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'BEAUTY AND THE BEAST':

FROM THE HEARTHSIDE TO THE BIG SCREEN

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INTRODUCTION

A central aim of this thesis is to establish the origin and trace the evolution of what has become familiar to readers today as the fairytale of 'Beauty and the Beast'. This story would seem to originate as far back in time as when pre-literate, archaic man first began to record and rationalise his existence through stories.

The oral tradition existed for centuries, it was the carrier of myths,legends and folklore. An inherent problem faced by any researcher of material from this time is the very oral nature of the stories told.

Tales were relayed by word of mouth from one generation to the next - no written account was kept until a much later stage in civilisation. Owing to the paucity of documentation available, many of the opinions formed about folklore rely on learned conjecture based on what historical information does exist from ethnographers, anthropologists and scholars of comparative religions.

Once the folktale did emerge as a differentiated genre within the oral tradition another puzzling conundrum presented itself notably, why it was that similar structures, themes and motifs pervade throughout folktales the world over. In the first chapter I deal with the two conflicting theories forwarded by various critics to explain the dissemination of folktales - namely 'monogenesis and diffusion' (or the migration theory) as expounded by Vladimir Propp and polygenesis, a theory that relies on concepts similar to the Jungian idea of the collective unconscious to explain the

widespread prevalence of similar folkloric motifs.

There follows in Chapter One, an account of what several scholars perceive the merits and functions of the folk/fairytale to be.

From there, I discuss the next major development in the evolution of folktales ('Beauty and the Beast' no exception) which was its transition from the spoken word into written text. I examine the powerful effect that collectors of folktales, (namely Charles Perrault and the Grimm Brothers), had on the progress of the genre towards its development into the fairytale and subsequently the nursery.

Another aspect of interest to me in the history of the folk/fairytale was the role women played as carriers and tellers of stories. I researched, in the first chapter, the 'old wives tale' and what significance it (with the 'old wife' herself) had on the development of fairytales at large.

As Stith Thompson has pointed out, both the written and oral traditions do not exist in isolation from one another. Resourceful writers from both disciplines borrowed material from each other to make their stories more diverse and interesting. In this respect therefore both written and oral traditions were to an extent mutually collusive in the development of 'Beauty and the Beast'.

It is with this in mind that in the second chapter I attempt to chart a chronology of some of the written tales that tackle themes inherent to the story of 'Beauty and the

Beast'. I limited my research however almost exclusively to the Western tradition as it is essentially the European variations of the story I am concerned with.

The history of animal bridegroom stories, (the wider cycle to which 'Beauty and the Beast' belongs), in writing is long and varied. I discovered that themes from these stories resonate from tales as ancient as Greek mythology, through stories told during the Renaissance and are still in use today.

The aim of the second chapter is to pick out the social agendas being conveyed through the telling of 'Beauty and the Beast' and to arrive at possible meanings for the story, to its changing audience at different historical epochs.

PROLOGUE

The aim of this thesis is in part to trace the origin and examine the content of what has become the nursery fairytale 'Beauty and the Beast'. In order to familiarise the reader with the basic narrative of the story, the following is a synopsis of the most widely used and familiar version - that of Mme. le Prince de Beaumont, written in 1746, as it appears in 'The Classic Fairy Tales', a collection by Iona and Peter Opie.

The story tells of a wealthy merchant and his family of three sons and three daughters - all of whom are beautiful, especially the youngest who, as a child was referred to at 'the little beauty'. This name stuck so as she matured was known simply as 'Beauty'. She was noted for her charm and good nature. The two elder sisters of the family however were of a proud and haughty disposition.

Suddenly and inexplicably, the merchant suffers a drastic fall in fortune. All that remained to him was a small country house, into which he and his family are forced to move. The merchant, his sons and Beauty apply themselves diligently to their new roles - the menfolk to husbandry and tillage and Beauty to attending domestic chores. The elder sisters, on the other hand, idly spend their days lamenting the loss of their fine lives.

In time, word reaches the merchant of the safe passage of a ship containing goods belonging to him. In the hope of regaining his wealth he sets off for the city. Before leaving however, he is pestered by his two elder daughters who demand expensive

gifts on his return. Beauty, when asked, requests only a rose. Unfortunately the merchant's business in the city proved unfruitful and he was forced to return home as poor as he left it.

While in the forest on his journey home, the merchant loses his way in a terrible storm. Night falls and he begins to fear for his life until he sees a castle which he approaches for refuge. Throughout his stay at the castle he does not encounter another human being. He notices a table set with supper for one beside a warm fire and prompted by hunger sits down to eat, hoping all the while that this liberty will be excused later.

In the morning, the storm has abated, as he departs he notices a garden filled with the most beautiful flowers. Reminded of his promise to Beauty he picks a rose. Immediately there appears a frightening, hideous monster who is enraged at the merchant for slighting his hospitality with the theft of a flower, something he values most highly.

Beast warns the merchant that he has fifteen minutes to prepare for his death. After begging for forgiveness and explaining the reason behind his theft of the rose a bargain is struck between Beast and the merchant - his life will be spared on the condition that one of his daughters (of her own free will) agrees to take his place. Beast then sends the merchant off with the gift of a chest filled with gold - thus reinstating his wealth and status.

On hearing the story of her father's misadventure, Beauty insists on assuming his place as the Beast's captive. Beauty survives her first night at the palace - she is not devoured by the Beast as she feared. Beauty is treated with diffidence and respect by Beast and is assured by him that she is mistress of his enchanted domain, where her every desire is accommodated through magical intervention.

Every evening at supper Beauty is visited by Beast who perpetually asks the same question - if she will consent to be his wife. At first Beauty is terrified by Beasts's hideousness, but gradually forms an attachment to him, overlooking his appearance in preference to his noble nature and kind heart. Beast is however, by his own admittance, unintelligent and lacking in wit.

Three months pleasantly pass for Beauty in the Beast's palace over which time she develops a platonic affection for him. However, she becomes increasingly concerned for the welfare of her father who, (she observes through the use of a magic mirror), has fallen into ill-health from pining the loss of her.

She beseeches the Beast to grant her leave to attend to her sick father. He grudgingly assents but warns her that he too will die with grief at her loss if she does not return within a week.

Magically transported to her father's home, who instantly regains his health on seeing her, Beauty finds her sisters have both married and are unhappy with their husbands. The sisters, envious of Beauty's contentment (and rich clothing), conspire to detain

her longer than the promised week. During this period of separation from Beast, Beauty realises the full extent of her feelings for him.

On the tenth night of her stay in the family home, Beauty experiences a foreboding dream in which Beast lies almost dead in his garden with words of reproach at her ingratitude on his lips.

Prompted by this dream, Beauty returns to the palace to find Beast in the place where she dreamed he would be, almost dead. She at once throws herself on him proclaiming her love and promises if he lives she will consent to be his wife.

At this, a magical transformation is enacted. The Beast is released from an enchantment (laid on him by a wicked fairy who stipulated that only the love of a beautiful virtuous virgin could release him from her spell).

Together they return to the castle where they are greeted by Beauty's family who have been assembled by a good fairy - she rewards Beauty's choice of the virtuous Beast with the promise that she will become a queen.

This fairy also meets out a punishment to the two elder sisters because their malicious and envious intervention almost prevented the union of Beauty to the Beast. She transforms them into sentient statues doomed eternally to witness Beauty's happiness She then magically transports the gathering to the prince's domain where the couple are married and live happily ever after.

CHAPTER 1

To comprehensively study the evolution of 'Beauty and Beast' as a story it is necessary to track its development from the earliest possible point. Jack Zipes maintains that the core narrative of this story - the union between a beautiful mortal maiden and a ferocious beast - has its origins in the fertility rituals of primitive tribes people. These rituals apparently entailed the sacrifice of a virgin boy or girl in order to "appease the appetite and win favour of a drought dragon or serpent".[1]

Zipes does not specify any particular tribe but the motif of a maiden marrying a beast recurs in almost every culture's store of mythological and folkloric literature. Among the Lalang Tribe in Java, for example, there exists a myth involving a princess who takes a dog for her husband and the resulting child from this marriage is considered to be the ancestor of the tribe. In another folkloric tale from the Yoruba Tribe a young girl is wed to a turtle and their union introduces sexual intercourse to Earth.[2] These examples are both myths, that is they form part of the repository of beliefs in the society that perpetuates them. Mercia Elaide defines myth as that which "narrates a sacred history; it relates an event that took place in primordial time, the fabled time of "beginnings". In other words myth tells how, through the deeds of supernatural beings, a reality came into existence".[3]

Long before any society recorded its accumulated body of mythological and folkloric knowledge it existed as part of the oral tradition. Often a community elected one person, or a differentiated smaller group of people, the medicine men, shamans,

witch doctors or ovates, to be the custodians of the sacred stories that contained all the communities essential knowledge.

