her own. In the city, submerging themselves in the public eye, both Lionheart and Jeweltongue embody the traits that they are named after, and are in this manner attuned, and limited, in their identities. Beauty, identifying herself in comparison with her sisters and their

names and qualities, is only visibly connected to them through the beauty that they share and thus her name implies her to be invisible and irrelevant, just as the servants in the family's household. She is the safety net for all the casualties left in her sisters' paths:

> Beauty adopted the nerve-shattered horses, the dumbly confused and despairing dogs that Lionheart left in her wake. She found homes for them with quiet, timid, dull people […] She brought cups of tea with her own hands to wounded swains bleeding from cries of 'Coward!' and 'Lackwit!' and offered her own handkerchiefs to maidservants and costumiers found weeping in corners after run-ins with Jeweltongue. (7)

Additionally, she "kept an eye on the household accounts" (7), making sure that everything was accounted for and delivered as ordered. She cares for her family unobtrusively and remedies their behavior silently because she feels that "there [is] too much temper and spitefulness in the house already" (9), and she wishes to "never to add to it" (9).

Beauty is isolated from her sisters and has no access to the opulence and tumult of social society. Early in the novel, readers learn that this partly by choice:

> From the nurses' point of view, the youngest girl was the least trouble of the three. She neither went out seeking mischief, the more perilous the better, the way the eldest did, nor answered impertinently (and with a vocabulary alarmingly beyond her age), the way the second did. Her one consistent misbehaviour, tiresome enough indeed as it was, and which no amount of punishment seemed able to break her of, was that of escaping into the garden the moment the nurse's eye was diverted. (4)

Unlike her sisters, she looks for her mother not in society but in isolation. Her affinity to flowers, and particularly roses, is caused by an unconscious search for her mother's scent, as "[t]he only thing that ever lingered was the sweet smell of her mother's perfume" (2). She

finds out from one of her nurses it is a rose perfume, unique to her mother due to its price. The garden offers her an escape, she revels in its isolation, and she finds a connection to the natural world there. Additionally, Beauty believes the only way she truly distinguishes herself from her sisters is a dream she has had since early childhood (6), which is linked to the memory of her mother's rose perfume. In the dream, she steadily moves through a hallway, approaching an unknown monster at the end. She frequently wakes up distraught, but receives no comfort nor sympathy from her caretakers after her mother's death; thus, she learned to silence herself and her fears from an early age. The determination and self-assurance she shows in her care for the garden is reflected in Beauty's dream-self as she continually tries to reach the beast at the end of the corridor despite her fear.

All three girls have their own shortcomings to overcome and McKinley uses the displacement, from the city to the countryside, for them to do so: Lionheart is destructive and regularly inflicts physical pain, Jeweltongue is cruel and regularly inflicts emotional pain, and Beauty continuously denies herself. Disconnected from their public personas in the city, the estranged family reconnects and in doing so find their fulfillment within community. While still in the city, Jeweltongue and Lionheart are confronted with the emptiness of society as their father's ruin is made public and their respective fiancés end the engagement. By the end of the day the news breaks, the family is thrust back together: "Lionheart and Jeweltongue and Beauty and their father were alone in their great house [in the city]; not a servant remained to them" (12). McKinley subtly indicates the separation within the family by not grouping them together, but rather mentions them distinctly separate through repetition of the conjunction. Beauty suddenly finds herself in the center of the family. She provides the drive that keeps her family going: while her sisters must adapt to situations unfamiliar to them, Beauty remains in a supportive, invisible role as she handles the business her father can no longer take care of. This reinforces her habitual self-denial because she keeps her own

anxieties concealed to alleviate her family's distress. Their move from the city to Rose Cottage releases all of them of the constricting personas they maintained first established by their mother.

Rural Rose Cottage, a small cottage in Longchance left to the three sisters by a mysterious old woman, initiates a process of becoming in all of them. Lionheart and Jeweltongue abandon their habitual anger and find contentment in simplicity and isolation. They find a companionship with their sister Beauty through their shared experiences in Rose Cottage. It is the dream that Beauty believes separates them, however, that truly draws them together. As the sisters share a room in Rose Cottage and the dream returns, Lionheart and Jeweltongue become aware of it as Beauty violently wakes from her nightmare one night. It is then they learn to what extent they had been disconnected in the city: "'All your life?' said Jeweltongue slowly. 'You have had this nightmare all your life and I never knew? I…' […] 'Hush, [said Beauty] We were different people in the city. It doesn't matter now'" (30). The sisters come to appreciate their bond and begin understand themselves as they come to terms with their position within the family, in the community, and as individuals.

Beauty has always used nature as an escape from reality. After arriving at Rose Cottage, the family finds the house and the garden covered in dead-looking, thorned vines. While Lionheart and Jeweltongue would rather remove the overgrowth, Beauty realizes that the plants had once been loved by the previous owner. After doing her duty in planting a practical vegetable and herb garden, Beauty starts reviving the garden. When the plants bloom, Beauty is reminded of their mother by the scent of the roses. Beauty becomes absorbed by them and suggests that "if she could do nothing beside a rose-bush in full bloom, she [would be] entirely happy" (46). Her contentment in the roses drives the dream away. Once, when a curse and a monster were mentioned in passing in town, the dream returns while the roses are still in bloom, and Beauty vehemently demands it to "Let [her] go! It is not

[its] time!" (56). This is a departure from her normally quiet and self-denying attitude. McKinley uses the roses as a guide for Beauty to become more self-aware and escape her habitual self-denial. This culminates when, in their third year at Rose Cottage, the roses do not bloom. Beauty feels the loss of her roses, who she treats as "her friends" (73), more than the loss of the family's wealth. Beauty finally breaks the promise she made to never to add to her misery and loses her temper (58). She does this again when her father leaves for the city and asks him for a rose, which she later calls a "selfish" desire (80). This is in stark contrast with Beaumont's traditional tale, where Beauty requests a rose as not to spite her sisters who had asked for jewels and fine clothes. Lionheart and Jeweltongue, on the other hand, only asked for their father's safe return. It is the request for the rose that truly initiates Beauty's involvement with the Beast and her process of becoming self-aware, or selfish, as she calls it. Through her first act of selfishness and in combination with her silent determination, Beauty claims agency in her own story. She is eager to be held responsible for asking her father for a rose: "'I was selfish in my little, *little* sorrow – and it is I who will take up the fate *I* have earned. Father, I am going to the Beast's palace'" (80). As readers know the motivations of both characters – Beauty's claim on her own responsibility and her father's unwillingness to make her a victim for his mistake – Beauty does not become a victim of the patriarchal system of exchange, as is the case in Beaumont, but instead claims her own agency and initiates her process of becoming (Perry 71-2). McKinley attempts to subvert the pre-existing metanarrative of gender which identifies women as weak, submissive, and obedient, which is, in third wave feminism, bound to humankind's oppression of nature. Her attempts, however, inadvertently purport this combination of metanarratives; the nurturing connection between nature and Beauty which drives the plot, undermines the changes she makes to the metanarratives. In other words, while trying to escape these conservative metanarratives of gender, *Rose Daughter* reinforces them.

Lionheart's Adventure: Challenging the Gender Binary through Cross-Dressing

McKinley's characterization of Lionheart as a cross-dresser seeks to destabilize the gender binary and blur the boundary between femininity and masculinity. This destabilization collapses conventional expectations and stereotypes of the gender binary (Flanagan, "Reframing" 80). However, McKinley's attempts to challenge these gender stereotypes and the metanarrative of idealized femininity is "hindered by the prevalence of conventional gender constructions" (80). In her femininity, Lionheart already exhibited traditional and stereotypical male attributes: she storms in and out of the house, raises her voice, gestures aggressively, swears, and generally leaves a sense of chaos in her trail. This is also noticeable in McKinley's register when describing Lionheart, argues Victoria Flanagan: "McKinley uses military metaphors to describe her, emphasizing Lionheart's warlike aggression and manner: ''I didn't know flowers could look like this!' roared Lionheart, and threw up her arms as if challenging an enemy to look at her, and laughed'" (90). Lionheart's cross-dressing intends to entirely collapse the gender binary Lionheart was already blurring.

