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Investigating the World of Disney's Heroines:  
*A Close Analysis of Cinderella and Beauty and the Beast*

An honors thesis presented to the  
Department of Communication,  
University at Albany, State University Of New York  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for graduation with Honors in Communication  
and  
graduation from the Honors College.

Victoria Margaret Gurrieri

Research Advisor: William Husson, Ph.D

March, 2014

### Abstract

This thesis will provide an in- depth analysis of the films *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast*, drawing principally (though not exclusively) on techniques of film analysis propounded by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's *Film Art*. Bordwell and Thompson provide explanations of the devices that should be used to critique a film. These include repetitions and patterns, visual and aural techniques, and narrative structures, which all serve to enhance the overall film. After examining each film individually, the two films are compared and contrasted. This highlights the progress made by Walt Disney Studios and their filmmakers in the years between the making of *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast*. In those forty-one years, the depth granted to a heroine increased and has continued to develop in their subsequent films.

### Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my thesis advisor Professor William Husson for his continued support and hard work throughout this long process. He has always been available to read my drafts and revisions, never missing a chance to edit until it was deemed my best work. His knowledge of film has been inspiring and beneficial to me as I prepare to enter the media industry. I would also like to thank Dr. Jeffrey Haugaard for giving me the opportunity to be a part of the Honors College at the University at Albany, which inspired the writing of this thesis. Next, I would like to thank my friends and roommates who have spent numerous hours watching *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast*, and listening to me as I analyze each scene. Lastly, I would like to thank my family for supporting me and challenging me to achieve my potential.

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## INTRODUCTION

Many children's films, especially animated films, are appreciated only for their storyline and entertainment value, as is the case for the Disney Studios' *Cinderella* (1950) and *Beauty and the Beast* (1991). However, there are specific stylistic decisions and narrative techniques that are employed by the filmmaker, which enhance the quality of a film. Through close analysis of a film, the critic is able to detect these devices and suggest how they operate within the overall film. As Kristin Thompson, an experienced film critic, noted to an interviewer when asked about the importance of close analysis and frame-by-frame attention to detail, "I take it that the critic's job is to notice such things and point them out for the enrichment of others who don't have the time or inclination to do such analysis" (2013). The critic has the important role of noticing and dissecting the details that are present in each shot of a film and presenting them to others, to help enrich the quality of their film viewing experience.

Any film, despite the fame of its story, can be analyzed closely in order to present an audience with a new perspective with which to see it. Films such as *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast* are typically overlooked as objects of film critique because audiences are predisposed to knowing their seemingly simplistic plots and characters. However, the audience may be missing important narrative details or stylistic techniques that are used

by the filmmaker to suggest deeper meaning, such as a larger statement being made about societal norms. For these reasons, it is clear that *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast*, which have been viewed for multiple decades, need to be critiqued so society may decide if they are worth showing to the next generation, or if they should be replaced with new heroines and adventures. This is explained by some of the purposes Thompson provides in the aforementioned interview, about how she decides to do close analysis on a particular film. She claims it could be due to the urge to find out more about a film because it is “appealing or intriguing” (Thompson, 2013). Since *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast* are widely regarded as classic children’s films, the critic wants to understand what has inspired older generations to share them with the younger generations. Similarly, “close analysis can be vital for writing about film history” (Thompson, 2013). Walt Disney Studios is one of the longest running studios in America. If a critic wants to write about film history, he will need to understand the details of these films and what has caused them to withstand the test of time. *Cinderella* was released in 1950 and *Beauty and the Beast* in 1991, yet both films are still seen by young children today. Understanding these films’ appeal for such an extensive time could be the question that inspired the critic, as well as the reason to prove these films are significant, the remaining two purposes according to Thompson (2013). As society

chooses to pass these films on to each generation, they become significant because of their permanent place in society.

## **CINDERELLA INTRODUCTION**

Walt Disney Studio's *Cinderella* is a tale of a hopeful young girl forced to act as a servant to her stepmother and two stepsisters after her father's untimely death. The filmmaker employs numerous narrative patterns and repetitive visual and aural developments of the sort described in *Film Art* (2013) by Bordwell and Thompson. Because *Cinderella's* narrative is told through the classic format of a fairy tale, it can be automatically inferred that good will triumph over evil at the end. Fairy tales are universally accepted to end happily, with the protagonist attaining her goal, as the antagonist is justifiably punished. The plot of *Cinderella* focuses on the eponymous character's goal to escape her life of servitude and find love and happiness. A main theme in this film is the pursuit of a dream, its interrupting factors, and the final attainment for those who are benevolent. The other central motif, Cinderella's tiny feet, serve as a physical distinction between her and all others, ultimately proving she is the woman the prince wants to marry and helping her to attain her dream.

## **OPENING CREDITS & NARRATIVE STYLE**

The opening credits of the film show images and music that allude to how the story will end. Bordwell and Thompson (2013) refer to these credit openings as "anticipating scenes" within *Film Art* because they predict what will later be shown (p. 95). Although the

actual plot is not being revealed to the audience through these images, they are used to set the scene and tone for what the viewer should expect to see in the film. As the viewer sees certain colors, animals, and images, it can be expected that these will be significant when they reappear later in the film. The first opening credits image depicts a horse drawn carriage. This is a preview of the vehicle that will eventually bring Cinderella to the ball where she will meet the Prince. The next image illustrates two birds holding pink cloth in their mouths surrounding a glass slipper. Later in the narrative, the birds help tailor a dress for Cinderella to wear to the ball, using only pink scraps and sashes. The birds are surrounding a glass slipper, which is at the heart of the story. The viewer must first recognize the uniqueness of a glass slipper, as opposed to regular shoes. Once her Fairy Godmother comes and fixes her tattered clothing, she bestows upon her a pair of glass slippers. The viewer has been primed by the opening credits to recognize that the slippers are significant, and may understand that the climax is set in motion when Cinderella loses one upon fleeing from the castle. The opening credits images to follow consist mainly of leaves, trees, flowers and other nature illustrations. While the images are not explicitly shown later, they signify beauty and connect the viewer with the idea of Cinderella's purity and closeness to nature.

The castle is shown twice, to accentuate its importance. Cinderella's dream is to escape from her life of servitude and live happily, and she dreams of how wonderful life would be at the castle.

The final image is the path that Cinderella and the Prince walk on outside when they leave the ball together. This path signifies the journey she is taking to follow her dreams and escape her current life.

This opening sequence helps to build expectations for the viewer. An enchantingly harmonious song is heard throughout the opening credits, also. It is clear that multiple people are singing it, acting as a chorus. This chorus acts as narrators, with the lyrics of the song serving to prepare the action of the storyline for the viewers. Narrators are able to provide objective information since they are not affected by the actions of the characters. It is important for the viewer to listen to the words of the choral narrators and recognize that they are providing the first description of Cinderella. The choral narration gives the first view into the unrestricted narration of the film (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p. 87).

Unrestricted narration explains that the viewer will be able to put together information gained from multiple characters and their respective viewpoints in order to have the best understanding of what is motivating the narrative. In this instance, the chorus is sharing

this information with the viewer, despite directing it at Cinderella. The lyrics to “Cinderella” are as follows:

Cinderella, you’re as lovely as your name  
Cinderella, you’re a sunset in a frame  
Though you’re dressed in rags, you wear a queenly grace,  
Anyone can see a throne would be your proper place.

Cinderella, if you give your heart a chance  
It will lead you to the kingdom of romance  
There you’ll see your dreams unfold  
Cinderella, Cinderella, in the sweetest story ever told (Geronimi, Jackson, & Luske, 1950).

The first stanza of the song invites the viewer to feel fondness toward Cinderella. Without yet being introduced to Cinderella, the viewer can assume that her characteristics, actions, and attitude will demonstrate the standards of royalty, such as class, kindness, charm, and discipline. The song acknowledges that Cinderella is “dressed in rags” for two significant reasons. The first is to praise the power of her beauty and grace, as it is prominent despite her undesirable attire. The second serves to avoid shocking the viewer when Cinderella is revealed to be a servant. Society’s stereotypical perceptions of servants could undermine their ability to see her traits as those of royalty. This line in the song opens the viewer’s mind to this possibility. The final line of the first stanza validates her dreams; she belongs in the castle as a queen, not as a servant. The second stanza explains the motivation behind what the viewer will see Cinderella’s character do. Because of this stanza, the viewers know

that this will be a journey for Cinderella to follow her heart because it will lead her to the fulfillment of her dreams. The last two lines of the song pledge she will have a happy ending if her journey is successful, and thereby encourages the audience to watch and find out.

### **SETTING THROUGH MISE-EN-SCENE**

The film's decisions about mise-en-scene are used to produce the setting of *Cinderella* and establish the societal norms of the film. Mise-en-scene is a technique describing everything that is seen by the audience, including the lighting, costuming, and color choices (Bordwell & Thomson, 2013, p.112-113). The filmmaker utilizes this technique to enhance specific moments, shots, and the setting for the viewer.

Through mise-en-scene it is immediately explained to the audience that this film is not set in the time of the film's release in 1950, but rather in a time reminiscent of the Victorian Era. The use of this time period serves to make the fairy tale more realistic. The opening line of the storybook beginning states, "Once upon a time in a faraway land there was a tiny kingdom..." (Geronimi, et al., 1950). This line reminds the audience to forget about the world in which they live, and embark upon a journey back in time. To do so, they must suspend their disbelief and accept the world as it is presented.