Periodically the shaman would recount a relevant story to the community as a group. This kind of storytelling was a social event in which the audience participated - they were at liberty to stop the teller and question him and their reaction to the unfolding events of the tale influenced the direction it took. The stories would have been performed in as engaging and entertaining a way as possible with the shaman using subtleties of intonation, inflection, facial expression and body language to create a comprehensive atmosphere in which to enthral his audience. The content of a given story would be modified according to the concerns of the group being addressed at the time. This meant that specific myths, folktales and legends were in a constant state of change and over the course of time motifs, characters and events from myth became incorporated into folklore or legend, and vice versa. Some stories were vastly elaborated upon while others became condensed or merged together to form new variants. Nordic languages reflect the close association of myth, folklore and legend with their use of only one word "saga" to describe all three.[4]

Folklore or "folklearning" has been defined by Brunvand as

> ... those materials in culture that circulate traditionally among
> members of any group in different versions, whether in oral form or
> by means of customary example, as well as the process of traditional
> performance and communication.[5]

Folktale is constituted by consistent but varying examples of a central theme or story

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that can be found over space and time; a defining characteristic is the formulaic structure used to impart the text. What differentiates the folktale from legend or myth is the fact that it does not pertain to be true, unlike myth and legend which are told as true stories, and are believed. Legend is a traditional folk narrative that deals with realistic incidents set in the past and often recounts the adventures of a local historical hero. Woven through the narrative are supernatural and bizarre elements.

Myth is differentiated in societies where it is still believed - distinctions are made between "true" and "false" stories. Among the Pawnee, true stories deal with supernatural or sacred occurrences such as the world's origin and some of these texts can only be recited at specific times such as after dark, during Autumn or Winter, and only among the initiated members of the community, thus often excluding women and children. False stories on the other hand have only profane content - they may explain the physiological peculiarities of animals for example and can be told anywhere at any time to any one. Thus a hierarchy of mythical texts has been established.

"True" mythical stories are often recited in conjunction with the performance of some ritual act. The folktale, according to Lewis Spence is "primitive myth dislodged from its primitive place".[6] This occurs when the ritual activity to which the narrative was an accompaniment falls into disuse thus freeing the tribes people to tell the story that earlier had demanded the utmost secrecy. Successive generations of tellers each embellish and modify the content of the once sacred stories until they become autonomous narratives in their own right. In other words, the original myth

undergoes a process of "desecratisation ... [or a] ... rank loss of the sacred".[7]

De Vries has demonstrated that although in folktales divinities do not actually appear, nor are there real names used, their presence can be discerned through the actions of the hero's protectors, enemies and companions. He maintains that the central characters in primitive folktales are deities camouflaged or "fallen" but that "they continue to perform their function".[8] Evidence of this point can be seen in European marchen where gods and mythic figures from earlier faiths have been metamorphosed into ogres, witches and fairies and the partially remembered customs from that earlier religion provide the subject matter for the stories in which they move.

It is remarkable when one begins to study the mythological and folkloric beliefs of different cultures through different times how regularly certain motifs and basic patterns emerge, as already mentioned, the motif of a savage beast's union with a beautiful maiden is one such example. Variants of this type of story can be found at almost every geographical location and its history seems as long and varied as that of human society itself.

The folklorists Kaarle Krohn and Finn Antti Aarne in the early twentieth century assembled and classified folktales from around the world according to historical and geographical information. The volume of research they published called 'Types of the Folktale' provides an authoritative classification scheme for folklorists. Exponents of their methodology are referred to as students of the Finnish school - the aim in this meticulous analysis of folktale types and their variants was to arrive at the primordial

or "Unform" of a particular tale.

Unfortunately, according to Elaide, this Unform has only a hypothetical existence, "in most cases the Unform was only one of the many pre-forms that have come down to us".[9]

Two conflicting themes have been forwarded by folklorists to explain the similarities that exist in folklore the world over.

The first is that of "Monogenesis and Diffusion" which maintains that all folklore and fairytales originated at one specific geographical location. Nineteenth century German folklorists suggested India as the creative source. These stories, they maintain were then transmitted orally by travellers who had come into contact with India through the use of trade routes connecting it to their native land. Eventually, variant forms of the tales, with their original content and underlying structure still intact surfaced in other distant regions.

Inadequacies that arise from this theory are first its failure to explain the overwhelming similarities between folktales from areas where there were no discernible paths of diffusion. The folklorist Vladimir Propp poses the question, "How is one to explain the similarity of the tale about the frog queen in Russia, germany, France, India, in America among Indians and in New Zealand when contact of peoples cannot be proven historically?"[10] Another fault with this theory is that is neglects to explain satisfactorily where the core narrative of the tales actually came

from originally. This is the theory to which exponents of the Finnish school adhere.

Within one year of the publication of 'The Interpretation of Dreams' by Sigmund Freud, Freidrich von der Leyen (a German psychoanalyst) forwarded the thesis that fairytales were accounts of narrated dreams whose source had become obscured through and transmission to successive generations. Geza Roheim maintains that folk tales and myths originated as narrated dreams and became commercial property because of their popularity, he argues therefore that in their interpretation the dictates of dream analysis should be followed.

It seems overly simplistic to reduce the entire content of folklore and mythology to accounts of individual dreams. Apart from the fact that dreams seldom possess the logic and structural integrity of a myth or folktale, from personal experience one finds that the dreams of others when recounted may prove to be an amusing and entertaining diversion but seldom contain the compelling qualities of a folkloric performance.

Although similarities such as the fulfilment of wishes, the destruction of one's enemies and victory over competitors do exist, there are several significant differences between dreams and folklore/fairy tales. In a dream for example wish fulfilment is disguised whereas with fairytale it is openly expressed. A dream often lights upon some problem or source of anxiety the dreamer has been unable to resolve while awake as its subject matter. Seldom in dreams is a resolution to these problems found however. Fairytales, according to Bettelheim, offer ways to solve problems.

They project the relief of all pressures and promise a successful resolution (in their happy endings). Finally one cannot control the events of a dream (although its content is censored at an unconscious level thus influencing what occurs in a given dream) whereas fairytales are the result of "common conscious and unconscious content having been shaped by the conscious mind".[11] The consensus of an entire community plays a part in this shaping of fairytale. Their content reflects what a community perceives to be universal human problems and the accepted, desirable solutions to them.

Whereas the theory of migration focuses on the birth and evolution of specific folktales - that is the when, where and how folktales emerged and developed, the contrasting theory 'polygenesis' pays more attention to the underlying meaning of stories. A psychological explanation is forwarded for the resemblances among tales in areas where there were no connecting trade routes or possible paths of diffusion.

Exponents of this theory maintain that there is no need for contact with external sources because the human psyche is the source for the plots of folktales. Similar themes consistently recur because "the limitations of human life and the similarity of its basic situations necessarily produce tales ... everywhere alike in all important cultural aspects."[12]

Tatar suggests that fairytales translate fundamental, eternal truths of mental life into concrete actions and images. She maintains that they can be interpreted as incarnating childhood hopes and fears or that they symbolically preserve the phobias

and fantasies of an earlier age. Both of these notions, the uniformity of life in general and the continuity of mental life suggest to Tatar that fairytales metaphorically tackle fundamental truths so basic to human existence that they are universal.

Roman Jackobson has observed that literature in general sometimes concerns itself with the fundamentals of human behaviour, this is not a concern particular to folklore and fairy tale. Why then, he asks, is all literature not as inbred and restricted in subject matter and structure as folk narratives are?

He maintains that "... socialized sections of mental culture [for example] ... language or folk tale are subject to much stricter and more uniform laws than fields in which individual creation prevails."[13] In other words, the boundaries of folkloric convention are more tightly reigned than those of an individual writer, for instance, who is at liberty to conform to or rebel against the conventions of the system he is part of. A writer could conceivable break the rules of literary convention or be universally disapproved of by his contemporaries and still in later years his works may become part of the classical cannon.

Emerging variants of folk tales must, on the other hand, win the approval of the community into which they are born before they become part of the repertory of tales. According to Jackobson it is censorship imposed by the folk tale's audience that is largely responsible for the strict restrictions on its content and structure.

The most obvious function of the folk tale is that it bound members of a community

together in a group social context. Noel du Fail describes how in sixteenth century France these 'veillees' or hearthside sessions provided an opportunity for men, women and children to gather together and tell what have become some of today's most familiar tales and fables. Angela Carter has made the connection between the activities of old wives at the 'veillees' and modern day soap operas or episodial radio programmes. She called fairy tales "the literature of the poor"[14] and maintained that oral storytelling bound society together in collective myths.

These community gatherings were not entirely devoted to the telling of stories - work still went on especially spinning and domestic chores. "'Spinning a tale' and 'Weaving a plot'"[15] these metaphors illuminate the relationship between the folk tale and domestic chores, they also carry connotations of being woman's stories as textiles and weaving were among women's principle labours.

People seized this opportunity to talk to each other, even preach their views, a practice frowned upon in other public situations.

Often it was the elder members of a community (archetypical an old woman) who narrated folktales to a younger audience. In this knowledge was passed on from an older voice of experience to the next generation. The lessons that were (and still are) being taught through fairytales were about the socially accepted paths advocated for both boys and girls and generally the "correct" roles "fathers and mothers, the rich and the poor, the rulers and the ruled"[16] assumed in a given society at a given historical epoch. Fairytales also provided depictions of possible dangers that lay

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Plate 1.   'Narrator', photograph by Emile Frechor, c.1900.   Depicts a
storytelling woman and her audience.

ahead of its audience and advocated ways to overcome them. In fairytale too evil is unmasked and virtue rewarded.