Lionheart, however, is not the protagonist, and thus, her gender-bending adventures are left unknown: to Jeweltongue and Beauty, as well as to readers, Lionheart just disappeared one morning and refuses to talk about what she had done when she returns to Rose Cottage (McKinley, *Rose* 34-5). This becomes a regular occurrence, as she leaves on errands, until one day "[a] very handsome young man had burst into the house at early twilight, with the light behind him, and [Beauty and Jeweltongue] had looked up in alarm at the intrusion" (41). After she explains that she was "pretending to be a boy" (42) to maintain a job as a stable-hand in town, Lionheart largely disappears from the narrative, as she only comes home "for a day every week" (42). Nonetheless, Lionheart is not portrayed as betraying her femininity. She defines herself to fit a situation she wants to create: to get a job and do what she loves, training horses, she "willfully embodies many of the attributes that are stereotypically

considered to be masculine" (Flanagan, "Reframing" 90). She does not shun her femininity because she does not want to be feminine; she accepts, even cherishes her femininity, but conceals her gender to enter a patriarchal adult world. Lionheart never really escapes her essential gender (Flanagan, "Reframing" 80) because whenever Lionheart is at home in Rose Cottage she is treated as female by her sisters, who are aware of her cross-dressing secret. Their awareness of Lionheart's cross-dressing limits her performance as male because it becomes relevant only to her employment and it does not otherwise affect her relationships with her family, where most of the story takes place (91). Readers do not get a genuine view of Lionheart's cross-dressing, thus the implications are lost to them. Although Lionheart defies certain feminine stereotypes, her cross-dressing is textually underrepresented to take advantage of its possibilities. McKinley fails to deliver a "genuine male performance" (91) in Lionheart, and that failure is total, in the sense that, while living as a male stable-hand, she still "attracts a romantic bond with a heterosexual male" (91). Although Lionheart does not leave her autonomy in the hands of her new match and her fluid identity remains in her male performance, her tale nonetheless ends in heteronormative matrimony. For McKinley, Lionheart's narrative functions to oppose socially determined and approved patterns of behavior, but her move towards multiple and fluid gender identities is structurally limited by her ultimately heteronormative conclusion.

Reframing Masculinity in Relation to Femininity: *Rose Daughter*'s Beast

Lionheart's failed male performance is a result of McKinley's conceptualization of masculinity and its relational position to femininity. There are several minor male characters in the text, including the father and Robbie, Grace's presumed dead fiancé, but masculinity is almost entirely represented by the Beast (Flanagan, "Reframing" 91). The Beast as the essential representation of masculinity in this fairy tale is constructed from a variety of

influences. As McKinley positions her retelling in dialogue with the pre-texts, she evokes readers' prior knowledge of the fairy tale and of the Beast's character. This includes his characterization in other retellings. As readers have already been introduced to Beauty's new characterization, the Beast's presence is anticipated warily. His presence gains potency from the expectation and legend which surrounds this particular Beast due to McKinley's use of storytelling within the text. What readers already know is that the Beast is both man and animal, enormous, hairy, and terrifying. In retellings, he often personifies "physical power through his animalistic strength and stature" (Flanagan, "Reframing" 91). His physical appearance instills fear in the characters and it remains a disguise that is difficult to pierce. This animalistic representation of masculinity sets up Lionheart's efforts to fail from the beginning as the metanarrative of femininity has remained within its patriarchal frame.

This destabilization is based on the premise that what people are may be different from what people are like (Perry 75). The tale's central theme that physical appearances can be deceptive is used to achieve this. This is a common theme and has been pointed out in the traditional tales as well, but McKinley uses this theme to destabilize the gender binary whereas the traditional tales used it to reinforce the binary. The Beast's struggle with himself, however, takes place before *Rose Daughter* begins, just as was the case in *Beauty.* He is both the self-absorbed, ambitious philosopher that caused him to transform into the Beast, and a star-gazing artist that Beauty comes to know. As Beauty returns home, she contemplates "Why would someone so great and grand, like the beast, want to marry her? […] She had always been […] called Beauty because she had no other, better characteristics to name her as herself" (McKinley, *Rose* 249). It is this moment of self-recognition that forces Beauty to acknowledge her love for the Beast's character despite his appearance (Perry 75): she does not care about her own physical appearance so why would she care about his? While she was at the palace, after all, she had come to know the Beast as an intelligent, kind, and gentle man,

who loves his roses. As Beauty realizes that her skills as a rosarian make her unique in society and especially to the Beast because she revives his roses, which symbolize his heart, she tries to convince her sisters that something might not be what it looks like: "'He is a Beast, just as he is named […] But he is – that is not what he is like. […] He is gentle and kind. He loves roses. […] He walks on the roof every night, looking at the stars. On the roof he has drawn the most beautiful map of the sky…'" (McKinley, *Rose* 258). It is Jeweltongue, however, who realizes this first, saying: "'Well then, if he were an ordinary man, instead of a Beast, and my darling younger sister burst into tears immediately after telling me he had asked her to marry him, I would advise her that it is perfectly obvious that she should say yes'" (258). This realization constitutes Beauty's pivotal moment of self-awareness; her selfhood is more than her name's denominator (Perry 75).

The Beast's masculinity is relational to Beauty's femininity in the sense that both are used to unravel the gender binary. Throughout *Rose Daughter*, McKinley undoes gender, whittling down the tale to its bare minimum: looking past appearances because they may be deceiving. Her treatment of each character as non-conforming to the traditional binary foreshadows *Rose Daughter*'s unconventional ending, where Beauty decides both her own and the Beast's fate and she chooses to keep the Beast as he is, because, she explains to him, "I think I will choose to believe that you would miss being able to see in the dark, and to be careless of the weather, and to walk as silently as sunlight. Because I love my Beast, and I would miss him very much if he went away from me and left me with some handsome stranger" (287). The seemingly small choice to leave the Beast as he is, has much larger consequences. The Beast, as Beast, remains other and the traditional, patriarchal order that would be restored by his transformation into the familiar is suspended (Lacey 62).

Through her characterizations, McKinley challenges the preconceived notions of what it means to be a woman, feminine, a man, masculine. She points towards the discrepancy

between gender and sex and proposes multiple and fluid identities for her characters. Additionally, the Beast's non-transformation destabilizes metanarratives. McKinley reconsiders the power relations that are associated with gender and reassigns power to Beauty through her choice. By recasting the Beast's transformation, McKinley is undoing the gender binary and creating new possibilities for gender formation (Lacey 42). This strategy disrupts the metanarrative of idealized femininity far more than any of the strategies used in *Beauty*. Lionheart, Jeweltongue, Beauty, and the Beast are not portrayed as conventionally masculine or feminine and in this way McKinley invites readers to reevaluate the metanarrative of gender. The Beast's otherness, his fluidity and change, is cherished by Beauty as she genuinely looks past his appearance rather than it being something that needs to be overcome.

CHAPTER 5 – BETWEEN MAGIC AND REALISM: ALEX FLINN'S *BEASTLY* (2007)

Beastly is Alex Flinn's first retelling; although they are not necessarily part of a series, Flinn's retellings are characterized by contemporized settings. This is striking in retellings and unique in the present selection of texts. Flinn's relocation of the tale to a specific time and place emphasizes her efforts to pose old problems in new settings and it also makes the tale immediate to her audience, while still focusing on socially undesired behavior and prejudice. Non-specificity in traditional fairy tales and other retellings limits an author's ability to relate the tale to twenty-first century problems young adults face, such as influence from new media and social media. In *Beastly* Flinn (b. 1966) engages with oppressive metanarratives altered by these media, specifically concerning beauty and worth/ Additionally, Flinn retells the traditional "Beauty and the Beast" tale from Beast's perspective. Although Disney (1991) also transformed "Beauty and the Beast" into a coming-of-age story centered on Beast, the Disney film, due to its omniscient narration, presents viewers with Belle's point of view as well. Flinn, on the other hand, has chosen to narrate *Beastly* in first person limited focalized through Kyle, a sixteen-year-old high-schooler who is transformed into a beast, even though female protagonists are more common in young adult literature (Roxburgh 6).