In order to become fully immersed in any film, every costume, action, and word choice must be convincing, and correctly portray the world as the filmmaker wants the

audience to understand it. In *Cinderella* the filmmaker's decisions about mise-en-scene result in costumes that fit the context described. During this time period, it was appropriate to wear extravagant ball gowns and attend formal balls. The characters are shown wearing dresses and nightgowns, never any casual clothing or pants. Even as Cinderella is cleaning, she is wearing a dress.

As the costumes had provided a context for the audience to recognize the time period, there are also actions in accordance with the time period. These actions include the invitation to the ball is being hand delivered, a "Proclamation by the King" written on a scroll, so all citizens knew to expect a visit from the Grand Duke, and upon the Grand Duke's arrival to an estate, his arrival being announced and preceded by the playing of a trumpet.

### **CHARACTERIZATION AND FLOW OF STORY INFORMATION**

The main characters in this film, Cinderella, Lady Tremaine, Drizella, Anastasia, the King, Grand Duke, and the mice prove to be quite different from one another throughout the film. These characters vary in societal status, are scheming to advance various goals, and in each situation have a limited depth of knowledge. The filmmaker utilizes the unrestricted narrative structure to display the true essence of each character. Bordwell and Thompson (2013, p. 87) claim unrestricted narrative structure provides "omniscient (all-

knowing) narration.” This technique allows for the audience to have a deeper understanding of each character, as they are seeing them from every perspective. The characters provide many lenses of information through which the viewer can learn what is motivating them to act in specific ways in the intertwining stories.

As the song during the opening credits suggests, Cinderella is beautiful and carries herself with the grace of a queen. This is shown in strict contrast with her stepmother, Lady Tremaine, and her stepsisters, Drizella and Anastasia. The filmmaker chooses to indicate the vile nature of both girls by making them physically unattractive. In one of the final scenes, as Anastasia bows and smiles, welcoming the Grand Duke into her home, he shakes and appears outwardly disgusted by her. This scene solidifies the filmmaker’s success in attempting to make Anastasia and Drizella clearly unattractive to all, through his decisions about mise-en-scene. For their costumes, Drizella is dressed solely in the least attractive shades of green, which contrasts with her stark black hair, and Anastasia’s exclusively pink and purple-toned attire is meant to clash with her bright red hair. These colors are obtrusive and obnoxious, as are the girls. Lady Tremaine had attempted to raise her two daughters with a privileged lifestyle, in the hope they would some day marry royalty. Others of this stature would naturally display discipline, charm, and grace. At this time, families with prominence would teach their daughters to be respectful women above all

else. These girls would be expected to reflect their family well so they could be married to other prominent or royal families. Oppositely, during Drizella's and Anastasia's music lesson, they begin to fight and Lady Tremaine stops them by saying, "Above all, self-control" which is a trait they severely lack. Despite their mother's attempts to teach them class, neither of these girls can hide their vile natural tendencies to act rude, violent, unappreciative, spoiled, immature, and malicious. Their lack of any redeeming qualities is presented to the audience through the eyes of outsiders. Upon their arrival to the ball, the Prince sees how they act and gives a disapproving sigh. The King, who is watching from above, shows a gesture of disgust, followed by verbal loss of hope upon their arrival. Their failure to win the Prince reflects their mother's teaching; she could not teach them to have class, since she herself lacks it.

From the beginning of the film, it is explicitly stated by the narrator (who is present only in the first scene of the film to provide background information about the family) that Lady Tremaine is "cold, cruel and bitterly jealous of Cinderella's charm and beauty." Lady Tremaine's dishonest, malicious, and dishonorable traits are shown through each of her actions. A specific instance occurs when Lady Tremaine tells Cinderella she may attend the ball if she is dressed suitably and has finished all of her chores. Drizella and Anastasia whine that she should not be allowed. Lady Tremaine assuages their concerns by stating, "I

said if", implying that she has created an impossible task for Cinderella to accomplish.

Cinderella is not present for this conversation, but due to the unrestricted narration, the

viewer is. This story form, coupled with the manipulation of time, builds suspense

(Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p. 89). Time is manipulated in the way the story is short and

the audience is thrown immediately into the action. The entire film occurs over a span of a

few days. The narrator in the beginning of the film provides all of the background

information about the characters and their situations before those days begin. The

audience eagerly desires to tell Cinderella about the sneaky conversation. The audience

remains actively engaged, watching as everyone else rushes to prepare for the ball.

Cinderella is hurriedly doing her exceedingly long list of chores. The mice and birds are

scurrying to tailor her dress in time. Drizella and Anastasia are panicking about what they

will wear. The audience involvement is painful since they are aware of the matters, while

Cinderella is not. This forces the audience to wait empathetically for the looming moment

when Lady Tremaine crushes Cinderella's dreams of attending the ball. This is not

surprising, as Lady Tremaine functions as a constant obstacle to all of Cinderella's dreams.

Although Cinderella acts courteously and obediently toward her stepmother, it is

through her relationships and interactions with animals, that her true character is

revealed. First, when talking with her dog, Bruno, about his desire to catch Lucifer, the

family's cat, Cinderella claims, "If you don't want to lose a nice, warm bed, you better get rid of those dreams." In this instance, it is apparent that Cinderella is commenting on her own situation. She is convincing herself that it is better to remain at the estate where she is granted a warm bed and relatively comfortable lifestyle, rather than the inevitable uncertainty of what would happen to her if she chose to chase her dreams. This insight shows that Cinderella is appreciative of the housing and food she is given, despite that she must act as a servant to earn it.

More frequently, the insight is gained through Cinderella's interactions with the mice. They act as her dependents, possessing a status comparable to her dependency on her stepmother. As Lady Tremaine exerts her power over Cinderella to make her a servant in order to remain at the estate, Cinderella uses her position to protect the mice. Immediately after Cinderella finishes her first song, one of the mice, Jaq, excitedly approaches Cinderella to tell her about a new mouse he found in the house. Her first instinct is to get him clothing: a hat, shoes, and a shirt. However, they explain that he is stuck in a trap and she runs to save him. Cinderella's relationship with the mice is outwardly established to the audience when Cinderella says, "Jaq maybe you better explain things to him." Jaq goes into the cage and tells the new mouse that everyone is nice and likes him, including Cinderella so he should not be afraid. After naming and clothing him,

she tells Jaq to warn Gus about the cat, Lucifer, and hurries off to begin her chores. This encounter shows that Cinderella chooses to love the mice and treat them with respect and kindness. She sews clothes to keep them warm and tries to protect them from predators such as Lucifer.

Later, when Cinderella is told that she may go to the ball if her chores are complete, and she has an appropriate dress, she goes to prepare and shares her excitement with the mice. As she is discussing her plans for tailoring the dress, she is summoned to help her stepsisters. She lets out an exasperated, "Oh now what do they want" and accepts that her dress will have to wait, and goes to see what they need. Jaq becomes infuriated because of how Cinderella is treated and says he doesn't believe she'll finish her dress in time. One of the other mice excitedly screams, "Hey, we can do it!" At this point the rest of the mice and some birds join in to help make the dress. Although they are essentially doing chores for Cinderella, they are delighted to help because they love her, not because this is a command. Since Cinderella confides in the mice, they are aware of her desire to go to the ball and want to help her finish the dress so she can. In continuing with the unrestricted narrative, the audience has been given access to this scene with the mice and is aware that the dress has been completed when Cinderella is revealing how upset she is about missing the ball. When

the mice uncover the dress, her gratitude and joy are clearly expressed. The mice act as a family, or support system for Cinderella, unlike her stepmother and stepsisters.

As shown through her relationship with the mice, Cinderella is benevolent, loving, and kind. The physical characteristics and costume decisions made through mise-en-scene reflect the depiction of each character. Cinderella's undeniable beauty is portrayed through her blonde hair and blue eyes, which are universally accepted as desirable physical attributes. In terms of costuming, when Cinderella is working, she is wearing a dress that is different shades of brown. This is reminiscent of rags, so she may embody her position as servant. When she isn't working, Cinderella wears many soft blue colors to portray her inner softness and naturalness and display her matching eyes. When the bluebirds wake Cinderella up, she is wearing a nightgown in the same shade of blue as their feathers, as well as matching ribbons in her hair, all of which draw attention to her large blue eyes. When she goes to the ball, she wears a sparkling blue dress and her shoes are made of glass. This gives her an angelic presence. The audience is aware of how fragile glass is, so they can imagine that she must be gracefully gliding as she walks, in order not to shatter them.

To understand the motivation for attending the ball, which allows for the narrative to develop, it is important to consider the King's role. The King is first shown in

conversation with the Grand Duke, discussing his desire for his son to marry, so he can have grandchildren. In this moment, the King decides to host a ball (disguised as a welcome home ball for his son), invite all the eligible maidens, and hope his son will fall in love with one of them. The audience is filled with hope and recognizes this opportunity for Cinderella to attain her goals of love and freedom. This is why it is devastating to the audience as well, when it seems she will not be attending the ball, because their hopes are also being crushed.