Folk and fairytales are not merely wish fulfilment literature, even though it is gratifying to "have everything turn out right at the end"[17] for the hero.

Jack Zipes sees in examples of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century German folklore that was collected and recorded as literary text the projections of Utopian fantasies from what was essentially powerless class of "folk".

Sociologically speaking the "folk" at this time was the vast majority of the German population - mostly illiterate agrarian workers. These people "nurtured their own forms of culture in opposition to that of the ruling classes [but] ... often reflecting the same ideology, even if from a different class perspective."[18] Some examples of folktales collected by the Grimm Brothers such as 'Rapunzel', 'Rumpelstiltskin' or 'Mother Holle', demonstrate that each narrative begins with an apparently hopeless situation and the narrative perspective is that of "the folk in sympathy with the exploited protagonist of the tale."[19]

Johann's Merkel asserts that "the basic structure of most folktales is connected to the social situation of the agrarian lower classes".[20] He equates the passivity of the folk hero with the hopeless situation audiences to the tale are trapped in. These people worked in isolation, that is they were geographically distanced from one another and so always stood as mere individuals in opposition to their "lords and exploiters"[21]

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which effectively meant that they had no power or opportunity to resist increasing exploitation. "Thus they could only conceive a Utopian image of a better life for themselves."[21] The folktale for this peasant class was the only available voice of dissent.

Bruno Bettelheim asserts that fairytales are a particularly valid form of literature for the edification of children because they relate to all aspects of the child's personality without ever making him feel uncomfortable or insecure in his own identity. Bettelheim maintains that fairytales fulfil all the requirements necessary to enrich the life of a child. First, they stimulate the imagination, secondly they help develop the intellect and clarify emotions. Thirdly these stories are attuned to the anxieties and aspirations a child experiences and finally fairytales unpatronizingly recognise the difficulties involved in growing up.[22]

Exactly when folk tales stopped playing an active role in the lives of adults in folk communities and were relegated to the nursery is not known. Although it is generally agreed that they lost importance in most communities before then, in certain parts of Germany folk tales were still composed and narrated among adults until the Franco-Prussian war in 1870. The advent of industrialisation, among other things, cut out the public forum for telling folk tales among adults as progressively there was less call for communities to group together to help with harvesting or domestic chores.

A crucial time in the development of fairy tales was when they were first collected together and recorded in writing. Charles Perrault was the first man in France to

CHARLES PERRAULT.
Né à Paris en 1627. Mort en 1703.

Plate 2.   Portrait of Charles Perrault.

write and collect fairytales. He was a seventeenth century poet, prose writer and storyteller and a leading member of the 'Academie Francaise' where he was among the most prominent campaigners in the literary controversy referred to as the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns. He espoused the view that contemporary writers were superior to their ancient counterparts by virtue of the fact that as civilisation progresses so does literature evolve, therefore modern writings were more mature and rational, thus superior to their ancient counterparts. Perrault and his contemporaries held reason as the chief criterion for literary excellence. The opposing side of this debate argued the complete supremacy of the Greek and Latin cannon over all things local, vernacular and recent.

In his collection and writing of fairytales, Perrault not only proposed these stories as examples of indigenous French popular culture, but defended what were traditionally dismissed as women's tales. Indeed the femaleness of the genre was of central importance to the claim that it was homegrown, aboriginal and patriotically French in its identity. These stories, it was maintained, conveyed ancient and pure wisdom and were especially valid when issued from the mouths of old women, nurses and governesses. The Grammarian Vaugelas demonstrated his confidence in women's speech when he said "in case of doubt about language, it is ordinarily best to consult women".[23]

'Histoires au contes du temps passe' or 'Contes de ma Mere l'Oye' was published in 1697 and Perrault's son Pierce Darmancourt was attributed with having written the stories. On the frontpiece there is an illustration of an old nurse (presumably mother

goose) narrating stories to a circle of children of higher social rank thank herself. Here Perrault has used a double disguise to camouflage his storytelling voice. The alter ego of mother goose, perhaps arising from a memory of Perrault's own childhood came to personify an imagined primordial body of homegrown knowledge which returned readers to their childhood and through childhood, to their roots. The imaginary figure - the crone narrator, is poised between high and low cultures thus giving the storyteller who assumes her voice access to knowledge from both classes.

The body of knowledge the archetypal old wife was culturally presupposed to have was of a consolatory, erotic and often fanciful nature, this connection is deeply intertwined in language itself. In English the phrase 'old wives tale' is an ambiguous one, it means "a piece of nonsense, a tissue of error, an ancient act of deception, of self or others, idle talk".[24] The phrase also carried connotations of natural, holistic learning - the old wives remedy. This is the value of the old wives tale it is posed between wisdom and folly. Fairytale too has a pejorative slur it carries implications of fantasy, escapism, invention and the "unreliable consolations of romance".[25]

The Grimm brothers at the turn of the 19th century began their enormously influential collection of traditional German folklore. The brothers undertook this task in an effort to preserve German folk traditions in print before they became extinct. They made every effort to present the tales in their volume as authentically German as possible. One device they employed in the second edition of "The Nursery and Household Tales" was to remove non-Teutonic sounding titles such as "fee" (Fairy), "prinz" (prince) and "prinzessin" (princess) and replace them with "zauberin",

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Plate 3.   Frontispiece illustration to 'Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passe' by
Charles Perrault, 1699.

(enchantress), "konigssolin" (king's son) and "konigstochter" (king's daughter) [26] respectively. In the second edition they also inserted proverbs to give "a more folksy texture".[26]

The Grimm's approached German folkloric stories at a time when they were no longer of integral importance to the day to day activities of 'the folk'. They would therefore have received from their sources versions of the tales which already had been dramatically revised. Removed from their original environment of the spinning room or harvesting field, crude language, off-colour details and sexual innuendo were probably toned down or eliminated from the stories by the time they reached the Grimm's ears or were reproduced in written form.

The brothers originally intended for their collection of folk tales to be received by their academic colleagues. This is reflected in the first edition of 'The Nursery and Household Tales' which came complete with a lengthy introduction and extensive appendices and notes. Sales of the book were surprisingly brisk (perhaps because its title implied entertaining domestic stories accessible to a wide audience).

By 1815 Wilhelm Grimm was considering a second edition as much for financial incentives as a scholarly desire to salvage priceless elements of German national heritage. Another concern of the Grimm brothers when revising their collection of tales were the critical views of the literary world. Here they did not meet with much success. The general consensus of critical opinion was that in trying to capture the authentic oral folk traditions, in particular retaining the crude language of the folk the

Grimms had made the tales unappealing to children - who were the designated consumers. The Grimms were advised by Albert Ludwig Grimm (no relation but also a collector of fairy tales) to improve the narrative tone of the tales and make them suitable for children as he himself had done with his collection 'Lina's Book of Fairy Tales'.

Alternatively a friend of the brothers Achin von Arrion suggested that they should attach a consumer warning to the collection advising parents to select stories for retelling to their children. Before publication of the second edition the brothers obviously took heed of the advice given to them and decided to dramatically revise the content of their book. They no longer insisted on absolute fidelity to the oral tradition and admitted to deleting "every phrase unsuitable for children" from the text. They even went so far as to forward their versions of the folktales as "manual[s] of manners".[27]

Wilhelm Grimm obviously took Albert Ludwig Grimm's advice and became quite adept at bowdlerizing folk tales as can be seen in his revision of Rapunzel. In the first edition of the 'Nursery and Household Tales' the nature of Rapunzel's liaisons with the handsome young prince are alluded to: "Tell me Godmother why my clothes are so tight and why they won't fit me any longer?" This reference to unseemly sexual behaviour is removed from the tale in the second edition where Rapunzel asks "Tell me, Godmother why is it that you are much harder to pull up than the young Prince?"[28]

Wilhelm Grimm also displayed his business acumen when preparations for the third edition were underway. There was a significant gap (eighteen years to be precise) between publication of the second and third editions of the 'Nursery and Household Tales'. The third and final variant was in a compilation of fifty of the best known tales. In the intervening time between publications the market for children's literature had become much more widespread. As proof of the ascendancy of the literary fairytale over its folkloric counterpart, front pieces to collections of fairytales began at this time to show nursemaids and grandmothers reading to children from books instead of narrating freely.[29]

Sex and violence are the overriding themes in the unexpurgated versions of the tales in the Grimms' collection. More specifically, incest and child abuse are the particular perverse forms of sex and violence these stories concern themselves with because the nuclear family is the most common subject matter, thus family members are most often cast as the protagonists. Through successive editions of the 'Nursery and Household Tales' Wilhelm Grimm systematically removed or diluted references to sexuality and obfuscated depictions of incestuous desire. Indeed every attempt was made to purge lurid sexual detail from the stories. Graphic scenes of cruelty to and abuse of children, on the other hand, remained largely uncensored. Violent episodes seemed only to be edited out if they appeared in too realistic a setting.