Beastly covers about two years, excluding the epilogue, and is divided into six parts and an epilogue. It starts with Kyle's encounter with a witch and his transformation into a hairy animal, followed by his search in modern medicine for a cure and his father's choice to lock him away in a Brooklyn brownstone, where he begins to learn the nature of beauty through roses. It is not until halfway through the book, Lindy, *Beastly*'s Beauty, arrives in the brownstone, after her father attempts to steal roses from Kyle, who now calls himself Adrian. Together they follow lessons given by a blind tutor, Will, and are cared for by Kyle's previous housekeeper, Magda. Eventually, after Lindy has left to take care of her drug-

addicted father, Lindy and Kyle are reunited, and Kyle is transformed back into his previous, beautiful self. Although Flinn has made no significant changes to the structure of the traditional tale, her recasting of the tale into modern-day New York City allows to question metanarratives of gender and the conceptualization of gender in fairy tales for young adults in the twenty-first century. The complete adherence of *Beastly* to traditional structure, all the while being a modernized adaptation in a contemporary setting, "assumes that meaning transcends the social and historical context" (Stephens and McCallum 31). This universal approach to fairy tales is ideologically opposed to feminist retellings, although Flinn still attempts to adhere to both.

Attitude to the Traditional: First Person Narration and Modernization of Setting

Flinn's modernization updates the story to make it more immediate for her young adult audience, as they are likely to be familiar with the school and social situations that Flinn sketches. As readers relate to her characters and their social circumstances, Flinn allows the relationships the Beast and Beauty have with themselves and with each other to define their path to adulthood. *Beastly*'s title and first person narration focus the tale completely on Beast's experience. Villeneuve provided a backstory for Beast, told to Beauty by the Good Fairy, but Flinn allows her Beast to speak for himself. This allows her to explore "deeper emotional depths of the traditional characters in a more limited yet explicit manner than traditional versions" (Doughty 106).

Flinn elaborates on the traditional characterization of the Beast by giving him a backstory which may explain his behavior, his choices, his character. Presenting Beast's experiences in first person narration, rather than Beauty's as McKinley does in *Beauty,* for example, affects the conceptualization of gender. *Beastly* considers how metanarratives of gender influence men as it describes Kyle's physical and emotional transformation from a

shallow high schooler to an actual fur-covered beast to a kind and compassionate young man, rather than Beauty's ability to see past his appearance on her journey into adulthood. Whereas McKinley's Beasts hardly ever contemplate their own challenges of being a Beast, Flinn gives her Beast ample space and time develop and readers to sympathize and understand him. It is not until over halfway in the book "Beauty and the Beast's" other main character, Lindy, arrives at Kyle's castle, a Brooklyn brownstone.

Flinn's narratorial choices allow her to shed light on a traditionally obscure element in the tale: Beast's appearance. In *Beastly,* point of view requires Flinn to imagine and describe what the Beast looks like. First person narrators, however, are unreliable and young adults may be inclined to the think the worst of their own appearance (Roxburgh 6). Flinn's Beast describes himself as animalistic: he has fur that cannot be shaved, claws, canine teeth; he howls at the moon like a wolf repeatedly; and on occasion he runs on all fours. Flinn's choice of narrator, the emphasis she places on his physicality before his transformation, and her subsequent explication of his animalistic features almost automatically forces her to pay attention to the metanarrative of beauty which shapes our society.

Beauty, Cruelty, Happiness: Flinn's Approach to the Metanarrative of Beauty

Flinn focusses her tale on the overwhelming emphasis twenty-first century society and media puts on physical beauty. The traditional Beasts presented in Villeneuve's and Beaumont's texts were cursed to be both unintelligent and beast-like. In Disney's 1991 animated film, Beast has, over time, forgotten his education and Beauty has to teach him how to read again. Flinn has taken the idea that the Beast is both beast-like and unintelligent from the traditional literary tales and combined them with Disney's vision and approach to the issue. Kyle is taught by his father, who works at a television news network, and the reinforcing patterns in his life, such as his popularity, that physically beautiful people always do better in life than

those who are not. This is a view that may be enforced by popular new media on twenty-first century young adults: being beautiful is essential for one's happiness. Flinn overtly links the character of the Beast and his redemption story to this metanarrative of beauty as Kendra, the witch who curses him, threatens him the first time: "'Surface beauty: blond hair, blue eyes […] is always easy to recognize. But if someone is braver, stronger, smarter, that's harder to see. […] you'd better hope you never get ugly, Kyle. You are ugly now, on the inside, where it matters most, and if you ever lost your good looks, I bet you wouldn't be smart or strong enough to get them back" (5-6).

Through elaboration and point of view Flinn provides motivation for the Beast's curse. Kyle is due to be chosen prince of his high school's ninth grade dance, he is selfish, vain, mean, egotistical, and he wants to be surrounded by beautiful people only. He does not care about learning as his success relies on his good looks and the status he gains from being the son of a moderately famous television star rather than on his own merits, such as his intelligence, his kindness, or his bravery, which he only discovers once he can no longer rely on his appearance. Like Disney's (1991) Prince, Kyle is intentionally cruel, because he believes he is entitled to be, based on his beauty and status in life: "'Is that what you think?' [Kendra] raised a dark eyebrow. 'That we should all transform ourselves to be as you want us to be, Kyle Kingsbury?' […] 'Yeah,' I said, 'Yeah, that's what I think. That's what I *know*'" (Flinn 5-6). Kyle tries to conform to "what [he] know[s]" (6), the implicit and invisible metanarratives that shape his life. His behavior is prescribed by the metanarratives which have regulated his life. His experiences need to lead "to self-knowledge and a new perception of reality" (Roxburgh 7) by subverting these existing metanarrative of idealized masculinity, and femininity, and beauty.

Flinn abundantly refers to the metanarrative of physical beauty, stressing that inner beauty, or the small beautiful things, are more important than physical beauty through various

characters. Magda, Kyle's housekeeper, after buying a white rose corsage instead of a white orchid, tells Kyle that "A beautiful thing is precious, no matter the price. Those who do not know how to see the precious things in life will never be happy. I wish you to be happy, Mr. Kyle" (Flinn 23-4). This rose corsage is the only thing that grants Kyle some redemption: Kendra, who initially intended the curse to be permanent, offers him two years to undo the curse due to one small act of kindness: he offered the rose corsage his girlfriend did not want to the ordinary girl who checked their tickets for the ball. After this moment, Kyle "walked away sort of smiling" (29), happy with his making someone else happy, but quickly returns to his intentional cruelty as he adds: "Anyway, it was fun, knowing Sloane would eventually stop whining and want the rose, and I'd be able to say I didn't have it" (29). Later, Flinn introduces the rose motif again through Will, Kyle's blind tutor: "[H]e'd been planting rosebushes, dozens of them. Roses in the once empty flowerbeds, roses in pots, rand rose vines climbing on trellises. Red, yellow, pink, and, worst of all, white roses that reminded me of what had ended up being the worst night of my life. […] 'Everyone can use a little beauty…' Will said" (109-10). Through the roses, Kyle connects to other human beings; those who have been othered by society through their reluctance or inability to adhere to its dominant metanarratives. The roses first connect Kyle to Will, who encourages him befriend Magda by giving her roses as Kyle remembered she liked them, and it is through roses that Kyle becomes closer to Lindy, both during their initial meeting and after she arrives at the brownstone.

Flinn, however, undermines her conceptualization of beauty as inner beauty and its significance through the one important alteration she made to the curse. The curse lacks a sense of urgency: Kyle will not die if the curse is not lifted before his time runs out, but rather he will stay in his beastly form for the rest of his life. There is no antagonist to enforce this, as Kendra is actually rooting for her own victim. Implicitly, and probably without intending to

do so, Flinn's alteration of the curse confirms traditional and modern metanarratives of gender founded in beauty: if one is not beautiful, one will not be happy or successful. Before Lindy's sudden return and before his transformation, Adrian has fallen into a depression. His roses have died and he has given up on any beauty and vitality. As Adrian's two years come to an end, he contemplates what he has learned. Adrian's continued belief in physical beauty is in direct contradiction of his emotional and psychological transformation and the lessons Flinn is trying to teach her young adult audience: "May fifth. Ten thirty. Less than two hours left. In these two years, I had lost all my friends, a girl I'd thought loved me and my father. But I'd found true friends in Will and Magda. I'd found a hobby. And I'd found true love, I knew, even if she didn't love me back. And yet my face, my horrible face, stayed exactly the same. It wasn't fair. It wasn't fair" (Flinn 262). If Adrian had truly learned it was his inner self and his inner beauty that counts, not his physical appearance, why would he care if he remained a beast? Flinn undermines her own efforts in subverting the metanarrative of beauty by maintaining the teleological happy ending in which the Beast transforms back into the handsome prince. By maintaining the traditional structural fairy tale ending, Flinn duplicates the metanarratives attached to it.