#### **DEADLINE DRIVEN, GOAL- ORIENTED PLOT**

In a goal -oriented plot, a film can be structured in multiple ways. *Storytelling in the New Hollywood* by Kristin Thompson (1999) presents the idea that films are typically broken into four parts, commonly separated by major turning points, as opposed to the traditional three- part system. This is important because the traditional three -part system is set as the beginning, middle, and the end, which relies upon the time within the film. The newly proposed four- part system considers the development of the plot and using the “shifting gears” for the transitions between stages (Thompson, 1999, p.27). When analyzing a film, it is more vital to understand the major turning points, than the time in the film, making Thompson’s system more beneficial. In *Cinderella*, the four parts include 1) “ the setup” (which explains the initial situation), 2) “the complicating action” (which changes

the direction of the goal and action), 3) “the development” (in which the protagonist strives to attain goals despite multiple obstacles), and 4) “the climax” (in which the action begins that will start the progress toward the final resolution) (Thompson, 1999, p. 27-29).

*Cinderella* conforms to this four- part narrative structure, in presenting its fairy tale themed plot. The narrative action occurs immediately as the film spans a period of only a few days.

In a fairy tale, it is expected that the protagonist will defeat the antagonist, solve the conflict, find the one she loves, and end with a wedding.

The setup portion sets the foundation on which the rest of the story will build. The first image of the story is the cover of a book. As the book is opened, it begins with a familiar phrase: “Once upon a time in a faraway land.” This is the start to an exposition. An exposition provides insight into the background of a character, as well as, establishing her current situation (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p. 85). This method is necessary in a film with a plot as short as *Cinderella*. The book’s narrator functions to recount Cinderella’s childhood and explain what has led her to the current moment, where the narrative will begin. This information includes her father’s untimely death after marrying Lady Tremaine, who always despised Cinderella. Lastly, through the harsh treatment and involuntary servitude, the narrator reveals that Cinderella has remained gentle and kind. Finally, the setup hints at Cinderella’s dreams of attaining happiness. The first turning point occurs

when the palace delivers the invitation to the ball. This is the first chance Cinderella has to escape her reality, if only for a night.

After the film's setup, Cinderella is excited to attend the ball, until the complicating action occurs. A time restraint is imposed. Cinderella must overcome all complications before the carriage arrives to leave for the ball at precisely eight in the evening. Lady Tremaine had given her a list of chores to complete, as well as, the task of finding herself a suitable dress. The audience is also aware that Lady Tremaine has no intentions of allowing Cinderella to attend the ball.

As the developmental stage begins, Cinderella is struggling to complete each of these tasks in time. Even after Cinderella finishes her chores, she had no time to tailor her dress. This obstacle is overcome as she finds out the mice had done it for her. Then, when she put the dress on and was ready to leave, her stepsisters tore it apart, as they realized it was made of their discarded scraps. Now, again, without a dress, she cannot go. As Cinderella struggles to overcome all of these barriers, she is defeated because time has run out, and they are leaving for the ball without her. At this moment, as Cinderella is crying in the courtyard, her Fairy Godmother appears to give her a beautiful dress and glass slippers, and use the mice and pumpkin to create a carriage in which to send her off to the ball. There is also a time restraint imposed on this, as the magic will reverse back at midnight.

After Cinderella arrives and is having a wonderful night dancing with the Prince, she realizes the time, and runs from the palace.

It is at this moment, as she is fleeing, when the climax of the narrative is ignited. Cinderella loses one of her glass slippers on the steps, and has no time to return for it. From this moment on, the plot can progress because the Grand Duke has the slipper that will only fit her foot, and the Prince has vowed to marry whomever the shoe fits. Back at the chateau, Drizella and Anastasia are preparing for the Grand Duke's arrival, as he is traveling through town giving each maiden a chance to try on the slipper. Before he arrives, Lady Tremaine recognizes Cinderella's excitement to try on the slipper, and stealthily locks her in the tower, as Cinderella is getting ready. Lady Tremaine does this because she cannot risk the slipper fitting Cinderella, and the family losing their servant. Cinderella panics, crying to be let out. The mice then rush to action and sneak into Lady Tremaine's pocket and successfully steal the key as she is entertaining the Grand Duke. Lucifer, the cat, steals the key and blocks the entrance. Luckily, Bruno (Cinderella's dog) comes to their rescue, chasing Lucifer away and they unlock the door. Cinderella runs down the stairs, catching the Grand Duke seconds before his departure. Ignoring Lady Tremaine's requests, he demands that he must allow every maiden to try on the slipper. Lady Tremaine trips the man holding the slipper, causing it to shatter. The Grand Duke feels that all hope is lost,

until Cinderella shows him that she has the other slipper. As expected, it is a perfect fit. This immediately cuts to the final scene in the film, which is Cinderella's wedding to the Prince.

As can be expected from the opening sequence, the film ends with, "They lived happily every after" and the closing of a book. This moment provides closure since the audience knows the fate of each of the characters and all of the conflicts have been resolved (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p. 99).

### **PARALLELISM IN *CINDERELLA***

The filmmaker employs parallelism to heighten significant contrasts throughout *Cinderella*. "Parallelism cues us to compare two or more distinct elements by highlighting some similarity" (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p. 67). In a scene where something is the same, parallelism reminds the audience to look for differing elements in order to see what is being compared and how that is functioning within the context of the film. The filmmaker uses his characters to provide judgments (to have faith is better than to be cynical) and represent opposing forces (sweet and the vile, the cynic and the romantic).

In the first instance of parallelism, early in the film, a scene opens with Lady Tremaine at the piano while Drizella is singing, "Sing, Sweet Nightingale" and Anastasia is playing the flute. They appear uncomfortable and sound horrific. Lucifer, who is in the room, shows physical discomfort listening to them, and escapes, closing the door behind

him. For a slight moment, Drizella's voice is distant enough to peacefully harmonize with another voice coming from the foyer. As the camera follows the glare of the cat, Lucifer, the audience watches Cinderella sing as she washes the floors. This scene amplifies the distinction between Cinderella and her stepsisters. She has never been given formal singing lessons, but has incredible vocal talent. Her inner goodness exudes through her gentle, natural singing voice. Oppositely, the evil nature of her stepsister is portrayed through their unnatural lack of talent after years of practice and lessons. The stepsisters will never sing with the natural charm that Cinderella possesses. This is evident when the girls speak, as well. Cinderella's words are kind and soft, whereas her stepsisters' words are vile and rude. The first time the viewer meets the stepsisters, Cinderella walks into Drizella's room and says, "Good morning, Drizella. Sleep well?" Drizella barked back, "Hm, as if you care. Take that ironing and have it back in an hour! One hour, ya hear?" Next, Cinderella walked into Anastasia's room and greeted her with, "Good morning, Anastasia." Anastasia angrily replied, "Well it's about time! Don't forget the mending! Don't be all day getting it done either!" Both times Cinderella entered the room with kind words, and left with more chores to be done, and having only received rude responses.

The second scene of parallel structure occurs at the ball. The King is admitting defeat to the Grand Duke. He does not believe that the Prince will find a suitable maiden to

make his bride. The Grand Duke closes his eyes and delivers a hyperbolic account of the King's expectations. In this scene, the Grand Duke is representing the cynical viewers who complain that fairy tales are unrealistic. He is acknowledging that this type of situation is romanticized and would not happen in reality. The two men are contrasted as the Grand Duke calls the King an "incurable romantic." As the Grand Duke continues his mockery, the viewer sees a radical change in the King's demeanor. Through the King and Grand Duke's perceptual point-of-view, the audience watches as the exact scene continues to unfold beneath them in the ballroom. A subjective shot is always used to show the scene from the character's perspective (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p. 90). In this shot it is selected to show the audience exactly what the King and Grand Duke are watching, which is Cinderella and the Prince in the distance. The filmmaker portrays this scene through the Grand Duke's glass eyepiece, to sharpen the focal point for the men, and the viewers. By concurrently juxtaposing the Grand Duke's cynical words with the undeniable visual cues, the viewer is obliged to believe that love has overcome the odds. As a stylistic decision, the filmmaker could have chosen to narrate the Prince's thoughts at this moment. However, the filmmaker chooses to make the Grand Duke, and thus all cynics, appear foolish for lacking faith that the fairy tale would come true.

**THEME OF PURSUING DREAMS ON TWO MEANING LEVELS: EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT**

Throughout the film, many characters are pursuing their dreams. Dreams allow the audience to have access to character subjectivity, an impartial account of what is true to their character. This provides insight into their motivation, hopes, and aspirations. The film shows multiple examples of people whose dreams are being interrupted. These interrupted dreams can be understood on an explicit and implicit level. Explicit meanings are the “openly asserted” or obvious, concrete level meanings (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p.58). The implicit meanings are more abstract and subject to interpretation by the viewer (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p.58). Each dream is first discussed on the explicit level, describing what occurred to physically wake the character from this dream. Immediately following that, the meaning of that dream is interpreted more expansively, based on the character’s desires and goals, and described as the implicit level.

Cinderella’s desire to make her dream come true is at the forefront of the film. From the beginning, she warns the audience that she will not state her dream. According to the lyrics of her song, “A wish is a dream your heart makes when you are fast asleep.” If she were to share the dream, it would not come true. However, outside her bedroom window, the castle is shown in the distance. It is inferred that her dream is to live happily ever after, with the prince inside the castle. In the literal sense, she had been awakened by the birds who “spoiled her best dreams.” As Cinderella slips into song, the chiming of the clock

interrupts this dreamlike moment, propelling her back into reality. Each night as she falls asleep she has the chance to dream about the life she wants, and in the morning the chiming of the clock signifies the end of this joyful time. Implicitly, she is waiting for the moment she wakes up from her slumber and is somewhere far away, living freely and happily.