A possible reason for the inclusion of such grisly scenes as decapitations and cannibalistic feasts is Vilma Monckeberg's observation that children rarely react with fear to violent episodes in fairytales they more often find them amusing.[30]
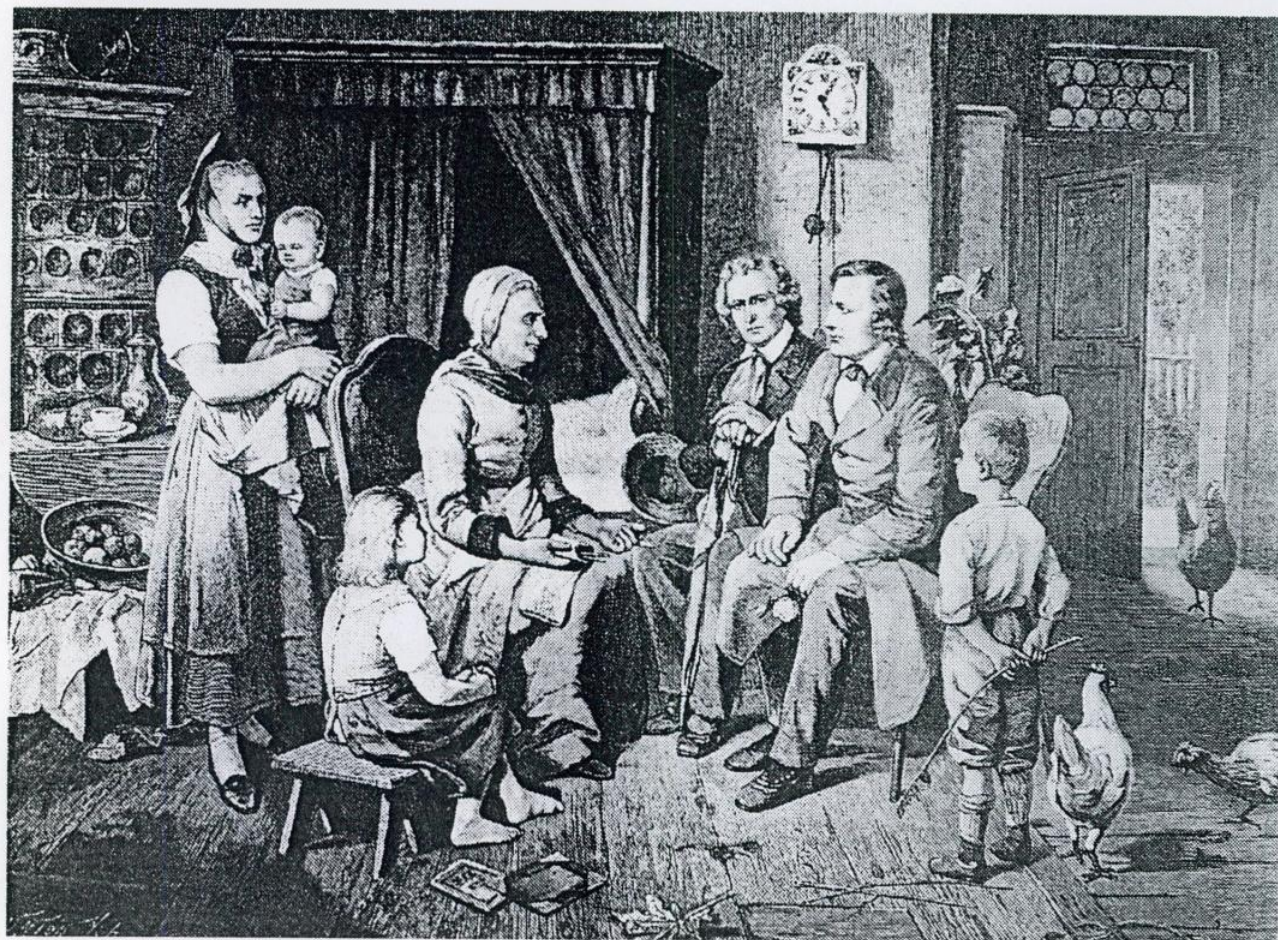
Plate 4.   Illustration by Ludwig Katzenstein of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
listening to one of Dorothea Viehmann's stories, 1892.

The Grimms it is clear certainly interfered not only with the texture of folk tales, they also manipulated their basic structure and content. Three phases of change were visited upon the stories that eventually found their way into the Grimms collection. The first did not actively involve the bothers intervention with the stories. The presence of two scholarly bachelors among a group of listeners, notebooks and pens in hand, undoubtedly affected the way the storyteller orated his tale. The second phase entailed translating and editing the spoken word into intelligible literary language and the third involved reshaping, embellishing, moralising and generally sanitizing a given tale sometimes to the point of irrevocably altering its shape and substance.

It would not be correct to term the Grimm versions literary fairy tales, notwithstanding Wilhelm Grimm's editorial intervention. When viewed in comparison with the stories written by Hans Christian Andersen, E. T. A. Hoggmann, or Oscar Wilde it seems more appropriate to slot the work of the Grimm brothers in the middle ground between folklore and literature. Several titles have been forwarded to label the Grimm's collection of stories. Folklorists refer to the Grimm's work as folk tales - to stress their roots in the oral tradition. Others use the term fairy tales because this is the usual translation of the German word 'marchen'. A third term used is 'buchmarchen' which is a more accurate description because it incorporates the blend of literary and folkloric elements in the tales.

The Grimm brothers threw a veil of obscurity over the folk wisdom that the stories they collected were originally intended to convey but they did not delete it

completely. Even though these stories have become children's literature, they are not necessarily innocent and removed from meaning and psychological depth. The original meaning may have become masked but it is not impossible to uncover. It is because of these tales complexities and rich layering of meaning that they invite interpretation from folklorists and psychoanalysts past and present.

As the collections of both Charles Perrault and the brothers Grimm prove, male writers have dominated the production and dissemination of fairytales. The role of women in the transmission of these stories has been somewhat overlooked as has very real evidence on the female character of the storyteller.

Italo Calvino, in his 1956 collection of Italian folktales notes that many nineteenth century anthologists cited female sources for the stories they adapted. He remembered his own mother, and her grandmother before her, narrating folk stories to him. On inspection, it was discovered that the predominant pattern is that of the "... older woman of a lower status handing on the [folklore] material to younger people [including boys who are sometimes but not always] of higher position and expectations"[31] than herself.

Although it is true that male writers have a monopoly on the dissemination of fairytale literature, they often are passing down women's stories whose indigenous settings are domestic or intimate. Jan Ojvid Schwan has observed that 'Beauty and the Beast' is an example of this type of tale. Prominent historical examples of this phenomenon are Boccaccio and his admirer Chaucer who both wrote the stories of

women. Some of these stories contain folkloric motifs which resurface in later times as fairytale. Straparola, in the 'Piacevoli Notti' (the facetious nights) of 1550 [32] chronicled the entertaining and occasionally indecent stories supposedly told by a circle of women. The Pentameron on (the Tale of Tales) written by Basile, and published posthumously in 1634,[33] recounts the tales told by a group of wizened old crones.

At the turn of the seventeenth century there developed a fashion for fairytales in the ruelles (salons of the aristocracy where society met and entertained). Indeed it was at this time that the term fairytale or 'contes' came into existence. Fairytale as a term is associated with both oral and literary traditions although it is usually used to describe "narratives set in a fictional world where preternatural events and supernatural intervention are taken wholly for granted".[34] A fairytale is characterised thus "a complex story with several episodes which takes place in an imaginary world outside time, space and causality, the hero is of no historic or mythical significance, the story does not pretend to be true."[35]

Mme. Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy, Mme. Marie-Jeanne L'Hertier de Villandon and Mme. Henriette Julie de Muratz were among the women who instigated this trend. They claimed to have first heard the stories they told, from their nurses or servants. This would have been an entirely commonplace occurrence as the children of bourgeois families were seldom reared by their biological mothers. That position fell first to nannies, then governesses. For this reason the governess, wet nurse and nanny played a central role in the transmission of the folkloric texts that were to form

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the basis of the French literary fairytale.

Fairytales occupy a unique position in literature. They mediate between the intelligentsia (with ancient regime storytellers' interpretations of their narratives) and the unlettered folk (in their countless popular oral variants).

The relationship between the original folkloric source and the eventual printed record in book form of the tales that were told by nannies to their upper class charges is not a simple one. We do not receive in the literary texts the unmediated voice of the original tellers. This lesson has already been learned with regard to the Grimm Brothers.

The archetypical figure of the female servant, merged with another imaginary figure - the stereotype of the old crone. Together they form the archetypical storyteller.

The midwife or nurse occupied a unique position in society in that she fell between two social classes but occupied neither fully. In a 1508 edition of 'The Hours of Simon Vostrie' (an early European prayer book) the grim reaper is depicted carrying various women off to their deaths. All the women wear headdresses or specific hairstyles to denote their social status, only one has her hair in disarray - the wet nurse (nourrice). This unkemptness reflects the confusion about her role in society. She is not a maiden (symbolised by long flowing hair) or a matron (whose hair is obscured behind a wimple). Neither is she a nun (as she does not wear a veil). She passes between states as mother to other people's children while perhaps being

unmarried herself. In this physical passage from one decade to the next the wet nurse was free to actin another valuable capacity - as the harbinger of news, information, gossip.