Lindy's involvement, however, alters the metanarrative slightly. Lindy, ultimately, accomplishes what many girls dream to do while in high school: dating the hottest, most popular, rich guy. She becomes visible in society through her association with Kyle Kingsbury, not through her love for Adrian King. Sloane Hagen, the resident mean girl, says when Lindy and Kyle return to school, "'He *must* have had a nervous breakdown […] Or maybe he took a blow to the head. Why else would he go out with a nothing like her?'" (Flinn 296). Flinn reworks the tale in such a way that its messages are more applicable to twenty-first century ideas, while still disrupting the traditional metanarrative in which beauty equals happiness. Instead of discontinuing the happy ending, Flinn uses the response to this happy

ending to subvert traditional metanarratives. Sloane has yet to learn the importance of inner beauty and thus she serves as an example of contemporary society. Flinn shows young readers that inner beauty is indeed more important than appearances, but she also shows them that society may not believe this aphorism, yet. The world does not care Kyle Kingsbury has been transformed, literally and figuratively, so Lindy and Kyle/Adrian embody the continued struggle against a world that believes in, supports, and promotes traditional metanarratives of beauty.

Framing and Fairy Tale Structure Affecting Metanarratives

Flinn, like McKinley, makes use of metafictional approaches to storytelling, the fairy tale tradition, and how her own novels add to this tradition. Flinn makes use of several techniques to draw attention to this relationship, not in the least in Kyle's narration, as he continuously mentions the fairy tale-like course his life is taking. As Kendra warns him for the curse that is to come, she calls him "beastly" (Flinn 6), to which Kyle responds with unease because "the word was from another time and place. It made me think of fairy tales, and I felt this weird tingling like the hairs on my arms had caught fire from her eyes" (6). The overt reference to structural affinity between his life and fairy tales in general establishes a relationship which draws attention to the difference and similarity between the retelling and its pre-texts.

Flinn draws attention to "how talk and conversation formed the basis of […] tales" (Zipes, *Stick* 76) by re-envisioning a frame that "highlight[s] the exchange of literary fairy tales and dialogue" (76). Flinn preserves the idea of a storyteller within her novel, much like Villeneuve and Beaumont used their frames to reference the importance of dialogue for the salon tales which formed fairy tales. Flinn thus invokes the oral tradition, and invites readers to examine and question the construction of fairy tales.

The story of what happened to the Beast is embedded "within a narratorial frame, wherein the retold story is a story told to an audience" (Stephens and McCallum 35). Each part of *Beastly*'s six parts is preceded by a transcript of a session of the "Unexpected Changes chat group" (Flinn i). This allows Flinn to have Kyle/Adrian tell his story as if he is telling it to the other people in this chatroom, diminishing the impact of diary-style. The first chatroom session prompts Beast to tell his story:

> SilentMaid: Please, talk to us, Beast. You're among friends.
>
> BeastNYC: All right, all right. The first thing you need to know about me is, I'm a beast. […] But there was a time when I would have said about a fat girl, 'She's a beast.' I'm not a beast like that. I'm an animal. Fur, claws, you name it. Everything about me is an animal, except the inside. On the inside, I'm human still. […] It's a long story. […]
>
> Mr. Anderson: We have nothing but time, Beast. Talk to us.
>
> BeastNYC: <sigh> OK. It all started because of a witch.

The frame of the chatrooms establishes a fictional audience alongside the intended audiences. Readers are positioned to read as if Kyle is telling them the story, which increases the emotional connection between reader and character (Doughty 96). Additionally, a framing device such as this one, which draws attention to the tradition of oral storytelling, also provides examples of how a live audience may react to the told story (97). Each session preceding each part indicates what part of the narrative is going to be talked about. Before part three, for example, after belittling SilentMaid's desire to turn human upon which she leaves the chat, BeastNYC writes, "sorry but it's really hard being a beast in nyc" (Flinn 84). Subsequently, in part three, Kyle narrates his move from Manhattan to Brooklyn and his ensuing isolation indoors as New York City is too busy for him to go unnoticed. This continuous indication of the processes and practices of storytelling throughout the novel and

in between parts of the novel position readers' attitudes towards the Beast and his struggles and invites readers to question how structure influences metanarratives (Stephens and McCallum 215).

In the first transcripts of the chatroom sessions, before part one, Flinn establishes a narrative and historical context, as she introduces the online presence of Mr. Anderson, the leader and founder of the chat room "Unexpected Changes" (i). At the start, each member of the group questions Mr. Anderson's capabilities of relating to their ordeal of being non-human to which he responds: "I've studied your type of case. Extensively. I've written a thesis on The Effects of Transformation on True Love, based upon the works of Grimm, LePrince [sic] de Beaumont, Aksakov, Quiller-Couch, and Walt Disney…" (Flinn ii). His name and his occupation remind readers of well-known fairy tale author Hans Christian Andersen. Mr. Anderson is joined by SilentMaid, a mermaid who considers a transformation into a human to be with the love of her life whose life she saved based on Andersen's *Little Mermaid*; Froggie, a former prince who has trouble typing due to his webbed feet and who needs true loves kiss to transform back, based on The Brothers Grimm's *The Frog Prince*; Grizzlyguy, a prince-turned-bear who needs to kill a dwarf to become human again, based on Grimm's *Snow-White and Rose-Red*; and lastly, BeastNYC, who readers will come to know as the Beast in a "Beauty and the Beast" tale. All these various characters invoke the expectation, structures, and outcomes of their respective tales.

The impact of the frame in *Beastly* is significant in the discussion of gendered fairy tale structures in which the plot will always pivot on the damsel in distress and a man coming to her rescue (Stephens and McCallum 220). Although retellings always carry a double potentiality for reproduction and revision (Stephens and McCallum 204), Flinn discards the potential for revision and instead reproduces traditional, patriarchal metanarratives in an otherwise updated retelling of the "Beauty and the Beast" tale. As McKinley drew attention to

the discrepancies between the tales of Jack Trueword, Mrs. Oldhouse and the older witch, Flinn draws attention to the similarities between her Beast's story and that of Froggie and Grizzlyguy. The presence of gender in her open dialogue retelling, however, is implicit and invisible, even if she draws the development of a tradition to the foreground. Instead, Flinn makes this strategy work towards the teleology of fairy tale structure, placing her own retelling amongst many in the fairy tale tradition, and consequently reproducing and supporting the dominant patriarchal metanarratives of the fairy tale tradition. Apart from foreshadowing each of the events in each of the parts of the novel, the frame provides several other stories of unusual transformation playing out simultaneously. SilentMaid, Froggie, Grizzlyguy, and BeastNYC are all transformed back or have the chance to be transformed back by their true loves who can look past their non-human appearance. Whereas McKinley's approach implicitly disrupted traditional metanarratives of gender, Flinn's focus on similarity between her tales, other tales in the tradition, and the fairy tale characters in the chatroom session upholds these metanarratives. This can be seen, for example, when the Beast eventually gives in to telling his story and says, "OK. It all started because of a witch" to which Froggie replies, "thts hw they all strt. [That's how they all start]" (Flinn iv-v).

Reproducing Traditional Metanarratives: Family and Femininity under Patriarchy

Flinn indicates in the author's note at the end of *Beastly* that one of her initial reasons for retelling "Beauty and the Beast" was that she felt the tale left gaps in both Beast's and Beauty's parental relationships (303). She felt like both Beauty and Beast had been abandoned by their parents: Villeneuve's Beast is abandoned by his mother on instruction of the Good Fairy, Beaumont does not mention his family at all, and neither does Disney. In

Beastly, Flinn explores how these experiences formed their characters' understanding of family relationships and gender perceptions.