Later, as Cinderella is cleaning the floors of the estate, she drifts into a daydream and another song about the nightingale. In this instance, the viewer is not looking at Cinderella, but at reflections of her in the bubbles rising from the soap on the floor. The cat literally bursts her bubble by purposefully stepping in dirt and tracking it around the newly cleaned foyer floor to ruin Cinderella's progress. Implicitly, her singing about the nightingale expresses her desire to be as free as a bird, rather than forced to remain as a servant in her own home.

Cinderella spends the day working hard to be sure she can attend the royal ball that evening. She knows that all of her chores must be done and she must have an appropriate gown prepared to wear. This must all be accomplished by the deadline of eight o'clock, when the carriage will arrive to bring them to the ball. As the clock chimes, she realizes that she has nothing to wear. As she stares longingly out her window, the narrative uses perceptual subjective point-of-view so the audience is seeing through Cinderella's eyes,

which are looking toward the castle, which appears to be glowing. This point-of-view style is selected because it allows the audience to share exactly in Cinderella's field of vision, rather than just watching her look at the castle. As Cinderella dreams of what it would be like to go, she notices a light behind her, revealing a dress that had been tailored for her as a surprise by the mice. She dresses quickly, only for her stepsisters later to rip off the pieces of the dress that were scraps of theirs. Cinderella's dream is ruined, and she is brought back to the realization that she cannot attend. Implicitly, Cinderella has realized that this may have been her only chance to attend a ball at the castle and make her dream come true, but now she cannot.

Later, Cinderella's Fairy Godmother appears as she is crying in the courtyard. Cinderella has given up all hope of going to the ball, but with her Fairy Godmother's magic, she is given a sparkly blue ball gown and glass slippers, as well as a carriage in which to arrive. Cinderella says it is "like a dream come true" to which the Fairy Godmother replies, "And like all dreams it must come to an end." She states the deadline for this dream is midnight, when everything will return to the way it was. Watching Cinderella with the Prince, the audience is aware that she is not keeping track of time. As the clock chimes to indicate midnight's arrival, Cinderella is awakened from her dream world in time to leave the Prince's company before everything reversed back. Her dream had come true, if only

for a few hours. Implicitly, although Cinderella is grateful to have had this experience, she appears to be sadly accepting that she will never have it again, because now the magic is gone and it is back to reality. As she is describing how lovely and charming the man was, she sighs and says, "Oh well, it's over" before being cut off by Jaq and Gus who show her that she still has one glass slipper, for which she is appreciative.

Cinderella overhears her stepmother as she is telling Anastasia and Drizella that the Prince is searching for the woman who fits in the glass slipper (that had been left behind when Cinderella ran from the ball). This reminds Cinderella of the dance she had shared with the Prince, and she falls into another dreamlike state and gently dances away singing, "So This Is Love." Cinderella is hurled into reality as her stepmother locks her in the attic, interrupting her chance to show that the slipper is hers. She knows that she must escape before the Grand Duke leaves, or she will lose her chance to try on the glass slipper.

Implicitly, she knows that missing her chance to try on the glass slipper means missing her chance to show the Prince that she is its owner and losing her chance to finally attain her dream. However, with the help of her mice, dog, and birds, she is freed in time to try on the slipper. The mice steal the key from Lady Tremaine's pocket and then must carry it all the way to the attic. Once upstairs, Lucifer, the cat, captures Gus and the key underneath a bowl and the mice try fighting back. Cinderella tells the birds to get Bruno so he can scare Lucifer

away. Once he does, the mice slide Cinderella the key so she can unlock the door. She runs down the stairs and stops the Grand Duke right before he leaves. The next scene shows Cinderella after her wedding to the Prince and the storybook says they lived happily ever after. Since Cinderella remained pure of heart and had good intentions, she was able to overcome each obstacle and deadline, making her dream into a never-ending reality.

To further advance the theme of interrupted dreams on implicit and explicit levels, the filmmaker chose to illustrate other character's dreams throughout the film. The first instance is Bruno, Cinderella's dog. He is shown sleeping on a rug but he is biting and clutching it. When Cinderella wakes him up, she asks if he was dreaming of chasing and catching Lucifer, the cat, again. When he excitedly nods, she tells him that he must learn to stop dreaming that, or Lady Tremaine will send him away. As aforementioned, when Cinderella delivers the important line, "If you don't want to lose a nice, warm bed, you better get rid of those dreams," she is talking about herself, as well as Bruno. Cinderella acts as the interrupting agent between Bruno and his dream of fighting with Lucifer. Although Bruno's dream to harm the cat is not of pure intentions, Lucifer's punishment was brought upon himself through all of his instigating and cruel behavior. Cinderella ultimately summons Bruno to chase Lucifer away when he is guarding the key to the tower in which she is locked. Lady Tremaine has locked Cinderella there to stop her from trying on the

glass slipper when the Grand Duke arrives. This will stop Cinderella from attaining her goals of freedom. At the moment Bruno is given permission to chase the cat, his dream has come true. Bruno's dreaming perpetuates the theme and shows that despite real life conditions, no one can control another's dreams or desires.

The next example of a dreaming character is the King. He dreams of the day he will have grandchildren in his life. He is laughing in his sleep on the night of the ball and the audience is given a preview into his dreams. He had been playing with two young children, anticipating that the ball had been successful. He is woken abruptly from his sleep by the Grand Duke who bears the news that they have lost the mysterious woman. The King becomes enraged. Implicitly, he can see his dreams of his son finding a bride, with whom to have grandchildren, slowly evading him. However, the King's dream comes true. The Prince marries Cinderella and the audience is to assume they will have children.

### **MOTIF IN *CINDERELLA***

Cinderella's feet serve as a motif throughout the film. A motif is "any significant repeated element that contributes to overall form" (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p.63). Cinderella's feet are repeatedly shown throughout the film so the viewer will understand that they are significant, unique, and central to the plot. It is sometimes the case that the repeated presentation of a female body part is analyzed as sexual, and termed fetishization.

Fetishization is the overt exertion of emotional or sexual investment in a particular object or body part (Benshoff & Griffin, 2003). Although Cinderella's feet are constantly being shown to the audience, it is simply to place significance on them, and not an attempt to sexualize them. Evoking sexual appeal is a fundamental piece of fetishization, but that is not how Cinderella's feet function in the film. When her feet are shown, there is never any indication that they are subject to a male gaze or any other inappropriate objectification. Lastly, considering the main audience for this film is women and children, sexuality is not necessary for the film to gain audience engagement. Subtle yet repetitive images and discussion force the audience to notice the unique size of Cinderella's feet, so when the Grand Duke fears that the glass slipper "may fit any number of girls within the kingdom" the audience is aware this will not be an issue.

In the first scene, as Cinderella dresses herself, the mice dust her shoes clean and then the viewer sees her feet slip delicately into them. After preparing breakfast for her stepsisters and stepmother, Cinderella leaves to deliver it. Balancing a tray in each hand and one on her head, she walks up the stairs. As she nears the top of the stairs she loses one of her slippers and gracefully puts it back on and continues walking. This casual scene foreshadows the climactic scene where she will lose her glass slipper as she is running from the palace.

Soon after, the viewer first hears the disgruntled voices of Drizella, Anastasia and Lady Tremaine. As she distributes the breakfast and walks out of each of their rooms, she is given a new chore that must be done. However, the focus of the shot remains on Cinderella's feet, rather than the growing pile of laundry in her hands. Her feet appear tiny and graceful as she walks and gently uses her foot to pull the door closed as she is leaving. Immediately after, as Gus the mouse is found in Drizella's teacup, Cinderella runs back up the stairs to see why her stepsister is shrieking. The pattern is even apparent in the animals, as Gus had run out and was stuck underneath Lucifer's foot. At this moment the viewer is shown Cinderella's delicate little feet immediately shown alongside her sister's large, clumsy feet as they come heavily stomping out of their mother's room, after blaming their servant for the incident.

In the castle, the King is whining about his desire to hear "the pitter patter of little feet again." Although he is referring to his desire to have grandchildren in the castle, this serves as a reminder of Cinderella's little feet, also.

Later, when the mail arrives from the king, Jaq and Gus run over to ask what it says. As Cinderella is talking to them, her voice is heard, but the camera is focused on the mice and her feet. This contrast shows the mice are noticeably larger than her feet, accentuating their tininess once again. This image is shown again as Cinderella is looking at her dress

one final time before attending to her sisters' call. There is a delayed focus on both the mice and her feet.

When the mice sneak out to find cloth with which to tailor Cinderella's dress, the scene is shown through their perceptual subjective point of view. The viewer is watching the scene through the eyes of Jaq and Gus. This is significant because we are being forced to view the room as they do, only focusing on the ground. If the shot were taken of the entire room, the viewer could decide where to look, but the filmmaker has chosen this ground level focus instead. Since the mice are searching for scraps, they are concentrating on the discarded pieces on the floor, which also means the shot is focusing on Cinderella, Drizella, and Anastasia's feet. The viewer can easily identify to whom each pair of feet belongs.

As Cinderella is indulging in her new attire from the Fairy Godmother, she specifically points to her glass slippers. This moment serves to set the scene for the climax of the film to eventually happen. Cinderella is showing the audience that these unique shoes were molded to fit only on her uniquely small feet.

When Drizella and Anastasia arrive at the ball, they are stepping on each other's dresses and tripping over each other's feet. The girls lose the prince's interest before they have the chance to approach him.