The wet nurse had associations with the upper class thorough her special rapport with children there, ordinarily though she would herself have belonged to the lower social strata. It was precisely the freedom of travel between both worlds and out of the control of the native or marital family that posed a threat to the "apparent social order".[36]

It was partly for this reason that a cultural slur on women's character arose. The word 'gossip' for example originally meant a baptismal sponsor, a godmother (or father). It denoted a friend and applied almost exclusively to a female friend invited by the mother of the child who was being christened to the christening ceremony.

'Gossiping' originally meant a christening feast. By 1590-1660 baptisms became more popular and were lavish sources of group bonding for both Catholics and Protestants alike. The word gossip at around this time came to mean "a person, mostly a woman especially one who delights in idle talk, a newsmonger, a tattler"[?]. In French the word 'commere' underwent a similar downward spiral in meaning from Godmother to gossip monger.[37]

"At the very beginning of the Christian era old women were linked with idle stories, with bawdy talk and with tittle tattle. This brings us to the heart of the fairy tale."[38]

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Prejudice against women and their speech has a long history in the Catholic tradition. It dates back to the 1st Epistle to Timothy attributed to St. Paul. There appears a distinctly mysogonistic statement "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection". Eve was the original sinner and she through her talk tempted Adam to fall into sin too - thus setting the pattern for all women to come.

Charles Perrault appropriated the guise of the archetypical female storyteller with his assumption of the alter ego of mother goose. He was by no means the first man to assess this stereotype. Appuleius in the second century A.D. temporarily assumed the role of the old crone to more convincingly narrate a segment in his Mylesian bawdy tale 'Cupid and Psyche'.

Perrault too called on the classical comic tradition of the Mylesian bawdy as forebear to his fairytales but stipulated that his was "an entirely made up story, an old wives tale such as had been told to children since time immemorial by nurses."[39]

The Brother's Grimm called on the archetypical storyteller in the form Dorothea Wild, (who provided thirty-six tales for the brothers collection) and especially Dorothea Viehmann, one of the Grimm's chief sources. The Grimms liked to stress the folk character of their tales (as I have already mentioned) and so transformed Dorothea into the generic peasant 'Gammer Grethel'. It transpires that Frau Viehmann was not a peasant at all but a market saleswoman, the daughter of an innkeeper and wife of a tailor. The actual woman soon fades into insignificance with the loss of her name. Her image is retained though as 'Gammer Grethel' on the

Plate 5.   Portrait of Dorothea Viehmann on frontispiece of 'The Nursery and Household Tales', 1819.

THE TRUE PORTRAIT
OF
GAMMER GRETHEL

Plate 6. Illustration from 'Gammer Grethel's Fairy Tales', shows Dorothea Viehmann's transition into the generic peasant.

There was an old woman,
  and what do you think?
She lived upon nothing
  but victuals and drink:
Victuals and drink were
  the chief of her diet;
And yet this old woman
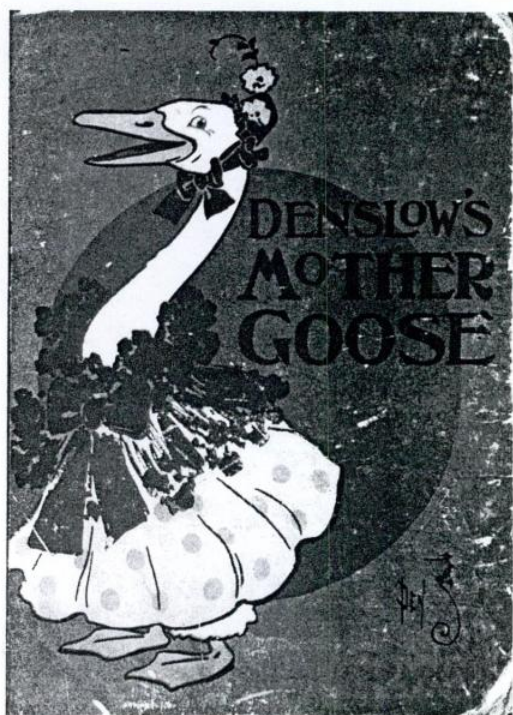 could never be quiet.

Plate 7.   Illustration from W. W. Denslow, 'Mother Goose', London, 1902.

Plate 8.   Illustration from W. W. Denslow, 'Mother Goose', London, 1902.

Plate 9.   'A Winter Nights Tale', by Daniel Maclise, c. 1867.

frontpiece of the 1819 edition of 'The Nursery and Household Tales'.

The image of Gammer Grethel, Mother Goose, Aunty Molesworth, Mother Hubbard and countless other cosily named imaginary narrators preserved the allusion to orality in literary fairytales. Even in Victorian times when fairytales had long been established as text or in signed works such as d'Aulnoy's 'La Chatte Blance' or the Grim Brothers 'The Juniper Tree' this pretence to orality was made. A chatty, intimate, familiar, style of narration complete with gossipy parentheses, rambling descriptions and direct appeals to an imaginary circle around the hearth all coincide to create the illusion of home - the bed time story and the winters tale, in literary fairytales.

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CHAPTER 2

The oral tradition has not existed in isolation in western culture since Homeric times: the earliest extant written forerunner to 'Beauty and the Beast' fairy tales is the Greek mythological story of Cupid (Eros/Amor) and Psyche written by Apuleius in the second century. This story, which appears in 'The Golden Ass', references more ancient stories, such as the many classical Greek tales of transformation (as anthologised in Ovid's 'Metamorphosis').

Stories containing the motif of a beastly bridegroom (either in a literal or metaphorical sense) recur in Chinese and Indian tales, such as 'The Girl who Married a Snake' from the 'Panchantra', written in the 6th century A.D. and attributed to Bidpal, a legendary Brahmin sage. There is also a related story in the 'Arabian Nights', and in the major Renaissance collections of Straparola and Basile. In the 'Piacevoli Notti' (Night 2 Story 1) there is a story about a Prince who is enchanted into a pig and adopts swinish mannerisms. He must be wedded to three women before the enchantment is lifted. In 'Cupid and Psyche' many of the motifs, characters and events of later folkloric tales were established. The character of Cupid, who is perceived as a mysterious, threatening beast for example, and Psyche's two jealous sisters who prompt her (motivated by their own jealousy) to break the only explicit prohibition laid down by her lover appear at this stage Cupid's enchanted palace as the narcissistic fantasy place where Psyche makes the transition from

childhood to adulthood is also established in this text. Finally, this story (like many of its successors) relies on female curiosity as the propelling mechanism of the plot (if Psyche had not disobeyed Cupid what story would there be to tell?). In this there are echoes of Pandora and Eve who also could not curtail their curiosity.

The basic plot of 'Cupid and Psyche' relates the relationship between immortal Cupid and beautiful, mortal Psyche who is said to have rivalled Aphrodite (Cupid's mother), the goddess of love, in seductiveness. Cupid makes love invisibly to Psyche who is forbidden to see him. Psyche's two envious sisters and the prophesy of an oracle, convince her that Cupid is "a fierce, barbaric, snake like monster" who intends to kill her and eat her. Overcome by curiosity, Psyche lights a candle to look on her lover as he sleeps. She is confronted by most handsome Cupid (so her perception of him as a monster was false). That the heroine must learn to look beyond the physical and realise the Beast's monstrousness is an illusion lying in the eyes of the beholder emerges as an important theme; following her failure to trust and obey Cupid sets Psyche off on a series of gruelling ordeals which she must complete to prove her worthiness of him (and in the process discovers herself). Eventually, the two are reunited and married, the daughter Psyche bears is named 'Voluptas' (Pleasure).

In this tale the normal roles of chivalry are reversed, Psyche the central protagonist is cast in the role of questor and Cupid's love is the object of her quest. Readers have become more familiar with the scenario of knights errant and maidens passively awaiting rescue.

Apulieus, a neoplatonist, is thought to have adapted what Lewis Spence maintains was a taboo myth, (stipulating a social convention that women did not look at their husbands for a designated time after marriage), into an allegorical story of "the progress of the rational soul towards intellectual love"[1]. Robert Graves maintains that the inspiration for this came from passages in Plato's 'Phaedo' and 'Republic'.

The theme of transformation, which was introduced by Psyche's perception of Cupid as a beast is of central importance to stories about animal grooms. It is consistently recurrent because the 'divine erotic beast' acts as a paragon of masculine desire, and the plot of the story in which he is involved offers to the society from which it comes, acceptable roles for 'the channelling of erotic energy - both male and female'.

The basic narrative in 'Beauty and the Beast' revolves around the interplay between the three central characters - Beauty, her father and the beast. Beauty is the central protagonist and the story is narrated from her point of view. The story begins at a crucial time in Beauty's development. She has reached puberty and must come to terms with her own burgeoning sexuality. The security of her comfortable domestic environment is placed in jeopardy because the parameters of her relationship with her father have shifted. Beauty is caught between the desire to remain dependent upon her father and the parental home and the need to respond to natural impulses, she is "in the throes of oedipal ambiguities". [2]

Beauty displays her dependence on her father by her consistent refusal of the many suitors who pursue her. The final testament of her devotion to him comes when she

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freely offers to take his place as the beast's prisoner. It is this act that propels Beauty from the story's first phase - her childhood existence under the protection of her father to the enchanted realm of the beasts' palace where her transition to adulthood begins.