Both Kyle and Lindy are voluntarily abandoned by their respective fathers and while Lindy's mother died, her sisters left her behind voluntarily, much like Kyle's mother. Kyle's father taught Kyle that he should only ever love himself: "That's another thing my dad always said: 'Don't be a sucker, Kyle, and do things out of friendship or love. Because what you always end up finding out is the only one who really loves you is you.' I was seven or eight when he first said that" (Flinn 3). As Kyle is transformed into a beast, his father initially does everything to help his son get back to normal, but as soon as he realizes that nothing can be done, he moves Kyle into the brownstone in Brooklyn, and abandons him. The only trace that Kyle has of his father is his credit card and memories. It is only after his transformation back into a man that Kyle's dad resumes contact, as Kyle finds his dad waiting for him in the brownstone, watching the news of beast running wild in the NYC subway: "You know anything about this, Kyle?' He gestured toward the television set, not seeming to notice the change in me. 'Why would I?' I shrugged. 'Obviously, I'm not a beast.' He looked up then. 'No, you're not, are you? […] Well, this calls for celebration. Shall I take you out for breakfast?' […] Typical. Now that I was normal, he was all about spending time with me" (284-5)

Lindy's father became drug-addicted after his wife passed away. Lindy is first presented as an independent, intelligent young woman who takes care of herself and her father. Lindy, however, remains dependent on her father, unlike her sisters who have given up on their sister and father. Kyle's first intrusion into her life is as an unobtrusive spectator, via a magic mirror given to him by Kendra. As Kyle watches Lindy, he sees that she loves to read but that she prioritizes her father over her own passion: "With a backward glance at her book, she walked toward the closet and unfolded a skimpy blue blanket. She took it to the man

huddled on an old sofa" (78). Ultimately, it turns out that despite his drug-addiction, Lindy is still obedient to her father as she has accepted the expected "willingness to acknowledge superior male authority" (Korneeva 241). If her father tells her to do something, Lindy will do it, even if it thwarts her own desires.

Lindy's father, after trespassing into the rose garden that Kyle so carefully maintains as the only beautiful thing in his life, offers the Beast drugs, money, and eventually a girl to pay for his life. Although Kyle does not pay attention to his offer of drugs and money, he does show an interest in the last offering: "'You want a girlfriend?' [The trespasser] was choking harder, crying. 'What?' […] 'A girlfriend? Do you want a girl?' 'Don't screw with me. I warn you…' But he could see my interest. He pulled away, and I let him" (Flinn 152). It is not until the mention of the trespasser's daughter that the exchange between patriarch and suitor develops completely: "'I have a daughter.' 'What about her?' I loosened my grip a little […]. 'My daughter. You can have her. Just let me go.' 'I can *what*?' I stared at him. 'You can have her. I'll bring her to you.' He was lying so I'd let him go. What kind of father would give his daughter away? To a beast?" (152). Unlike in any of the pre-texts discussed, her father voluntarily gives her up to Kyle, whom he only knows as an aggressive, fur-covered beast. Flinn, in her representation of the father's motivations and behavior, shifts the little agency Lindy has away from her. Thus, Lindy has become an object of exchange of patriarchal relations, as is the case for Villeneuve's and Beaumont's Beauties (Saxena 199). Simultaneously, Kyle convinces himself that he does Lindy a favor by letting her stay with him, but it is a selfish request in which Lindy has no choice whatsoever. Lindy's self-denial in her care for her father and the absence of healthy female-female relationships establishes and reinforces male dominance and patriarchal metanarratives of gender. Lindy is, like Beaumont's beauty, "independently submissive" (Saxena 198), as she chooses to obey her father and sacrifice herself to the Beast in his stead.

Although there is no sense of self-sacrifice in Lindy as she is given to the Beast, Lindy still displays traditional self-sacrificial tendencies as she has been caring for her drug-addicted father all her life and returns to him, leaving the Beast, as she finds out he has overdosed. She sacrifices her own happiness to save her father again, suggesting Lindy internalizes a traditional, patriarchal construction of femininity. *Beastly*'s metanarratives are represented through and as endemically gendered structures (Stephens and McCallum 204): Flinn has done little to subvert potentially harmful, antithetical or unjust metanarratives of gender. Instead, she reproduces and maintains the metanarratives of the traditional rather than offering alternatives.

CHAPTER 6 – REMAKING A DISNEY CLASSIC:

DISNEY'S *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* (2017)

In July 2014, Emma Watson was appointed UN Women Goodwill Ambassador ("UN Women"), as an advocate for the UN Women's *HeForShe* campaign, which was launched on June 18, 2014 ("Sweden"). *HeForShe* is a solidarity movement wanting to mobilize people of every gender identity as advocates of gender equality and agents of change ("Our Mission"). During a special event for the campaign in September 2014, Watson addressed the United Nations arguing that "[i]t is time that we all perceive gender on a spectrum instead of two sets of opposing ideals. If we stop defining each other by what we are not and start defining ourselves by who we are – we can all be freer and this is what *HeForShe* is about" (Watson, "Gender Equality"). Feminism, for Watson and many others in the 2010s, is about involving men and boys in the struggle for equal right and eliminating harmful and destructive stereotypes of femininity and masculinity simultaneously. Its goal is that everyone benefits from equality: "Men don't have the benefits of equality either. We don't often talk about men being imprisoned by gender stereotypes but I can see that they are and that when they are free, things will change for women as a natural consequence" (Watson).

Five months after Watson gave this speech, in January 2015, she announced on Facebook that she would "be playing Belle in Disney's new live-action *Beauty and the Beast*!" (Watson, "Facebook"). As a UN Women's Goodwill Ambassador and an advocate of their *HeForShe* campaign, Watson's portrayal of Belle becomes particularly interesting. Aiming to be an agent of change herself, Watson worked together with director Bill Condon "to really make sure Belle is a 21st century heroine" (Russian). Together, they redefined Belle as a character and attempt to offer an alternative to the Disney princess archetype and fairy tale characterization and development. As an actress, particularly after her portrayal of Hermione Granger in the major *Harry Potter* franchise, Watson has become a role model for

young girls around the world, and her portrayal of both Hermione and Belle allows her to impact metanarratives of gender. However, Disney is known for their conservatism and limited leniency towards social progressiveness, making *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) a unique Disney film, with several changes which impact traditional metanarratives of gender. Watson's initial involvement in the development of *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) gave her an extraordinary amount of influence on her own character's representation (Woerner). Director Bill Condon commented on Watson's involvement that "having [her] as a partner, as a collaborator, was so crucial […] Because she'll always know more than I do about [gender equality], because she's leading the life of a strong role model for women in the twenty-first century" (Woerner).

The film has been relocated to a more specific time and place, which draws attention to the differences and similarities between the two versions of Disney's tale. In 1991, the film opened with a voice-over narrator saying, "Once upon a time in a faraway land" (00:01:18-21) and only alludes to its location during Belle's opening song; in 2017, the film opens with a voice-over narrator saying, "Once upon a time, in the hidden heart of France" (0:00:44-6). A specific time can be deduced from costumes, specifically LeFou's and Gaston's uniforms; both men are former soldiers, as Gaston mentions coming back from the war (0:08:34-5), and it is suggested by the film makers that these are based on actual uniforms around the time of the Seven Year's War, in 1763 (Russian). A more concrete historical setting familiarizes a retelling to its audience: a historical perception of our own world makes a tale far more immediate than a magical, far-off land (Joosen 13). This technique distances viewers from the material and invites them to critically assess the more specified context (Joosen 11, Hutcheon 6-7). Additionally, the 2017 adaptation draws attention to the fairy tale's tradition. As a nod to one of the traditional fairy tales, Disney has named Belle's village after Villeneuve, thereby acknowledging explicitly that this film is part of the longer tradition of retelling fairy tales.

Belle's Characterization: Female Bonding, Determination, and Agency

The nod towards Villeneuve by naming the village after her is not the only reference to the traditional stories embedded in *Beauty and the Beast* (2017). Disney has returned the rose motif to Belle, which was omitted in the 1991 film, and re-activates some of the traditional components they had initially removed. The return of the rose is significant for the conceptualization of gender and the characterization of Belle. Beauty's request for a rose in Villeneuve and Beaumont motivates the plot: in their tales Beauty's father's crime towards the Beast is not trespassing as in the animated film (1991), but rather stealing a rose from the palace garden. This is also the case in the live-action film (2017). However, Disney has reimagined the rose motif as well. Disney introduces the rose motif as Maurice, Belle's father, leaves for the annual market to sell his intricate music boxes. In the dialogue, the request for a rose is positioned as a regular occurrence:

> Maurice: 'So, what can I bring you from the market?'
>
> Belle: 'A rose. Like the one in the painting.'
>
> Maurice: 'You ask for that every year.'
>
> Belle: 'And every year you bring it.'
>
> Maurice: 'Then I shall bring you another. You have my word.' (0:14:00-17)

Figure 7 Maurice looking at the painting of Belle's mother holding Belle. The rattle is positioned prominently on top of Belle with a bold splash of color (2017, 0:11:44)

Figure 8 A close-up of the painting in figure 1 (2017, 01:19:18)

The request, then, is not special or impossible, but connects Belle with her deceased mother and indicates the relationship Belle wishes she could have with her mother. She is no longer emotionally isolated from other women. The painting Belle refers to is a painting of her as a baby, in her mother's arms, with a rose rattle (figure 7 and 8).