All of this leads to the climactic scene where Cinderella loses her glass slipper on the stairs of the castle. She had been with the Prince and lost track of time. The magic will reverse, changing everything back at midnight, so she is rushing away from the palace. The rest of the magic is gone, but the mice notice that she is still wearing one sparkling glass slipper. As the Grand Duke arrives at their estate in search of the owner of the glass slipper, it is no surprise when Drizella and Anastasia's feet are unmistakably too large to fit in the slipper, despite their best attempts. However, as Cinderella scurries down the staircase with her skirt lifted in order not to trip, the Grand Duke follows her feet with his glass eyepiece and a smile overwhelms his face. He can see that her uniquely tiny foot will be the only one to fit in the slipper, and it is.

## **CONCLUSION**

Throughout the film, the patterns enlisted by the filmmaker serve many purposes. These operate to portray different points of view, give a glimpse into the minds' of characters, and prepare the viewers for what is to come. *Cinderella*, like most fairy tales, is meant to instill hope in viewers. As she is on her journey, the viewer is reminded that anyone can achieve their dreams if they try hard enough.

### ***BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* INTRODUCTION**

Walt Disney Studio's *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) is a story of love, freedom, and finding a place in society. The filmmaker makes many stylistic decisions of the sort described in *Film Art* by Bordwell and Thompson, which aid the messages conveyed by the

film. This film tells the story of Belle, who fell in love with the Beast, despite his outward appearance, and ignored the advances of an attractive man (Gaston) because he was devoid of inner goodness. The film uses techniques such as music and mise-en-scene to give the audience a familiarity with the characters, and hints as to what they may do in the future. Themes are employed to contrast ideas such as inner beauty with outer beauty, and freedom with captivity. These themes allow for progression of the plot, and the growth of the characters.

#### **SETTING THE SCENE AND EXPOSITION THROUGH OPENING NARRATION & IMAGERY**

As the narration begins, the story is told primarily through stained glass window images. By evoking this type of imagery at the forefront of the film, the audience can anticipate the environment in which the story will take place. Bordwell and Thompson explain that the title sequence can be used to immediately set the scene and preview what will happen (2013, p. 95). For this film, it is crucial that the audience is aware that the prince resides in an enchanted castle in the forest outside of a small town. As churches and castles that remain from medieval times demonstrate, stained glass windows were typically used to decorate important buildings and tell stories. This was also a form of art, which allows the viewer to perceive the importance of beauty to the story. The filmmaker's

use of stained glass windows transforms the scene back in time and introduces the castle to the viewers.

The first title sequence image shows the Prince at the focal point of the window, expressionless. As the shot focuses on him, the narrator describes him as “spoiled, selfish, and unkind.” This is the first description of the Prince that the audience is given. Next he is shown to be superficial in denying a beggar a place to stay for the evening. The following image is an old woman with a humpback, crooked nose, protruding chin, and a cane, holding a rose out to the Prince. He appears to be scoffing at her offering. As the narrator describes her hideous appearance, the shot changes to focus on the beggar. She has one tooth, an eye that cannot fully open, and a pained expression. The beggar holds out the rose and there are red circles surrounding it, in order to make its radiance illuminate. The next shot is brief, but shows the rose up close. The following image returns to the Prince and the beggar, but this time he is pointing away from the castle and telling her to leave. The shot returns to the image of the beggar, and her warning not to deny her based on appearance. The shot returns to the beggar in front of the castle, but the Prince is gone. In the next sequence of images, the beggar woman’s appearance changes to show a gorgeous enchantress holding the rose, and the Prince begging for forgiveness on his hands and knees. The images focus on his hands as they are surrounded by light, and then turn them

into the hands of a beast, with an intense red in the background. The last title sequence stained glass image is of the castle, engulfed on the left side by light and beauty, as it previously had been, and on the right side engulfed in rain and darkness, as it is now. After this moment, the stained glass images end, and the viewers are inside the dark, enchanted castle.

The narrator begins the film by describing the Prince, and then sharing the conflict with the audience. This exposition, as it is termed by Bordwell and Thompson, is meant to “lay out the backstory and initial situation” (2013, p. 85). Rather than explaining why it is an enchanted castle when Belle arrives, the audience knows from the beginning what happened to make it enchanted. The filmmaker chose to immediately explain the situation, in order for the audience to be prepared for the effects of the enchantress, and to accept Belle’s love for the Beast. (The effects of the enchantress include the Prince’s new form as a beast, an enchanted rose that has been wilting for years, a magic mirror which allows its user to see whatever he or she wishes, and for all of the servants to have the form of household objects). Without the background knowledge that he is a human, the audience may be reluctant to accept that Belle is in love with a male of a different species. The conflict is announced by the narrator: the Beast will be stuck in this hideous form until he can love another and earn her love in return, by the time the last rose petal falls. (The

enchantress gave the enchanted rose to him.) If he cannot do this, he will remain a beast forever. Because the Prince is shallow, he fears that all people are shallow, and will judge him solely on his outward appearance, as he had judged the beggar. This leads him to decide to remain hidden in the castle, not allowing others to see his hideous exterior.

### **MUSIC REVEALING CHARACTERIZATION AND CONTEXTUAL SETTING**

Through songs, the audience becomes familiar with the characters. The filmmaker chose to expose key information about the characters, and the constructed society, through songs. These songs give the audience an understanding of the characters in relation to the time period.

Belle is immediately introduced as the first scene opens. As she walks out of her house and into town, “Belle” is sung. As she begins to describe the “poor little provincial” town, the townspeople begin to describe her. Although each person acknowledges Belle’s superior beauty, she is pitied for being different from the rest of the town members. These people cannot understand that she may not want to be similar to them. One townspeople claims, “It’s no wonder that her name means beauty, her looks have got no parallel.” Upon hearing this, someone responds, “Behind that fair façade, I’m afraid she’s rather odd.” The townspeople do not approve of her lifestyle. Belle is mainly interested in reading books. As a woman, this is considered unacceptable because it isn’t right for her to have ideas. She is

supposed to know her place in society and concern herself only with looking beautiful, finding a husband, then acting as a doting mother and wife. Instead, Belle has read about what exists beyond this town, including true love, adventure, and excitement. She is not content with conforming to the inferior role expected of her as a woman, so she chooses to defy it, despite the consequence of being rejected by the townspeople. The townsfolk repeatedly say, "She's different from the rest of us" referring to Belle. As Belle walks through the town, multiple people comment on her personality. Belle is regarded as, "strange, no question," "so peculiar," "puzzle to the rest of us," "rather odd," "strange but special," "most peculiar," "dazed and distracted," and a "funny girl." These comments serve to separate Belle from the town's members. She is outwardly beautiful but regarded as different in a negative way. She is pitied for choosing books over a husband, and deemed inferior to the general public.

As much as the song "Belle" gives the audience an understanding of Belle, it also creates a basis upon which to identify the townspeople. This song depicts the townspeople as superficial and unwelcoming. Her gorgeous exterior is respected, but her intelligence is reprimanded. She is rejected because she is not content with their small town lifestyle, consisting of finding a husband and catering to his needs, while not having any dreams of her own. Belle is searching for adventure and excitement, and finds it through reading

books, unlike these townspeople. The line of “Belle” sung by the townsfolk, “with a dreamy, far- off look, and her nose stuck in a book” explains that she is constantly dreaming of places far away from their village, which is improper for a woman. At the end of the song Gaston says, “The whole town is talking about it; it’s not right for a woman to read. Soon she starts getting ideas and thinking.” This line embodies the town’s ignorance. Within the world of the film, women were expected to be utterly complacent and accept their status as inferior to men. The three blonde women, listed in the credits as Bimbettes, who constantly swoon over Gaston, serve as the stereotypical women of this time period. (The Bimbettes will be discussed more thoroughly in the following section: THEME OF INNER V. OUTER BEAUTY THROUGH MISE-EN-SCENE). As Gaston embodies the alpha male role (the man whom all other men aspire to be), the Bimbettes are the obliging women who want nothing more than to be among his collection of trophies and serve as his wife.

In continuing with the theme of characterization through song, “Gaston” is next in order to describe Gaston. Although the audience has encountered Gaston, this song allows for further understanding of his character, as well as the explanation that he is the ideal male specimen in this society. This scene explains the requirements of the perfect man, as being all that Gaston embodies because he is “perfect, a pure paragon.” As the Bimbettes explain in “Belle,” Gaston is a “tall, dark, strong, and handsome brute” which is exactly what

they want in a husband. When Belle denies Gaston's marriage proposal, his manhood is undermined. LeFou, Gaston's sidekick, reminds him of all the reasons he should not feel disgraced or ashamed by singing "Gaston." Physically Gaston is described as having an "incredibly thick neck," "swell cleft in his chin," "biceps to spare," "every last inch of him is covered in hair," and he is "roughly the size of a barge." Gaston is an "intimidating specimen," "burly and brawny," "slick," "quick," and has incomparable abilities in fighting, biting, hitting, matching wits, spitting, and shooting. This description enhances the belief that he is the most attractive man in the village since attractiveness in the world of the film is contingent on manliness and rugged strength. Throughout the song, it is constantly repeated that no one's physical attributes or abilities are comparable to Gaston's. Gaston is considered different, but superior. He is the example of what every man in the village aspires to be.

