

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF LOVE: ANALYZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BELLE AND THE BEAST IN BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

**Gabrilla Shabatini W<sup>1</sup>, Rathinam Alias Shanmugasundarie K<sup>2</sup>, & Susmitha M<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>BA Student, School of Liberal Studies, CMR University, Bengaluru, India

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Studies, CMR University, Bengaluru, India

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Studies, CMR University, Bengaluru, India

**Abstract.** *Beauty and the Beast* is a captivating fairy tale that has captivated audiences for generations with its timeless message of love, acceptance, and the transformative power of inner beauty. The story revolves around Beauty, a kind-hearted and compassionate young woman, and the fearsome Beast, cursed by an enchantress due to his selfish and arrogant nature. Trapped in an enchanted castle, the Beast can only break the curse by finding true love before the last petal falls from a magical rose. Despite the Beast's intimidating exterior, Beauty sees beyond his appearance and discovers his gentle and kind-hearted nature. As they spend time together in the castle, their relationship blossoms, leading to a deep connection built on understanding, empathy, and acceptance. Through their journey, both *Beauty and the Beast* learn valuable lessons about the importance of looking beyond outward appearances and recognizing the beauty that lies within. *Beauty and the Beast* has been adapted into various forms of media, including books, movies, and stage productions, with Disney's animated film being one of the most beloved versions. The film beautifully portrays the enchanting castle, memorable characters like Lumière, Cogsworth, and Mrs. Potts, and features unforgettable songs like *Beauty and the Beast*. It continues to enchant audiences of all ages with its captivating story and timeless themes. At its core, *Beauty and the Beast* reminds us of the importance of empathy, compassion, and seeing the goodness in others. It encourages us to embrace our own imperfections and appreciate the beauty that resides within each of us. Whether through the original fairy tale, Disney's animated classic, or other adaptations, *Beauty and the Beast* continues to inspire and enchant audiences with its powerful message of love, acceptance, and the beauty of the human spirit.

The classic fairytale of *Beauty and the Beast* has a rich history, with its origins dating back to 1740 when French novelist Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve first penned the tale. Her rendition, a lengthy narrative, laid the groundwork for what would become one of the most beloved stories in the canon of fairy tales. Over time, the story has undergone multiple adaptations with many local flavours added to it, captivating the hearts of people across cultures and generations. It was Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont who made the tale popular through her abridged version published in 1756, making it more accessible to a wider audience. Despite the many retellings and reimaginings, the story of *Beauty and the Beast* remains a beloved classic in literary history.

The story of *Beauty and the Beast* draws inspiration from various sources such as ancient Greek myths like "Cupid and Psyche" and Italian folktales like "The Pig King." These influences give the story timeless themes of love, redemption, and the transformative power of inner beauty. The story is about Belle, a compassionate and spirited young woman, and the Beast, a cursed prince trapped in a monstrous form. Initially, Belle is repelled by his appearance, but as she discovers his inner kindness and vulnerability, her perception of the Beast evolves. Through shared experiences and moments of connection, Belle comes to see past the Beast's exterior and appreciate the goodness within him.

Central to the narrative is the Beast's gradual transformation, both physically and emotionally. As Belle demonstrates unwavering compassion and belief in his inherent goodness, the Beast learns to let go of his past traumas and embrace the possibility of change. Their evolving relationship is characterized by mutual respect, understanding, and a deepening emotional

connection. The climax of the story comes with the breaking of the curse, symbolized by the enchanting moment when the last petal falls from the enchanted rose. In this transformative scene, the Beast is liberated from his monstrous form, revealing the prince hidden within. It is a testament to the power of love to overcome adversity and bring about profound transformation.

Throughout their journey, Belle and the Beast confront societal expectations and prejudices, highlighting broader themes of acceptance and the importance of looking beyond outward appearances. Belle's unwavering love and acceptance of the Beast serve as a powerful example of the transformative power of empathy and compassion. In conclusion, *Beauty and the Beast* remains a timeless tale that continues to resonate with audiences worldwide. Its enduring popularity is a testament to the universal themes it explores, reminding us of the profound impact of love, acceptance, and the beauty that lies within each of us.