Additionally, Belle asks her father to reveal one more thing about her mother, as he does not speak of her often in his grief over her death. He answers, comparing his daughter to her, saying that "Even back in Paris I knew a girl like you who was so ahead of her time, so different. People mocked her, until the day they found themselves imitating her. […] Your mother was fearless. Fearless" (0:13:04-0:13:46). By introducing the rose motif to connect Belle to her mother, Disney undermines the general absence of positive relationships between women in traditional fairy tales. Not only does this connection to her mother motivate her request for a rose, which in turn motivates the plot, it also characterizes Belle in relation to her mother rather than to her father. Her father's mention of Paris contrasts with Belle's life with her father alone, in a provincial village, with her life with both her parents, in a city. Belle's claim that she "want[s] much more than this provincial life" (0:18:11-2) is thus not only linked to her desire for a traditionally masculine space, a city instead of a village, it is also linked to her desire for a public life in "the great wide somewhere" (0:18:26-7) instead of in a private-sphere house as "[Gaston's] little wife" (0:18:04).

Disney has underscored Belle's determination by giving her complete control over her own destiny and that of her father, subverting traditional metanarratives of women's sacrificial behavior. Belle, for example, claims responsibility when the Beast accuses her father of stealing the rose, saying "I asked for the rose, punish me not him" (0:29:07-9). Maurice is granted the same determination, however, as he says "I won't let you do this. I lost your mother, I won't lose you, too" (0:29:51-3). She agrees with her father, only to take her destiny and his into her own hands when she convinces the Beast to open the door to her father's cell, throw him out, and lock herself in. Here, Disney invokes the recently established relationship between Belle and her mother, as she tells her father, "I'm not afraid," referring to her father's description of her mother as fearless. Disney has given Belle not only her agency and her determination, but the ability to see her own decisions through to the end.

Masculinity Revisited: Villainizing Gaston, Redeeming LeFou, and Voicing Beast

While Belle's characterization has been elaborated upon to motivate her choices and to grant her more agency, Disney elaborates on Gaston's character to eliminate him as the comic relief in the animated film, thus villainizing his actions rather than normalizing them. This re-imagining of Gaston's character destabilizes the traditional, patriarchal metanarrative his character used to embody in the animated film (1991). Breaking the positive connotations between laughing and patriarchal conceptualizations of gender allows Disney to present Gaston as a true villain. Gaston's problematic position is neatly summed up in one of the lyrics of his titular song. LeFou and the town's girls, who swoon at Gaston's feet, sing, respectively: "There's no man in town half as manly / Perfect, a pure paragon" (2017, 00:37:16-21). The descriptions of what make Gaston such a "pure paragon," however, include sneaking up on his game from behind and biting his opponents during wrestling matches. The whole town, however, regards Gaston as the "man among men" (00:40:23-5). This is a

problematic representation of masculinity and society's acceptance of this traditional patriarchal masculinity, but Disney has subverted it by a series of small changes to the sequence: LeFou actually pays several of the villagers to validate and praise Gaston's character, for example when he pays the band to play along with the song (figure 9). In the relationship between Gaston and LeFou, Disney simultaneously establishes and disrupts traditional metanarratives of masculinity.

Figure 9 LeFou paying the band to go along with his song (2017; 0:37:06)

Gaston, conforming to masculinity influenced by traditional metanarratives of gender, favors dominance over empathy, physical strength over compassion, and violence over kindness. For young boys and adolescents, presentations of stereotypical and traditional masculinity like Gaston's may be harmful, and in LeFou, Disney attempts to show that contemporary conceptualizations of gender are redeemable and open to change. During the villagers' attack on the castle, led by Gaston, LeFou experiences Gaston's vicious actions first-hand, as Gaston uses LeFou as a human shield to protect himself form a boxing coat rack, then pushes him underneath the attacking pianoforte and leaves him there claiming that "it's hero time" (1:41:45-1:42:06). After this scene, LeFou changes sides and instead helps the

Beast's servants, redeeming himself and going against his former boss. This contrasts with the Beast's servants doing nothing against the Beast's cruel behavior. When talking to the servants, Beauty asks why they are loyal to him when he is the cause of their curse. Mrs. Potts acknowledges her guilt and explains, "You're quite right there, my dear. You see, when the master lost his mother and his cruel father took that sweet innocent lad and twisted him up to be just like him, we did nothing" (01:14:04-01:14:21). It is suggested that all behavior stems from example and repetition, prescribing and repeating metanarratives, and that disrupting socially approved but harmful patterns of behavior is essential to creating new possibilities for identity formation.

Disney also elaborates on the new masculinity they already presented in the animated film (1991). They illustrate the emotional awakening of the Beast and his fear of changing his behavior due to a fear of being hurt by giving him a more explicit voice in the live-action remake (2017). In the animated film (1991), the Beast does not have a song of his own, and granting the Beast a way of expressing his own sorrows so explicitly, undermines traditional metanarratives of gender which restrict male emotions. In this ballad, the Beast contemplates how far he has come in his personal development:

> I was the one who had it all
>
> I was the master of my fate
>
> I never needed anybody in my life
>
> I learned the truth too late […]
>
> Now I know she'll never leave me
>
> Even as she runs away
>
> She will still torment me,
>
> Calm me, hurt me, move me, come what may. (2017, 1:30:20-31:17).

Not only does the Beast acknowledge and express these emotions, he learns to accept them. The Beast presents as a true foil to Gaston as he reverses each of the traditionally masculine traits: the Beast empathizes with Belle and lets her go to save her father, he has compassion for his servants, and chooses kindness over violence when Gaston attacks him. Although Gaston displays himself as a monster when he shoots the Beast in the back, it is not the Beast who causes his death. Instead, Gaston falls to his death due to his own actions and monstrosity: he is so focused on killing the Beast, he has not noticed that the bridge he is standing on is crumbling underneath his feet.

The Beast's ballad, "For Evermore," subverts traditional metanarratives of gender in another way as well, namely through direct role reversal. As Beauty leaves to save her father, the Beast sings,

> Wasting in my lonely tower
>
> waiting by an open door
>
> I'll fool myself, she'll walk right in
>
> And be with me for evermore. (2017, 01:31:19-32:38).

Disney thus activates the fairy tale script but employs a direct role reversal to disrupt traditional conceptualizations of femininity and masculinity and frustrating viewers' expectations: instead of Belle behaving like a damsel in distress, waiting for her prince to rescue her, it is the Beast who does so. By giving the Beast his own voice through song in a musical, then, Disney allows him to express his emotions and break traditional metanarratives of gender; simultaneously, through the role reversal, casting the Beast as the damsel in distress and Belle as his savior, Disney also disrupt traditional fairy tale structure as they draw attention to its structural gender stereotypes.

Switching Narrators: Male to Female Storyteller and Gendered Storytelling

The live-action remake (2017), although retaining the voice-over narrator, subtly subverts traditional storyteller expectations by recasting the narrator as female. In the prologue of *Beauty and the Beast* (1991; 2017) an invisible third person narrator introduces the prince and the curse that turned him into a Beast. This voice-over can remind viewers of traditional storytellers, invoking fairy tale atmosphere and mood (Kozloff 73). In the fairy tale tradition, storytellers traditionally have been male (Kozloff 73; Smith and Cook 12). In 2008, Stacy L. Smith and Crystal Allene Cook examined gender portrayals in films aimed at children, looking at narrators in addition to characters. One of their key conclusions was that, of the analyzed films released between 1990 and 2005, “more than four out of five (83%) of the films’ narrators are male” (12). A male voice-over narrator thus invokes and legitimizes patriarchal pre-existing metanarratives.

The prologue of *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) is narrated by a male voice. Narration is credited to David Ogden Stiers who also voices Coggsworth, the Beast’s majordomo who is turned into a clock under the curse. He is the master-of-ceremony, both in the film’s narrative as well as in the Beast’s castle, and voices that need to convey authority tend to be male (Kozloff 100). During his prologue, the narrator reveals how the curse came to be and why, saying that the prince was repulsed by the appearance of a beggarwoman who came looking for shelter at the prince’s castle. Although the narrator stresses that the Prince should not judge anyone on their appearance, the narrator’s choice of words in describing the enchantress convey judgement of the woman’s beauty: “the old woman’s *ugliness* melted away to reveal a beautiful enchantress” (1991, 00:02:03-4, emphasis added).