Outside of the village, the filmmaker brings the audience to the Beast's enchanted castle. When the enchantress cast the spell on the entire castle, she changed the form of the castle's servants from human to household objects. The characterization of the castle's servants is made through the singing of "Human Again." (This song was not included in the earliest editions of the film, but was added in those released after 2001.) A select few servants describe what they will do when they return to their human lives after the curse is

lifted. This offers a glimpse into some characters' pasts and allows the audience to understand how the curse has affected them. Lumiere, the candlestick, describes that he was good-looking, flirtatious, "poised and polished," charming, and enjoyed cooking. The wardrobe next describes that she'll be happy when she can return to all of the essential superficial parts of being a woman. She wants to return to wearing make-up (lipstick and rouge), be smaller in size, be graceful, have hair, and wear dresses. The wardrobe makes it clear to the audience that she misses her physical appearance since she is now quite large in size, and no longer a dainty woman. Cogsworth, the clock, claims he'd finally "unwind" from his tense state, and relax in early retirement far away from the castle and Lumiere. Although each servant is not given the chance to explicitly state what he or she will do when transformed back into a human, all are excited and hopeful. The background chorus consists of all the other objects and they sing about aspects of human life they are missing out on, such as falling in love, dancing, and reclaiming the years they have lost. The household objects are all dancing as they clean the castle for the romantic evening of ballroom dancing that the Beast and Belle have planned. The servants all hope that they can create the perfect atmosphere in which the Beast and Belle can fall in love. They are optimistic that the night will go well and they will soon be human again.

It is important to note that the servants remain loyal to the castle and their master, at all times throughout this film. For years before Belle's arrival, they had supported the Beast, as he made no progress toward reversing the spell. The Beast and the servants rely upon one another. The Beast needs them to help care for him, and the possibility for the servants to ever become human again is contingent upon the Beast's actions. The household objects continue to serve the Beast and have respect for him. Their loyalty is tested in the final scene. When the servants become aware that the Beast has released Belle, and she is gone, it can be expected that they would lose all hope in ever reversing the spell. At this point, if they did not genuinely care for the Beast and the castle, they would not warn the Beast of the mob advancing toward the castle, but they do. The servants then go beyond their duties in refusing to let these people take over their castle. The servants fight using all of the resources they have available, and are successful in defeating all the men, except Gaston, who went searching for the Beast.

#### **THEME OF INNER V. OUTER BEAUTY THROUGH MISE-EN-SCENE**

The filmmaker designs and costumes each character in a specific way to illuminate their inner motives, goodness, and purity. Character costume is part of mise-en-scene. Mise-en-scene is a film technique described by Bordwell and Thompson as everything seen by the audience (2013, p. 112-113). This includes specific choices for "setting, costume,

lighting, and performance” in order to emphasize something significant in the scene (2013, p. 113). The filmmaker of *Beauty and the Beast* utilizes mise-en-scene to show the theme of defining a character’s beauty. Outer beauty can be deceiving, because it is based solely on perceived physical attractiveness. However, in the film, inner goodness is displayed through a character’s kindness, selflessness, and placing the needs of others before one’s own. Rather than deciding to make the physically attractive characters all have inner goodness, and all unattractive characters full of malice, the filmmaker makes the statement that people cannot be judged by their physical appearance alone. In making this point, the filmmaker created Belle and the servants to be purely good and transparent, Gaston to show that those who are considered attractive can still lack inner goodness, and the Beast to appear hideous but have inner goodness. In order to define a character’s beauty under this theme, one must examine a character’s outer appearance (what is given through mise-en-scene), then consider his or her inner goodness (shown through actions, decisions) and decide if the physical appearance mirrors their inner beauty, or lack thereof.

This theme is introduced in the title sequence. Through costuming, the beggar’s hideous appearance and poor clothing create a stark contrast with the Prince’s attractiveness and royal attire. The beggar is given a crooked nose, protruding chin, one tooth, an eye that cannot open, and an oversized green cloak. The Prince is given long, thick

brown hair, a strong build, piercing blue eyes, beautifully colored attire and a large crown.

The narrator shares this scene, as it is a retelling of a story from many years prior. As the beggar warned the Prince “not to be deceived by appearances, for beauty is found within”, she is reminding the audience not to make the same mistake. As the Prince dismisses the beggar, she changes into her true state of beauty as an enchantress. As the Prince falls to his knees and begs for mercy, the enchantress appears overwhelmingly tall. She is thin, has a flawless face, and has blonde, flowing hair, which surrounds the crown she wears atop her head. Although the Prince was physically attractive, the enchantress realizes “there was no love in his heart” and “as punishment she transformed him into a hideous beast.” His new form as a beast became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

When the audience is introduced to the Beast, he is violently clawing the old picture of himself as a human. As a beast, his appearance is frightening. He is large in size, described later by Belle’s father, Maurice, as being almost ten feet tall. He is full of dark brown hair and has paws for hands and feet, both with sharp claws, a humpback, tail, horns, and fangs for teeth. However, the Beast still has beautiful, piercing blue eyes. The Beast is given the opportunity to show that he has understood his punishment and learned to care for others when Maurice arrives in need of a place to spend the night. However, it is apparent to the audience that he still lacks goodness. As Maurice walks into the castle, the

audience can see the Beast moving through the shadows and darkness. Once Maurice is sitting in front of the fire the Beast makes his appearance. The filmmaker made interesting decisions about mise-en-scene here because he artfully allows the audience to feel the Beast's presence before showing him. The doors are first thrust open violently, as can be assumed through the loud noise. This brings in a cold breeze, putting out the fire, and engulfing the room in darkness. The Beast has caused all of the heat and light to escape this room. All of the cheerful friendliness in the room has been replaced with fear, as shown through the faces of Mrs. Potts, Chip (Mrs. Pott's son, the teacup), and Maurice (Belle's father). Then, the room is shown from the Beast's subjective point of view. Bordwell and Thompson explain that a subjective shot gives a specific character's view of the scene to reveal something about that scene (2013, p.90-91). As the viewer watches the scene unfold from the Beast's point of view, anticipation builds, as Maurice is shown to be his target. All the filmmaker allows the audience to see is the shadow of the Beast growing larger in size and nearer to Maurice. Quickly, the shot changes back to an objective one, so the viewer may see Maurice trembling in fear as the Beast approaches. (An objective shot shows what is happening in the scene, without giving the audience any specific lens through which to watch (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p.90-91).) Immediately, the shot moves to show the Beast advancing toward Maurice on all fours; his mane is sticking up and he has an angry

expression on his face, with his gruesome fangs showing. The Beast is not comfortable with his appearance in this animal-like form. When the Beast sees Maurice's terrified expression upon looking at him, his insecurities lead him to believe that Maurice is repulsed by his appearance, and his temper cannot be controlled. The Beast chooses to take him prisoner, despite all of Maurice's attempts to explain himself.

At this point in the story, Belle realizes that Philippe, her father's horse, has returned home, frightened and without her father. Belle is scared that her father is in danger, so she tells Philippe to bring her to him. They arrive at the castle and Belle sees her father's hat just inside the gate. She searches through the castle until she finds her father, shivering cold and sick, stuck in the tower. Because the Beast feels that he will be stuck in this form forever, he is releasing his frustration on others and continuing to be violent. However, when the Beast finds Belle by her father's side in the castle, and she asks to take his place as prisoner, a slight postural and vocalic change is shown in the Beast's demeanor. He had previously been standing upright with his eyes widened, his fangs showing, and he was yelling authoritatively. Her goodness catches him off guard, and he looks confused as he hunches over and softly says, "You would take his place?" Although it only lasts a moment until he returns to his intimidating posture, the humane side of the Beast has been revealed. Throughout Belle's stay at the castle, he chooses to make her feel as a guest,

rather than a prisoner. At this point he recognizes the chance that she could break the spell, and tries to induce her into loving him by forcing her to go to dinner. Her defiance frustrates him more since he cannot make her love him and save him from this hideous form.

Later that night, after finding Belle in the restricted wing of the castle, the Beast frightens her and she immediately runs away. As she is travelling through the woods, wolves chase Belle and her horse. The Beast comes to her rescue, fighting off all the wolves. After saving her life, he passes out from the injuries he had sustained. Rather than leaving him there and escaping, Belle chooses to bring him back to the castle and care for him. This selfless act by the Beast allows another glimpse into the Beast's goodness. From this point in the film, the Beast realizes that he feels strongly for Belle and chooses to control his temper and treat her well. Belle describes his change in temperament by singing "Something There": "There's something sweet and almost kind. But he was mean and he was coarse and unrefined. But now he's dear, and so unsure, I wonder how I didn't see it there before." It is this moment where Belle appears to have inspired his goodness and the audience can see that the two are falling in love. The servants tell the audience that this evening is going to be special and they must create the most "magical, spontaneous, and romantic atmosphere known to man or beast." The Beast is shown preparing for the

evening, being bathed and groomed and having his hair cut and styled. His clothing is similar to his royal attire at the film's beginning. Belle is dressed in a gold ballroom dress, with matching gold gloves, gold earrings and a gold headband. After eating dinner together, Belle takes the Beast's hands and leads him into the ballroom. The candles dwindle to show the passage of time as they dance together. Eventually, they decide to go to the balcony and rest. As the Beast is gaining the courage to tell Belle how he feels, he can sense that she is upset. When she says she wishes to see her father again, the Beast gives her the magic mirror in order to do so. When Belle sees that her father is sick and needs her, the Beast releases her from his imprisonment. At this moment, his transformation is complete. He has chosen to act selflessly, revealing his inner beauty, rather than force her to remain at the castle and help him reverse the spell. The Beast has now proven that he has love in his heart. However, Belle has not yet proven her love for the Beast. Later, Belle returns to the castle to warn the Beast that there is a mob of townspeople who have just learned of his existence and want to kill him. She is too late, and arrives during the Beast's fight with Gaston. After the Beast is stabbed, he is drifting out of consciousness when Belle tells him she loves him. At this moment the curse is lifted and he is transformed back into a human in a theatrical way. His limp body is lifted into the air and wrapped by his cloak. His paws transform into hands and feet, and his head and body transform back into that of a human.