It is interesting in this fairy tale (as opposed to its mythical counterpart - 'Cupid and Psyche') that magic only intervenes in the middle of the story. Beauty comes from a normal mundane existence and at the tale's end, having achieved happiness and fulfilment, returns to the 'ideal' domestic arrangement. The beasts' enchanted castle acts as the locus for Beauty's transition and all the magical occurrences throughout the tale. It is here that the action of the story really begins with the father encountering an enraged beast after attempting to steal the precious rose.

The character of beast is a curious mix of the civilised and the savage. He can be seen as the substitute onto which Beauty places her incestuous desires for her father and the projection of her fears and anxieties about sexuality. The central message of this fairy tale, and the lesson Beauty learns, is that love has the power to humanise and transform even the most hideous of beasts.

The role Beauty's father plays in bringing Beauty and the Beast together is of utmost importance according to Freudian interpreters. He smooths the path of emotional transference from himself onto the beast because it is he who is responsible for their initial involvement with each other - Beauty goes to the Beast out of love for her father and once in his magical domain her feelings change from revulsion, to

Plate 10.   Illustration from 'Popular Tales of the Olden Times', c. 1840.

tenderness, to love.

It was in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that fairy tale writers established 'Beauty and the Beast' in the format that is familiar to readers today. It was indeed at this time, as I have established, that the phenomenon of the fairy tale came into being. Several crucial transitions occurred, the most significant being that orally transmitted, group orientated folktales were assumed by members of the aristocracy and used as the basis for literary fairytales. Once the fairytale was recorded as text, its mode of transmission was fundamentally changed. No longer were these stories fluid in so far as the audience could not interact in an active way with them (as the narrator was not present), thus the texts were mediated by the printed word. Reading a fairytale became an individual experience as well as a passive one. As Richard Dorson observed, "a folktale lives in the spoken word and dies on the printed page".[3]

Before the narratives originally contained in folktales could be accepted among the aristocracy, they underwent drastic changes in structure, style and actual content.

The basic plots were elaborated upon and embellished with characters and events that would reflect the concerns of their new target audience. The aristocracy viewed themselves as refined so the vulgar, crass language of the unlettered folk would not have appealed to them.

Heide Gottner-Abendroth has demonstrated that matriarchal world view and motifs in original folk tales were gradually changed to accommodate the more dominant

patriarchal world view that was prevalent in French society at the time of the reign of Louis XIV. He maintains that by the middle ages, oral folk tales that were originally stamped by matriarchal mythology had been transformed in the following ways - Goddess figures became witches, evil fairies or stepmothers; active young princesses or heroines were replaced with active heroes, matriarchal marriage and family ties became patriarchal; and the essence of symbols based on matriarchal rites were made benign.[4]

A pertinent example of this change can be demonstrated through a comparison of oral folk tales about animal bridegrooms that originate in matriarchal societies with their counterparts in the literary fairy tales about 'Beauty and the Beast' at the end of the seventeenth century.

In oral tales the bridegroom is depicted as

> "a wild roving beast ... and this condition represents his homelessness and undomesticity. That is in the eyes of the matriarchal woman, who created a cultivated environment for herself, he has never developed beyond the condition of a predatory animal that roams the woods. He is still covered by fur or feathers, while she wears human cloths which she herself has made. The male condition as human is not yet extant, or it is one of 'death', which is the meaning of the state of 'enchantment' as beast. The transformation into an animal is likened to death and is the male condition, and it is worse than that of the female because it does not mean initiation into a higher form of life. Rather the male has not yet reached the cultural level of the human (= woman). It is up to the woman to bring him to civilisation by making human clothes for him and accepting him into her house as a domesticated inhabitant." [5]

By the end of the seventeenth century however such significant changes had taken

place in the structure of society, (and consequently the configuration of oral and literary fiction) that the original female bringer of civilisation could now "only find her own true salvation by sacrificing herself to a man in his house or castle, symbolical of submission to patriarchal rule". [6]

Marie-Louise Teneze in her essay 'Du Conte Merveilleuse Comme Genre' (on magic folk tales as a genre) asserts that at each new epoch or changing stage of civilization the structure and symbols in tales are endowed with new meanings. They are either transformed or eliminated in accordance to the requirements of the people within a social order. The seventeenth century in French literary tradition was such a time.

Fairytale writers such as Mme. d'Aulnoy, Mme. de Villeneuve and Charles Perrault were familiar with both oral folktales about animal bridegrooms and the classical literature that dealt with the subject, as can be demonstrated by the fact that 'Psyche', a dramatic interpretation of the myth of 'Cupid and Psyche' was commissioned to celebrate peace at Aix la Chapelle in 1668 and was performed for the King three years later. La Fontaine also wrote a novel based on the same subject, 'Les Amours de Psyche et de Cupidon' in 1669 (which contained some thinly disguised social commentary lampooning the 'follies of the age').

Marina Warner claims that aristocratic female writers such as Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy and Henriette-Julie de Muratz occupied a position of influence as hostesses and frequenters of 'ruelles'. She maintains that they adopted fairytale literature and attempted to manipulate it to their own ends. These objectives were to highlight the

social injustices that they as women were forced to endure. Women of Mme. d'Aulnoy's social rank, for instance, were virtually powerless, they had little control over their own destiny with regard to marriage. The prevalent social practice was to marry off daughters at young ages (fourteen or fifteen was not uncommon), frequently to men much older than them who perhaps these girls would never have even seen. The fairy tale was adopted as a means of voicing womens dissent and rebellion and to assert their views. The moral issue that was at stake was about the character and purpose of marriage, and the different needs of women from men, and their different experiences of the institution.

Mme. d'Aulnoy had herself a turbulent personal life, this may have contributed to her choice of subject matter and the strength of her convictions. At the age of either fifteen or sixteen she was married to Baron d'Aulnoy (a man thirty years her senior), this union was arranged by her father. In 1669 (when Marie-Catherine was nineteen) she and her mother the Marquise de Gadagne became involved in a personal scandal, allegedly they conspired with their lovers to have M. d'Aulnoy charged with treason, a crime punishable by execution. The attempt failed, after three years in the Bastille, M. d'Aulnoy convinced the courts of his innocence and had his accusors charged in retaliation. Consequently both Mme. d'Aulnoy and the Marquise de Gadagne's lovers were tortured, they confessed their crime and were executed. The Marquise managed to escape to England and Marie-Catherine evaded arrest apparently by jumping out a convent window and hiding from the police in a nearby chapel. There exists various conflicting accounts of what happened over the following years in her life - she may have spied for the crown abroad. In 1685 it is known she returned to Paris

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and began to receive guests at her home. It was here that she and several friends began to tell fairy tales and dress up to play the parts.

Mme. d'Aulnoy often adopted the negative image of the lower class woman - a gossip or witch - to narrate a story, this shift in vantage point gave her greater freedom to comment on courtly society. She was also the least connected of the female fairy tale writers of the time to the Court of Louis XIV so her references to "despotisms frailties and caprices" [7] were the least veiled.

Mme. d'Aulnoy returned repeatedly to the theme of transformation and variations on the animal bridegroom story. She used these narratives to convey dissatisfaction with the idea of arranged marriages. Encrypted in Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy's variations on the Cupid and Psyche plot "lie the pervading conditions of unhappy forced unions between incompatible mates". [8] Among the stories that most obviously tackle some of the salient themes that are later to appear in 'Beauty and the Beast' are 'Le Mouton' (The Ram) and 'Le Serpentin Vert' (The Green Serpent) recently translated by A. S. Byatt as 'The Great Green Worm'.

The plot of this story runs almost parallel to 'Cupid and Psyche', except that both protagonists are cursed with deformities or ugliness and d'Aulnoy interjects whenever possible with the value of equal conversation between men and women.

D'Aulnoy attributes a new set of meanings to fairytale metamorphosis. In one segment of the story 'Le Serpentin Vert' the heroine, Laidronette, finds herself in a

grove full of beasts. The creatures that inhabit this grove were once human and have been transformed by fairies as punishment for various crimes they committed - the animal form assumed corresponds to the nature of the crime committed. A jealous lover for example who 'overwhelmed (his sweetheart) with unjust accusations' and 'beat her so cruelly as to leave her almost dead' was changed into a wolf to prevent him beating her again. The nature of this metamorphosis manifests his inner nature in an outward shape.

Traditionally the narratives of animal groom fairy tales are not forthcoming as to why handsome young princes come to be enchanted into the semblance of beasts. In some tales, however, the fairy's motivation for transforming the prince is revealed as a punishment for transgressing a basic social code. In the recent Disney version of Beauty and the Beast, the prince is punished with outward beastly appearance because of his refusal to help a poor beggar woman. In another variant it is revealed that a prince was transformed into a snake after having taken advantage of an orphan to satisfy his depraved sexual urges. In both these cases, man is transformed into something less than human and his passage through the story is a pilgrim's journey of redemption until he eventually earns the right (through the reciprocation of genuine love - the highest human emotion) to be acknowledged as human.