It remains unclear who actually narrates the prologue in the live-action film (2017), as the role is not officially credited to anyone but it is assumed that it is Emma Thompson, who also voices Mrs. Potts. In this way, the narration mirrors its animated predecessor (1991). This

small change, however, has larger consequences for the portrayal of the Prince and the enchantress, and for the conceptualization of gender in this film. Traditionally, women storytellers remained in the private sphere, telling stories to their children and grandchildren (Kozloff 100). A female third-person narrator in a major film allows her to dominate the public sphere instead, encompassing the traditional power and authority ascribed to male storytellers as well as retaining the soothing and truthful capacities traditionally associated with female storytellers (100-1). A female narrator disrupts traditional gender binaries of the public and the private sphere. Additionally, the narrator's lines have been slightly changed. Rather than commenting on the enchantress' "ugliness" (1991, 00:02:04), the "old woman's *outward appearances* melted away to reveal a beautiful enchantress" (2017, 00:02:59-03:59, emphasis added). This is one of the few changes made in the narrator's text during the prologue but the change of perspective has a significant effect: rather than a male judgement viewers are confronted with a female voice describing.

The Power of Typography and Metanarratives of Gender

In a film's title design, typography, the style or appearance of text, can be used to convey mood and atmosphere, or even establish information about a character in the film (Thangaraj 2). According to Johanna Drucker, in *Figuring the Word*, "writing produces a visual image: the shapes, sizes and placement of letters on a page contribute to the message produced, creating statements which cannot always be rendered in spoken language" (146). Although Drucker is referring to typography in literary representations, the same can be said of visual representations of words in film sequences, such as the title. The premise of typography is that different typefaces or fonts carry different connotations and can have different influences on the readability, interpretation, and emotional impact of the words and the concepts they represent. Font, color, size and composition all play a role in how viewers unconsciously

interpret the typography of titles. Similar to gender performativity and dominant metanarratives, typography is a nearly invisible concept which carries out, through repetition, this performativity and perpetuates socially dominant constructions. In relation to itself, typography is performative as it constitutes “a stylized repetition of acts” (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 179) through the use and repetition of stylistic elements that convey certain significances (Drucker 144-6). Perpetuating certain typographical elements, then, means to perpetuate the metanarratives connected to those elements.

Typography is particularly influenced by the metanarratives of gender; certain typefaces are deemed to be more feminine or masculine than others: “square bold typefaces are masculine, while rounded and curlier typefaces are feminine” (Thangaraj 2). These connotations are influenced by our dominant believes of what it means to perform gender according to the binary and its representations depend on several aspects of a typeface. These elements include boldness, serifs, and shape and ornaments (Johnson). On screen, or paper, size, placement, and color also play a role in viewer interpretation. Typography of character names, for example, has the ability to represent their voices in harmony or competition (Thangaraj 2). This immediately establishes a representation of the story. Size, typeface, color, and composition contribute to viewers’ interpretation of a title.

The title of *Beauty and the Beast* (1991; figure 10) presents Beauty in a curly, thin, red font, while Beast is presented in a bold, square, grey font. The title design thus perpetuates traditional metanarratives of gender by presenting Beauty in a traditionally feminine font and Beast in a traditionally masculine font (Thangaraj 2): compared to the bold, powerful typography of Beast, Beauty appears delicate and small. Beauty is presented in lowercase letters, “a very subtle way to push a design in a feminine direction while all caps [like the Beast’s] can make it more masculine” (Johnson). The connotations between bold and thin, lowercase and uppercase, and gendered identities are created by metanarratives of gender

Figure 10 Title design of Disney's 1991 Beauty and the Beast *(00:03:18)*

which ascribe the privileged, authoritative and stronger position to masculinity. Compared to Beast's bold, capitalized presentation, Beauty looks fragile and malleable. Positioning and color, however, ascribe the privileged position to Beauty: it is positioned above Beast and presented in a bright red. The color red demands attention and has a great emotional impact, traditionally associated with love, passion, desire, and anger, among others. These representations of power, however, are immediately undermined by other connotative representations and symbolisms. Beauty's curvy typeface wraps itself around Beast's representation, indicating the relationship that will develop between them. Additionally, Beast is presented in a stony, grey color, indicating his initial inability to change. Disney presentation of the title like this foregrounds Beauty's role in the narrative, whereas the construction of the narrative, privileges Beast and reduces Beauty's role to a supportive character, as discussed in chapter 2.

In Disney's live-action adaptation (2017) the title sequence has been adapted to eliminate the conspicuously gendered representations. The title instead represents Beauty and the Beast in a nearly similar font, size, and color (figure 11). Traditional scripts linked to typographical representations remain inactive. The connection between word and character remains but the connotations between their representations are altered; instead, Beauty and the

Figure 11 Title design of Disney's 2017 Beauty and the Beast *(00:04:34)*

Beast are presented, at first glance, as equal. Gendered typeface, however, remains albeit to a lesser extent in this title design. This is particularly visible design of the capital letter T: while Beauty's T is given a curve and swirl, Beast's T has a strong serif. This can also be seen in the top-curl on the letters B: Beauty is given a bigger curl than Beast. Additionally, Beauty is not presented in its pre-text's distinct red color but the title does differentiate between Beauty and the Beast in the texture of the letter, as happened in 1991 with Beast's stony appearance. In the title sequence of 2017, Beast is given a rougher appearance in texture, while Beauty remains smooth. This positions Beast's character as one that needs polishing, nurturing, and socializing. The small changes Disney has made to the title design impact the audiences' attitude towards the narrative since traditional scripts have not been activated. As such, the title design already creates critical distance for the audience, drawing attention to the film's differences and similarities in its gender conceptualization.

Conclusion

This thesis has investigated how narrative strategies and processes interact with metanarratives of gender in young adult retellings of "Beauty and the Beast" published in the last four decades. The purpose of this investigation was to ascertain how this interaction affected conceptualizations of gender in these retellings and how this was exploited by retelling authors to give significance to the story. The pre-texts and their metanarratives directly influence the ideology of a retelling, and an author's narratological approach to these pre-texts and metanarratives determines whether or not a retelling maintains traditional elements. The Beauties and Beasts in this thesis are often heavily influenced by the omnipresence of gender as a force of social organization. Revised metanarratives exhibited in "Beauty and the Beast" retellings discussed here, whether explicitly feminist or not, problematize gender conceptualizations and question fairy tale conventions. By exploring the intersection of narrative variables such as frames, focalization, naming conventions, agency, and storytelling, these retellings reveal and reflect on gendered patterns, the doing and undoing of gender, and the destabilizing of dominant metanarratives.

Beauty and *Rose Daughter* present modes of femininity and masculinity that frustrate patriarchal metanarratives. McKinley provides young readers with protagonists who are active, self-sufficient, and courageous. In both *Beauty* and *Rose Daughter*, McKinley privileges a state of becoming over a state of being in gender identity formation. As a result, traditional metanarratives of gender are destabilized, if not undone, because the tales emphasize changing rather than static conceptions of oneself, the other, and gender in general. McKinley has constrained herself more in *Beauty* in her adherence to traditional fairy tale structure and resolution. She refuses to alter the structure, pattern, and structurally important motifs of the traditional fairy tale, which leaves both Beauty and the Beast trapped in a story shaped by patriarchal notions of femininity and masculinity. Critical distance in *Beauty* is

instead created through the addition of the honor motif, which encourages readers to question fixed and separate notions of the two genders supported by the traditional metanarrative. The dialogue between author and audience about societal norms which limit both Beauty and Beast is extended into their relationship; together they escape the imposed limits on either of them and become each other's guides into adulthood. Beauty has a strong, temperamental personality, she dominates the tale through her first person narration. Her intelligence, unlike in the later Disney film (1991) is not used as a plot device, but rather as a genuine characteristic appreciated by the Beast. She fights against the patriarchal limitations placed on her character, but fails to relieve herself from them. Although McKinley successfully demonstrates difference in her treatment of female relationships between Beauty and her sisters, this shift is not supported by the course of the novel, which remains fixed in its formulaic promise. Beauty's characterization is still controlled by conventional fairy tale teleology and metanarratives. Additionally, Beauty's ultimate need for proof of her own beauty ties her to patriarchal notions of feminine qualities. Similarly, Beast's expected transformation returns him to the same patriarchal frame, undoing the progress that McKinley made for either character.