He has shoulder length brown hair, strong physical stature, and his most defining characteristic, his piercing blue eyes. Belle is skeptical at first, but after touching his hair and looking into his eyes, she trusts that it is the same man. The physical transformation allows for his outer appearance to mirror his inner goodness.

Many decisions about Belle's physical appearance help reflect her uniqueness and inner beauty, from the beginning of the film. Her given name, "belle" is an adjective that means "beautiful" in French and is meant to describe her inner and outer beauty. She is universally accepted as the most beautiful woman in the village. This is declared multiple times during the song "Belle", as described in the previous section. Gaston admits that his sole reason for choosing her as his wife is that she is the only person "as beautiful as he." Belle is humble, despite the comments people make about her beauty. The film chooses not to perpetuate the stereotype that blonde -hair, blue -eyed women, such as the Bimbettes, have the most desirable physical traits. Belle is given natural beauty in her medium build, brown hair tied back with a blue bow, and hazel- brown eyes. Belle wears a plain blue dress with a long sleeve white shirt underneath, and a white apron, which covers the majority of her dress. The filmmaker chose to dress her this way to show that she does not spend time worrying about her appearance. However, since Belle is regarded as beautiful, the filmmaker is making the case that beauty is natural and comes from within. Belle's outer

beauty is mirrored by her inner goodness. This is shown through her desire to immediately sacrifice herself for her father. When Belle arrives at the enchanted castle in search of her father, she finds him locked there as the Beast's prisoner, as his punishment for trespassing. As Belle recognizes that he is sick, she forfeits herself to the Beast for the release of her father. Since she desires a life of freedom and adventure, she is acting selflessly, proving herself to be as pure and good as she outwardly appears.

In order to heighten Belle's uniqueness in possessing inner and outer beauty, the film chooses to directly contrast her with the physically beautiful women of her village. The Bimbettes serve as the voice of the typical women in this society. These women are primarily focused on their outward appearances, making them appear flawless. Although the viewer never sees the Bimbettes discussing their appearance, their gaudy costuming shows that this is not their natural look. The Bimbettes have blonde hair and blue eyes, supplemented by appropriate make-up, and the perfect physique, showcased by their lavish dresses. As Belle's dress is modest and plain, these are the exact opposite. Their dresses are identical in style but one is red, one is yellow, and one is green. These dresses are tight fitting to accentuate their chests and small waists. Everything about their appearances seems gaudy, fake, and for show. Despite their gorgeous exterior, below the surface they are vacant. There is no depth to their characters. The Bimbettes are doting

women who are pleased to be inferior to their male counterparts, as shown through their fervent pursuit of Gaston. For example, as Gaston stops Belle as she is walking out town, the Bimbettes are standing nearby. Gaston tells Belle that she should stop reading books and pay attention to more important things, like him. As he says this he smiles and the camera moves to show the Bimbettes staring at him and releasing a sigh that resonates throughout their entire bodies. A few moments later, as Gaston asks Belle to come to the tavern to look at his trophies, she replies, "Maybe some other time." Upon hearing this, the Bimbettes look shocked. The first says, "What's wrong with her?" Then the second continues, "She's crazy" and the third finishes, "He's gorgeous." As the scene continues, they remain frozen in the background, daydreaming of Gaston. The Bimbettes don't understand how Belle could deny Gaston, since he is the epitome of manliness and physical attractiveness. Whomever Gaston picks for his wife is regarded as the luckiest woman in the town. In a society where the women are expected to find a husband, they think that Belle is crazy to reject the best eligible bachelor. Each of the Bimbettes' only desire is to find a strong man to marry, whereas Belle wants more in life than to remain trapped in this small, predictable town. This is why Belle is worthy of being the story's heroine, while the Bimbettes are given a smaller role in the background, simply used to perpetuate the norms.

Gaston, as described in the previous section, is regarded as the perfect specimen of a male. The decisions about mise-en-scene made by the filmmaker were complex for Gaston. He is physically considered perfect, large and muscular in stature, dressed well, with straight white teeth, blue eyes and long thick black hair, but his arrogance and sense of entitlement prohibit any chance of being humble or having inner goodness. The audience can assume that townsfolk have always placed Gaston on a pedestal, leading him to become narcissistic, misogynistic, and egotistical. This is apparent when Gaston walks into his own wedding and makes the joke that he has yet to propose to Belle. The guests laugh because in such a male-dominated town, they believe the idea of a woman denying a wedding proposal to a man is absurd, especially if that man is Gaston. These qualities are not present in someone who contains inner goodness. Gaston's words and actions show that his attractive physical appearance is deceiving. Below the exterior, there is nothing but selfishness. Before entering her house he says to LeFou, "This is her lucky day" implying that she should be honored for the opportunity to marry him. As Belle opens the door she politely says, "Gaston, what a pleasant surprise" to which he responds, "Isn't it though?" He continues on to explain how every girl in town would love to be in Belle's position. During his wedding proposal, he becomes distracted by a mirror image of himself. The filmmaker chooses a unique way to share this scene, through a subjective point-of-view shot. This is a

mise-en-scene technique because the filmmaker makes the decision (for the audience) of what to focus on. As discussed by Bordwell and Thompson, a subjective shot gives a specific character's view of the scene as it unfolds in order to place the audience in their position (2013, p.91). However, unlike a normal subjective point-of-view, the audience sees this from two different characters' perspectives; the viewer can choose to take either Belle's or Gaston's. From Belle's perspective, the viewer sees a man making faces at himself in a mirror, looking rather foolish, despite the fact that she is standing there. In looking at just the mirror image, the viewer can see what Gaston sees in himself, and how proud he is as he smiles at himself in the mirror after licking an imperfection off his tooth.

As Gaston makes himself comfortable in Belle's home, he takes off his boots to expose a hole in his sock. This decision by the filmmaker to place the hole on his sock is purposeful and significant to his costuming, as it could be symbolic of Gaston's character as a whole. If an outsider were looking at Gaston, his shoes would cover the hole. It is only when he chooses to take off his boots and expose this hole that the audience becomes aware of it. Similarly, when looking only at Gaston from the outside, it appears he is flawless. However, below the surface there is a large imperfection that cannot be ignored: his personality. As soon as Gaston speaks, his true character is revealed, full of arrogance, violence, and selfishness. As Belle represents uniqueness and complete beauty, Gaston's

attractiveness is superficial and undesirable to the audience. The theme of inner beauty's importance over outer beauty has been reiterated, so the viewer is aware that superficial attractiveness is deceiving and worthless if it is not coupled with inner goodness.

Lastly, the filmmaker chose to give the household objects the physical representation of their inner personality. Each object is pure because they cannot hide certain aspects of their personalities, as they are revealed through their outer appearance. When the spell is broken at the end of the film and the audience sees Lumiere, Cogsworth, Mrs. Potts, Chip, and the feather duster in human form, they have similar characteristics to the forms they had taken.

Lumiere is tall and thin, similar to the candlestick form he had taken. His name literally means "light" in French, which can be interpreted in two ways. (According to Bordwell and Thompson, explicit meanings are the literal point, on the surface. Conversely, implicit meanings are below the surface and can be interpreted in many different ways (2013, p. 58-59).) On the explicit level, a candlestick's primary function is to provide light for its user. However, implicitly the name can suggest Lumiere's inner light-heartedness, which is shown through his constant attempts to lighten any situation with humor or optimism. Lumiere is also good-hearted, as he tries to tell the Beast that he allowed Maurice into the castle, to protect him.

When Cogsworth is revealed as a human, he is a stout man, wearing a pocket watch. Cogsworth is made into a clock because he is tense and detail-oriented, placing importance on schedules and rigidity. Because Lumiere and Cogsworth are so different, they seem to disagree about everything.

Mrs. Potts is a plump, maternal character, who is constantly trying to take care of everyone. When she realizes Maurice needs warmth, she chooses to ignore Cogsworth and helps to give him tea. Her position as the teapot allows her to interact with people and warm them up from the cold. In France, afternoon tea is a social habit of the upper middle class, so Mrs. Potts' fits the position of hostess and servant. Her son, Chip, takes form as a chipped teacup. He is innocent and sweet, and the chip in his glass represents his uniqueness from the other cups, as well as his recklessness and bravery. Children typically believe that they are invincible. Being that Chip is a young boy, it is implied that he attempted something reckless, and expected not to cause any damage, but because he is made of glass, it resulted in a chip. His bravery is shown later in the film when he sneaks into Belle's bag when she leaves the castle, and then helps to save her from the basement in which Gaston has locked her. At this point Gaston has formed a mob to hunt down the Beast, and Belle is trying to stop them so Gaston throws her and Maurice in the basement. Chip uses a log cutter to break down the basement door and free them.