In the Grimms' version 'The Lilting Leaping Lark' the prince is in his animal form (a lion) from the start. In other versions a 'wicked fairy', as in Perrault's account, or 'wicked witch', is responsible but her motives are seldom disclosed. According to Bruno Bettelheim it is not necessary for the reader to know who enacted the

transformation or why, because this transformation from human to beast symbolises the repression and tabooing of sex as something animal-like to be feared hidden away and shunned. He maintains that this repression of sex happened so early in a child's development that it cannot be recalled. Furthermore, the witches, or fairies, mentioned (usually being female) to Bettelheim, represent a child's nurse or nanny who would normally have been the first to repress infantile sexual behaviour.

On surveying the array of animals commonly forwarded as potential grooms, one notices that the majority of them are ferocious, threatening, or at the very least repulsive, creatures. Bears, wolves, lions, even crocodiles are some of the many forms a prospective husband takes. Why is it that the grooms are made to seem so intimidating? Ferocious animals carried a greater potential to scare audiences at the time of these stories creation than they do now because the threat that they imposed was more immediate. The particular animals vary from one geographical location to the next and it is usually the beast who would have been a menace to the local community who is chosen as a prospective husband. Alternatively in lighting upon a repulsive creature such as a frog or snake, the sexual symbolism is more apparent. These creatures could be seen to symbolise the revulsion and anxiety a young child feels at the prospect of maturity and sexuality, further because it is usually the groom who is transformed into an animal and the task of disenchanting him falls to his potential bride, the onus is on the female to come to terms with her childish perception of her partner's (and by extension, her own) sexuality as something beastly.

The Absence of Beauty Lamented.

Plate 11.   'The Absence of Beauty Lamented', from 'Beauty and the Beast', by Charles and Mary Lamb, c. 1809.

Plate 12.   Illustration from 'Rose Red', by Richard Doyle, c. 1850.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.
This shows the wonderful trans-
formation. There lies the poor
Beast, nothing but an ugly old
Bear.

Then of a sudden in his place there kneels a handsome young
Prince at Beauty's feet, and, as the story says, they lived happily
ever afterwards.

Plate 13.   Illustration from 'Beauty and the Beast', Nursery version, c. 1880.

In early narrated versions of 'Beauty and the Beast' a precise definition of the beast was not always necessary. Fear was generated by allusion to local beasts of prey, and the narrator let the imagination of the audience fill out the beast's specific form. Another device was to empower the beast with such atrocity that "anyone beholding him was struck down with terror for their lives". [9] When the story evolved into text however, illustrators were forced to tackle the problem of the beasts monstrous countenance. Originally revolting animals sufficed, Mary Lamb for example, depicted the beast as a swine in her illustrations of an English version. The beast soon acquired more anthropomorphic characteristics - standing upright in contemporary costume but disfigured by boar's tusks or wart hogs' snouts reminiscent of Christian iconography of the devil (in fact in some variations the devil functions as an equivalent to the beast in preliminary scenes).

Increasingly the beast manifested itself as a bear and as time passed he became less ferocious and more loveable in keeping with the growing popularity of teddy bears and changing attitude to the natural environment, also by this stage the story was firmly ensconced in the domain of children's literature.

Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot Gallon, known as Mme. de Villeneuve (1695-1755) wrote the first fairy tale, called 'La Belle et la Bete'. It was included in her novel 'Les Contes Marins ou la Jeune Americaine', published in 1740, and was reprinted in 'Le Cabinet des Fees', fifty years later. Although this story is connected to the ancient cycle of animal groom fairy tales it must definitely be viewed as a literary fairy tale of the same order of invention as the stories of Hans Christian Andersen or Oscar

Wilde. It occupies nearly one hundred printed pages and the plot is intricately developed with each individual character fully explored. This goes against the grain of traditional folk stories where characters, as such, exist as abstractions rather than having developed personae, or even names. Characters are referred to by titles that inform the reader what they are or what function they serve in the story, for example 'a wealthy merchant' or a 'poor woodcutter'.

In Mme. de Villeneuve's version, the victim, once a handsome youth is metamorphosed into the semblance of a beast by the curse of an evil fairy whose advances he spurned. This story encrypts the "corrupt and vicious intrigues of court life, of fortune hunting and marriage brokering, pandering and lust" [10] in the eighteenth century. The underlying motives in telling this story, as with many of the first literary fairy tales, were to campaign for marriages of true minds, for the rights of the heart, and for freedom of the true lovers of romance.

The arrangement reached between the Beast and Beauty's father at the beginning of the tale recounts what was once a social reality. Daughter's were dispensed of by fathers, as chattel, in the most fortuitous way possible. It is understandable then why many young girls came to perceive their husbands to be as beasts. Love within marriage, we are lead to believe from d'Aulnoy and Villeneuve's fairytales, was a rare occurrence, and how could it be otherwise when young men and women were not free to make their own choice of partner?

"Revolution is one function of the romance"[11] so Gillian Beer maintains. With the

French Revolution long since past and the social reformist instituted (libertie, egalite and fraternate) accepted as the norm, it is inevitable that the stories told before the Revolution will be interpreted in a fundamentally different way after it. Some contemporary women, who take for granted their freedom to choose a marriage partner have ironically come to advocate the fairytale of 'Beauty and the Beast' as a positive commentary on marriage for material gain.

Feminist critics have many objections to traditional tellings of 'Beauty and the Beast'. Primarily, they claim that it, like many traditional fairytales, is collusive in the growth and maintenance of patriarchy. Fairytales, according to Karen Rowe and Marcia Lieberman, achieve this through the negative role models they advocate for women.

Jeanne Marie Le Prince de Beaumont (1711-80) in 1756 adapted Mme. Villeneuve's story into a concise and openly didactic tale. Although it is often incorrectly assumed that Charles Perrault was the author of this version. It is Mme. de Beaumont's version that has become canonical, establishing the format with which we are familiar today.

Mme. de Beaumont wrote this story along with many other fairy tales, cautionary tales and educational conversations while working as a governess in London, a position that she occupied for fourteen years.

Her writings were published in a periodical entitled 'Magasin des enfants au dialogues

entre une sage governante et plusieurs de ses eleves' in London in 1756 and were aimed explicitly at an audience of her upper class charges, mostly girls under the age of 18. An English translation 'The Young Misses Magazine' was published in 1761. Mme. de Beaumont often invited her pupils to collaborate with her in writing articles for the magazines. Not only are her stories openly didactic, they also contain overtly christian motifs. In 'Beauty and the Beast', for example, the beast is reconstituted to human form when Beauty pours water from a stream over his head, an action comparable to the sacrament of baptism. She also included in her magazines histories of saints' lives - St Zita, for example, who was a cinderella figure from the thirteenth century.

Mme. de Beaumont heralded a new age in the telling of 'Beauty and the Beast' because in her work there is the cross-over between the elite, lettered lady of the salon and the proverbial storyteller of the nursery. She makes this cross-over with her fall in fortune from idle French nobility to working governess in a household owned and controlled by someone else. What also becomes apparent in the shift across the channel and the change in social status is the change in the tale from pre-revolutionary protests in France to acquiescence after the revolution in England, a comparable "shift in the use of such stories from the social arena of the salons to the domestic interior of the home".[12] The fairy tale thus emerged as an instrument of social adaptation advocating women as the civilizers who transform "predatory men into moderate consorts".[13]

Mme. de Beaumont anticipated the anxieties and fears of her pupils when facing their

future in arranged marriages to men who they fully expected to find monstrous, so she wove into her story the notion that the Beast was not as his outward nature would imply - the terror, mystery and threat that enshrouds him exists only in the mind of the beholder - and when one looks beneath physical appearance the heart of a good man can be found.

Whereas Marina Warner could claim that the writings of Mme. d'Aulnoy and Mme. Villeneuve courageously criticized the absolutist patriarchy that dominated society of their time, Jack Zipes maintains that these fairy tales on the whole fall into line with the patriarchal social order and advocate self-abnegating roles for women. Zipes does admit to seeing signs in d'Aulnoy's stories of criticisms of 'arbitrary male behaviour' but maintains that for the most part, she compromised herself under the weight of social pressure. This trend reaches a pinnacle in the work of Mme. de Beaumont who when addressing her audience of pre-pubescent girls always took great care to "insist on [this] note of submissiveness". She wanted to prepare them for "life, that is for marriage ordained according to the normally accepted bourgeois conventions".[14] It is important to remember that both Mme. de Beaumont and Charles Perrault wrote their fairy tales at a time that coincided with the Enlightenment and must be viewed as part of a wider social phenomenon. Standards were being set that would affect the development of modern children's literature. For the first time children were considered as individuals in society that had particular emotional and intellectual needs consistent with their chronological age. This consideration of children was severely limited however, to one social strata - that of the upper class and the vast majority of literature for children still courted favour with an adult audience. So the

overwhelming tendency in fairy tales was to provide models of behaviour for the rearing and schooling of upper class children. These models according to Jack Zipes, "affirm[ed] the dominant Christian absolutist view regarding the regulation of inner and outer nature in favour of male hegemony and rationalized industry."[15]

This equation with fairy tale as edifying became more widespread in the nineteenth century with the Brothers Grimm leading the way in traditional German folklore.