On the other hand, in *Rose Daughter*, McKinley repudiates idealized femininity and renegotiates the gender binary. The father is an ineffective patriarch, the sisters' identities are fluid and multiple, and the Beast is presented as a gentle and intelligent man in a horrifying body. All of these elements challenge metanarratives of gender. McKinley explicitly negates metanarratives as she gives Beauty a choice regarding her own destiny; she is no longer controlled by the teleological, inherent outcomes of fairy tale structure. McKinley draws attention to the constructedness of fairy tales by the storytelling characters Mrs. Oldhouse, Jack Trueword, and the old witch: each of their tales focusses on a different character, narrative angle, or plot point, which allows readers to question the Beast's origin and the

nature of storytelling together. Additionally, McKinley implicitly comments on the traditional formulaic structure by changing the outcome and eliminating the Beast's transformation into a man. This technique invites readers to further question conceptualizations of gender. By presenting Lionheart's failed cross-dressing alongside the Beast's essential masculinity, McKinley re-evaluates masculinity as relational to femininity. Beauty's choice to have the Beast remain a Beast affirms that identity, like gender, is performed and is open to change. In Lionheart, Jeweltongue, and Beauty McKinley offers three progressive female characters through whom McKinley addresses the metanarrative of static and singular gender identities, presenting gender identities as multiple and fluid. McKinley maintains the marriage fable, however.

In *Beastly*, Flinn updated fairy tale time and setting to present-day New York City. This relocation emphasizes her efforts to pose old problems in new settings, which increases the risks of treating metanarratives with a universal frame of reference. Underscoring the universality of the human experience almost automatically reiterates traditional metanarratives of gender, because it is believed that experiences are not influenced by cultural or time-specific differences. In her novel, Flinn could have radically altered the metanarratives of gender but she was unable, or unwilling, to do so. First person narration from the Beast's point of view should have enabled Flinn to offer readers the other side of the story: how have traditional metanarratives of gender influenced young adult men while growing up, and what has changed for them? Whereas McKinley hardly ever offers her Beasts interiority, Flinn gives her Beast ample space and time to develop. This encourages readers to sympathize with and understand him. However, Flinn remains within the implicit and dominant frame, pointing towards similarity rather than difference and thus reducing, and ultimately eliminating, critical distance for her readers. Whereas McKinley drew attention to the discrepancies between the tales of Mrs. Oldhouse, Jack Trueword, and the older witch,

Flinn draws attention to the similarities between her Beast's story and that of Froggie and Grizzlyguy. Flinn's chatroom sessions invoke fairy tradition and conventions, but unlike McKinley, Flinn does not undo metanarratives of gender tied to this tradition. Instead, she reinforces the patriarchal metanarrative through repetition of gendered structures in which the plot will always pivot on the damsel in distress and a man coming to her rescue. On the other hand, Flinn still disrupts the metanarratives of beauty which equals physical beauty with happiness by emphasizing that self-awareness, appreciating and understanding others, and healthy relationships lead to happiness, not physical beauty. In this reworking of the metanarrative of beauty, Kyle/Adrian and Lindy embody the continued struggle against the perpetuation of traditional metanarratives of beauty which support and promote unrealistic views of physical beauty in the twenty-first century. Flinn's alteration, albeit small, shows that inner beauty is indeed more important than physical beauty, but that the world is unwilling to follow this aphorism.

Disney's 2017 *Beauty and the Beast*, heavily influenced by Emma Watson's involvement with the *HeForShe* campaign and her portrayal of Belle, not only dismantles stereotypes of femininity but of masculinity as well. Disney's application of something as implicit as typography in the title sequence helps to undermine conspicuously gendered representations. Each change Disney's creative team has made to their 1991 classic, however small, has an impact. This is also seen, for example, in LeFou's redemption story arch, which offers in him a more positive and fluid role model of masculinity. In the animated film (1991), Disney already presented a new form of masculinity in the Beast, but in the live-action remake Disney further undoes traditional masculinity through Gaston and LeFou. Through these two characters, Disney attempts to counteract metanarratives of masculinity exhibited in Gaston's behavior and opinions. In *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) it is not just Belle's characterization that seems influenced by Watson's involvement with the *HeForShe*

campaign; the film attempts to show that both men and women benefit from gender equality and when they are encouraged to be themselves, empowered and authentic.

Metanarratives of gender may help readers or viewers decide who they are and how they relate to others. Approaches to metanarratives of gender in "Beauty and the Beast" tales have varied over time, from its literary conception in the eighteenth century, when women authors tentatively suggested personal freedoms be extended to women, to the current reframing of masculinity. In the retellings discussed in this thesis, the interaction between metanarratives and narrative strategies is most obvious and successful in changing traditional metanarratives through structural disruptions and framing strategies. Framing devices contextualize stories for readers; if a tale's frame and structure remain within the traditional metanarratives, as is the case in *Beastly*, it becomes increasingly difficult for the author to adapt metanarratives through other narrative strategies, even if these strategies would have an effective outcome in isolation. Disney's 2017 *Beauty and the Beast* recasting of the anonymous voiceover narrator as a female voice rather than a male voice, as was the case in the 1991 film, disrupts viewer expectations. Recasting this narratorial frame allows Disney to deviate from traditional scripts, destabilizing traditional metanarratives. It is retellings that do not duplicate the entirety of the plot structure, however, that are most disruptive as they have more possibilities to conceptualize new metanarratives of gender, as can be seen in McKinley's *Rose Daughter*. McKinley ultimately denies the teleological transformation in *Rose Daughter*, thus disrupting traditional metanarratives bound to plot and structure. Disrupting fairy tale structure is the most effective strategy to achieve a more evident and effective change in metanarratives of gender because expectations are not met, which encourages readers to question their own expectations and beliefs. Any of the retellings discussed in this thesis can satisfy, in part, common feminist values in literature, such as equality, accurate representation and avoidance of stereotyping. McKinley's *Rose Daughter*

(1997) and Disney *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), however, seem to be the most effective in suggesting change in metanarratives with a focus on disrupting structure and frame, while simultaneously redefining and undoing gender in less disruptive ways, such as intricate character development and positive female relationships. The project of revealing the social and narrative construction of metanarratives and the deconstruction of patriarchal metanarratives of gender is an ongoing one, however, and even the smallest changes can have a large impact.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

The size and scope expected of this thesis limited the number of retellings that were explored in detail. The retellings were limited to one fairy tale from the European canon which was exported to the United States. The first two literary tales of "Beauty and the Beast" were selected as pre-texts, alongside Disney's 1991, which supplanted the literary fairy tales for contemporary young adult audiences. I chose four retellings, divided over two media: three novels and one film. The textual analyses are not exhaustive and I did not address the differences between cinematic retellings and novelized retellings. Although the results presented here form an informed conclusion, further research is necessary to explore how different media affect storytelling, narrative play, and metanarrative of gender. Additionally, further research is necessary to investigate this development in other traditional tales and their retellings, as well as in other cultures.

Gender studies is much more diverse than represented in this thesis. Retellings which considered gay and lesbian subjectivities and other transgressive gender and sexual identities have been neglected due to the size and scope of this thesis. Chris Anne Wolfe's *Roses and Thorns: Beauty and the Beast Retold* (2000), for example, is a lesbian retelling of "Beauty and the Beast" in which the Beast turns out to be a woman as well. Collapsing stereotypes like

this, as it is not initially apparent that the Beast is a woman, has considerable implications for traditional metanarratives of gender which rely on the heteronormative gender binary.

Additionally, I initially intended to analyze another retelling by American fantasy author Sarah J. Maas. Her retelling of "Beauty and the Beast" in *A Court of Thorns and Roses* (2015), *A Court of Mist and Fury* (2016), and *A Court of Wings and Ruin* (2017) would have been unique in the selection of texts because Maas serialized the tale, which allowed her to make far more significant changes to plot. Additionally, Maas pulls fragments from other fairy tales and incorporates them throughout her retelling. In this way, she invokes expectations of other fairy tales without necessarily reproducing their structure and metanarratives. Unfortunately, I was unable to address these retellings due to a lack of space. I opted to omit Maas rather than any of the other retellings, because her serialized retelling would require more research into that topic. However, it would be interesting to see effect serialization has on metanarratives of gender and the conceptualization of gender in young adult retellings.

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