In discussions about Belle and Adam (the Beast) from the 1991 Disney version of *Beauty and the Beast*, the word "transformation" is often mentioned. While the Beast does magically transform near the end of the story, their relationship offers many examples of communication concepts. This fictional relationship serves as a depiction of how these concepts can work and be applied in the real world. Relationship theories can also be applied to understand the dynamics between Belle and the Beast and how their connection evolves throughout the story.

According to the Social Exchange Theory, personal relationships are established by evaluating the benefits obtained versus the costs incurred. People naturally seek rewards and attempt to avoid expenses. This theory implies that people are drawn to each other due to the benefits they can receive, which indicates our self-centered nature. Initially, Belle's interaction with the Beast can be analyzed through the lens of social exchange theory, where individuals weigh the costs and benefits of relationships. Belle initially fears the Beast, and their interactions are marked by apprehension and fear. However, as Belle

spends more time with the Beast, she begins to observe his inner kindness and vulnerability, causing her to reevaluate the costs and benefits of their relationship. In the end, she values the emotional connection and companionship she shares with him, outweighing any initial doubts.

The theory of attachment emphasizes the importance of social and emotional connections in achieving effective emotional regulation, mental health, and psychosocial functioning. Belle and the Beast's relationship is a reflection of this theory, which suggests that individuals seek emotional bonds based on their early caregiving experiences. Belle's nurturing and compassionate nature can be attributed to her close relationship with her father, while the Beast's guardedness and harsh behavior may have stemmed from experiences of rejection and isolation. As the story progresses, Belle's ability to comfort and understand the Beast helps to build a secure attachment bond between them, facilitating both characters' emotional growth and healing.

Interdependence theory is a concept that explores how individuals rely on each other in relationships. It takes into account various factors such as mutual dependence and relationship satisfaction. An example of this theory is evident in the relationship between Belle and the Beast in *"Beauty and the Beast."* Both characters come to depend on each other for emotional support and companionship, despite their initial differences. They realize the value of their connection and actively work to support and nurture it. As they continue to bond, they become more invested in each other's well-being, forming a deep and meaningful relationship that goes beyond physical appearances.

Social identity theory delves into the ways in which individuals classify themselves and others according to their group memberships and social categories. In the classic tale of *"Beauty and the Beast,"* both Belle and the Beast confront social expectations and stereotypes linked to their unique identities. Belle faces scrutiny and condemnation from her peers due to her unconventional passions and outsider status, while the Beast grapples with his own

internalized shame and self-image as a monster. Nevertheless, as they deepen their relationship, Belle and the Beast can transcend these societal obstacles and develop a true bond grounded in mutual empathy and acknowledgement.

This article closely examines the characters of Beauty, her sisters, and the Beast to determine whether they conform to typical patriarchal expectations or exhibit more contemporary, innovative behaviors. De Beaumont's tale is groundbreaking in addressing gendered expectations and marriage relationships in progressive ways. She adopted her story from De Villeneuve's much longer text and created empowered female characters who make their own decisions, providing an alternative to

traditional female fairy tale characters. Beauty's character is particularly noteworthy for her ability to free the Beast from his imprisonment in a beastly body, showcasing female empowerment. While De Beaumont's tale does not aggressively challenge gender roles, it offers new perspectives and pushes the boundaries of masculine and feminine behaviors. Thus, "Beauty and the Beast" is a fascinating tale that delves into relationship dynamics and themes, encouraging us to contemplate the intricacies of love, acceptance, and personal transformation. By viewing Belle and the Beast's evolving relationship through various relationship theories, we can gain a deeper understanding of the profound impact it has on their lives.

**Keywords:** love and acceptance, inner beauty, transformation, empathy, compassion.

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