In Victorian England 'Beauty and the Beast' proved to be a popular choice among writers, especially women. Tabart, in his anthology of 'Popular Stories' in 1804, used a translation of Mme. de Beaumont's tale, this may have influenced Mary Lamb who with her brother Charles published a version in 1806, following on its heels was the poetical work by William Godwin entitled 'Beauty and the Beast or a Rough Outside with a Gentle Heart'. Richard Doyle, the famous fairy painter, illustrated his sister Adelaide's translation of the French text which was written around 1842 (but not published until this century). In 1889 a version based on Miss Winnie Wrights amalgamation of the two well known French variants (that of Mme. Villeneuve and Mme. de Beaumont) was published by Andrew Lang with the help of his wife Leonora Alleyne in his 'Blue Book of Fairy Stories' consequently this proved to be the most widely read version in English. Scholars have forwarded the idea that Jane Eyre could be a variation on Apuleius's 'Cupid and Psyche' with the character of Rochester as a blind Cupid. Evidence to support this view comes from the fact that the Brontes are known to have read 'The Blackwood's Magazine' publication of Apuleius's latin story.

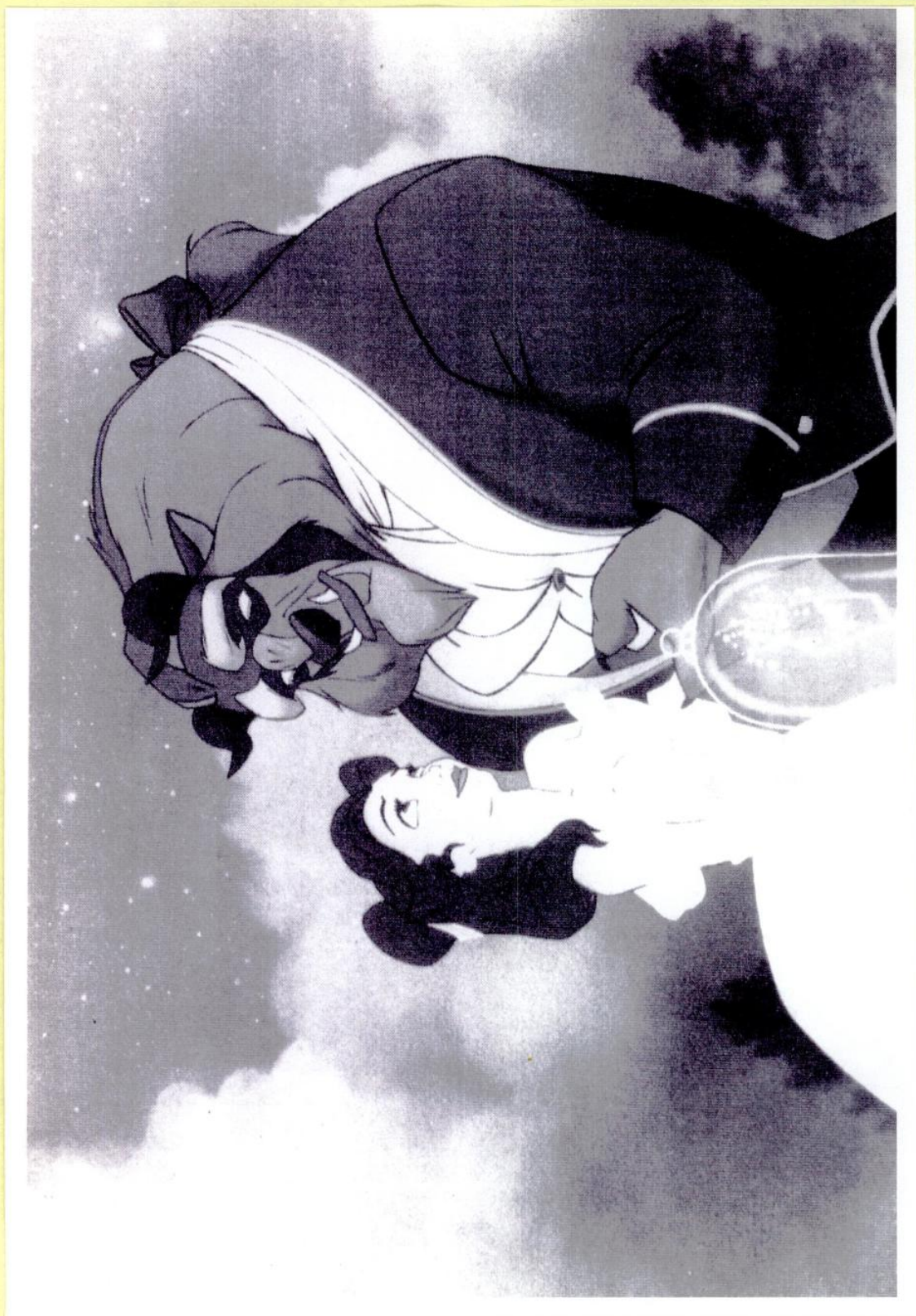Plate 14.   Still from 'La Belle et la Bete', by Jean Cocteau, 1946.

Plate 15.   Still from 'Beauty and the Beast', Disney Corporation, 1991 (animator Glen Keane).

More recently the theme of the monster bridegroom has been taken up in cinema. Female interpreters again are strongly in evidence. Ruth Rose wrote the screenplay for 'King Kong' in 1933 which follows a similar line to Cocteau's 'La Belle et La Bete' in that Beauty is conveyed as a kind of femme fatale figure. The poet Ted Hughs, in 1982, interpreted a version of 'Beauty and the Beast' for children to be shown on television. In it he engaged with the theme from 'Cupid and Psyche' that it was Beauty's (Psyche's) sexual fantasies that conjure the beast to her side. In 1987 a CBS 'made for t.v.' series took up the story of 'Beauty and the Beast' and amalgamated it with themes from Robin Hood. In this series, which was broadcast on British television, Beast remains in his animal state, (an anthropomorphic lion), throughout. Candine Thompson forwarded her version of the beast with Frankenstein connotations in a modern fairy tale 'Edward Scissorhands' made in 1990. Linda Woolverton wrote the screenplay for the 1991 Disney adaptation of 'Beauty and the Beast'.

The surrealist writer and painter Leonora Carrington was attracted to the motifs of transformation inherent in Beauty and the Beast stories and returned to it several times in her short stories written from 1937-41. Angela Carter, like Carrington used this subject matter as a means of exploring the erotic possibilities it contained for women. 'The Bloody Chamber', is a collection of short stories that update and revise the fairytales of Charles Perrault from a feminist perspective. In it Carter includes several stories on shape shifting, 'The Tiger's Bride', 'The Courtship of Mr Lyon', 'The Werewolf' and 'The Company of Wolves'.

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CHAPTER 2

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3.   Dorson, Richard, 'Grolier Academic Encyclopedia', p. 273.

4.   Zipes, Jack, 'Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion', p. 24.

5.   'Matriarchale Mythologie', in Weiblich-Mannlich, ed. Brigitte Wartmann, p. 224.

6.   Zipes, Jack, 'Setting Standards for Civilisation', essay in 'Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion', p. 35.

7.   Warner, Marina, 'From the Beast to the Blonde', p. 284.

8.   Warner, Marina, 'From the Beast to the Blonde', p. 284.

9.   Warner, Marina, 'From the Beast to the Blonde', p. 7.

10.   Warner, Marina, 'From the Beast to the Blonde', p. 289.

11.   Ibid., p. 278.

12.   Ibid., p. 294.

13.   Ibid., p. 297.

14.   Zipes, Jack, 'Setting Standards for Civilisation', from 'Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion', p. 41.

15.   Ibid., p. 33.

CONCLUSION

The meaning and importance of 'Beauty and the Beast' or stories of its kind by whatever name they went, has changed in accordance with the dictates of its audience over successive generations through which it has been told. The original oral predecessors to this story gave an account of, or attempted to explain a given societies ritual on religious beliefs and customs.

Later in history, countless folktales were narrated to audiences comprising of both adults and children. These unexpurgated ever changing oral versions of animal and bridegroom tales (and folktales in general) were shared in group social meeting places such as the hearthside, harvesting field or spinning room. Their aim was to teach, guide, warn and entertain.

Eventually, folkloric variations of 'Beauty and the Beast' stories found their way onto the printed page. With this transition from folk to fairytale came fundamental changes in perspective, function, style and content as well as a gradual shift in target audience. Over the course of time 'Beauty and the Beast' as a story has emerged as a nursery fairytale aimed most commonly at the edification and amusement of a child audience.

A central aim of mine in this body of research was to establish a thread of historicity through the myriad incarnations of 'Beauty and the Beast', that is, I hope to have demonstrated that at each changing stage in its development the core narrative held

in 'Beauty and the Beast' and stories of its lineage provided for the culture that perpetuated them relevant social commentary. Further that encrypted beneath their prima facie storylines lay themes of central importance to the audience, be they explanations of religious activity, a struggle against dominant social practices or a blueprint for approved social conduct.

Essentially, what I hope to have established through this thesis is that 'Beauty and the Beast' was in the past (as modern retellings are now) a testament to the mores, values and conventions of the society from which it was generated. In other words 'Beauty and the Beast' has always remained a product of its time.

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