Lastly, the woman who serves as a featherduster is transformed into a featherduster. She is Lumiere's love interest, and acts a tease throughout the film. These household objects are honest representations of themselves in every form. They care for each other, help strangers when possible, and defend the castle when it is under attack by the villagers. These objects are strong characters who are to be judged solely on their inner goodness and beauty.

### **THEME OF RESCUE ACTIVITY AND FLOW OF STORY INFORMATION**

Throughout the film, many characters show their bravery by attempting to rescue others. The theme of rescue activity is employed in two ways. First, it is part of the overall adventure format of the story. The act of putting oneself in danger, in order to save someone else is inherently selfless and reminiscent of something the hero in a story would do. These characters accept the necessary sacrifices as consequences and they choose to help, out of the pure goodness of their hearts, perpetuating the theme of inner goodness. The other significance of this theme is to show the unrestricted narration of the story. According to Bordwell and Thompson, unrestricted narration gives the audience complete depth and breadth of knowledge regarding the story (2013, p. 87). The characters are given varying degrees of knowledge. When faced with a lack of information, they choose to act based on their knowledge and educated assumptions about the situation. As discussed in

Bordwell and Thompson (2013), the flow of story information is determined by the desired effect of the filmmaker. By employing the unrestricted narration, the filmmaker is able to build suspense and tension within the audience, especially in the scenes containing rescue activity. This enhances audience engagement because the audience knows the context of the situation, unlike the characters who are entering these situations without full knowledge of what they will entail. The audience remains engrossed to see how the film will connect these merging storylines.

When Maurice leaves for the inventors' fair with Philippe, they end up lost in the forest late at night. Philippe is frightened and drops Maurice in the woods and runs away. As it is raining and wolves are chasing Maurice, he stumbles upon a gate to the grounds of the castle and desperately runs inside. As he bangs on the door it falls open, and he looks inside before letting himself in. Maurice hears voices and calls out to make his presence known. Lumiere and Cogsworth are in the foyer and Lumiere chooses to welcome Maurice into the castle, to help him escape from the cold. Although Lumiere had not gone out and found Maurice, he accepted him once he was brought into the castle, despite the angry response he knew it would elicit from the Beast. Lumiere was willing to face the wrath of the Beast, rather than let this man remain out in the cold, unsafe forest. Cogsworth was overwhelmed with fear of how the Beast would react and repeated his disapproval of the

situation. Mrs. Potts agrees with Lumiere and brings Maurice a cup of tea. When the Beast finds Maurice in the castle, he becomes angry. Lumiere tries to explain the situation to the Beast, but he loses his temper and Lumiere stops speaking. The Beast ignores Maurice as he tries to explain that he meant no harm and was merely lost in the forest and needed a place to spend the night. The audience is aware that Maurice did not have poor intentions in arriving at the castle, but the Beast does not know him, so he does not trust him. He chooses to make Maurice his prisoner.

As the film cuts back to the village, Belle is relaxing and reading in her home and it is apparent that she is unaware of her father's current predicament. Since Belle had no reason to believe her father had not made it to the fair, she is shocked to see Philippe return to the house without Maurice. She frantically asks, "What are you doing here? Where's Papa? Where is he, Philippe? What happened? We have to find him. You have to take me to him." At this moment Belle is setting out to rescue her father. She has no idea of the dangers that exist in the forest but she doesn't care. Philippe brings Belle to the gate of the castle, where they can see Maurice's hat on the other side. Although the castle has a creepy exterior, Belle chooses to go inside in search of her father. At this point, she is running aimlessly throughout the castle. Once Lumiere and Cogsworth see Belle, they choose to bring her attention to the door that leads to the tower, without making their

presence known to her. The audience can see that Lumiere has helped Belle find her way to the castle; however, Belle does not know what led her to these stairs. Moments later, she finds Maurice locked away. Belle touches his hands and realizes that he is cold and hears him cough and knows he is sick. Maurice is trying to convince Belle to leave immediately, but she refuses, unaware of the scary Beast who resides in the castle. As the Beast finds Belle beside Maurice, he yells that she must go. Belle, still determined to save her father, gives up the adventures of which she had always dreamed, and proposes that she could take his place as prisoner. Before giving her word, Belle asks the Beast to move into the light so she could see him. Although the audience and Maurice are aware of the Beast's terrifying appearance, this is Belle's first encounter with him. Upon seeing him, Belle gasps and falls toward her father in terror, but remains strong by giving her word to remain as prisoner. The Beast accepts this offering and brings Maurice out of the castle and throws him into a contraption that brings him back to the village.

When Maurice is dropped in the village, he runs into the tavern in an attempt to gather people to help him rescue Belle from the Beast. The people in the town mock Maurice's request because they believe he is a lunatic and that there is no beast. Men pick him up and toss him outside into the snow. Maurice is shown alone outside the tavern, upset and distressed, calling out, "Will no one help me?" Since no one chose to help

Maurice, the townspeople are represented as rude and selfish people. The audience is aware that Maurice is telling the truth, but because of the townspeople's preconceived notion that Maurice is crazy, they refuse to acknowledge the possibility that this is the truth. The audience is engaged and feels a connection with Maurice, who is a kind man who is telling the truth and being ignored. Knowing the full situation, the viewer is intrigued to find out how Maurice will either convince the townspeople to help him, or save Belle without their help.

The film cuts back to the castle and shows Belle crying in her bedroom. Moments later Mrs. Potts is at the door and Belle is startled to realize that she is a talking teapot. Belle had not yet been aware that this is an enchanted castle, but accepted it without hesitation or skepticism. Belle refuses to have dinner with the Beast because she is upset that he didn't give her a chance to say goodbye to her father. Against the Beast's orders, she goes to the kitchen in search of food, hours after dinnertime. After eating, she decides to explore the castle, and Lumiere and Cogsworth choose to go with her. She stumbles upon the West Wing, the only place that is forbidden to her within the castle. Belle's curiosity takes over, and she sneaks up the stairs. As she is about to touch the enchanted rose, the Beast finds her and yells at her to get out. Belle is so frightened by his roar that she runs out of the castle and into the snow-covered forest. Soon, wolves are chasing Belle and Philippe

and they cannot escape. When Belle is thrown off of Philippe, she picks up a stick and begins to swing it at the wolves. At the exact moment she is knocked down and surrounded by wolves, the Beast arrives. He fights off the wolves, despite the overwhelming number of them, and the injuries he is sustaining from their biting and scratching. Eventually, the wolves run away, but the Beast appears dizzy, and passes out on the floor. Belle's first instinct is to get atop Philippe and continue her journey home, but she cannot leave the Beast there to die, so she puts him on Philippe's back, brings him back to the castle, and cleans his wounds. In this scene, the Beast, who had previously acted selfish and mean, has risked his life to save Belle. This shows that goodness exists within him. Belle shows her goodness by then rescuing him, in return, by bringing him back to the castle and caring for him.

As this scene unfolds, the audience is aware of why the West Wing is forbidden, and watches in heightened anxiety as Belle climbs the stairs toward the enchanted rose. Because Belle does not know what she is coming upon, the audience wishes to warn her of the Beast's temper and stop her from going any further because nothing good can come of it. After the Beast finds her there and screams to get out, Belle runs out into the forest. Audience engagement is high as the viewers want to warn Belle that she will not be able to

escape the vicious wolves in the forest, that led her father to seek refuge in the castle. The Beast, with the knowledge of all the dangers of the forest, follows her out and saves her.

The film cuts back to the village and shows Gaston plotting against Maurice with the man from the insane asylum. They plan to bring Maurice to the insane asylum unless Belle agrees to marry Gaston. This scene is secretive, as Gaston does not want his scheme to be foiled. The shot is filmed from above, as if the audience is spying on these men without their knowledge. As the meeting ends, they decide to immediately set their plan into motion. However, when they show up at the house, they are too late, so LeFou remains to alert Gaston when they return. Maurice has just left to rescue Belle by himself. He says, "If no one will help me, then I'll go back alone. I don't care what it takes, I'll find that castle and somehow I'll get her out of there." Maurice puts more random objects in his bag (some maps, a globe, a metal compass-type object, a pair of long johns, and a lantern) and then sets out into the forest. When Maurice goes looking for Belle he is exhibiting courageousness, as he is still sick, without a horse, travelling through inclement weather, and through a forest full of vicious wolves. Also, since Maurice had a disturbing encounter with the Beast, he fears that the Beast is acting cruelly and mercilessly toward Belle. Maurice is unaware of the Beast's transformation into a kind, generous friend.

The audience is aware that the Beast has undergone changes in his temperament, as he has begun controlling his temper and treating Belle with respect and tenderness. After Belle and the Beast have their romantic evening full of ballroom dancing, the Beast can see that Belle is not fully happy. She says she wishes to see her father again, and the Beast gives her the magic mirror. This is the first instance where Belle has the same full access to narrative information that the audience is given. This is significant because Belle can now see that her father is searching for her, and she realizes that he is unaware of the Beast's transformation and thinks she is in danger. The audience had previously been aware of Maurice's mistaken beliefs about the Beast, as the viewers can see that Belle had grown to enjoy her time at the castle. In the mirror Belle sees her father is sick and may be dying and is alone in the forest. If Belle had been able to contact her father and tell him that she is safe and happy in the castle, he would not be on a mission to rescue Belle, and require her assistance. It is clear that Belle wants to go help him, but she is bound by her word. At this moment the Beast releases Belle as his prisoner so she may go to him. Belle is thankful, and says, "Hold on Papa, I'm on my way." She finds Maurice passed out in the snow in the forest, and brings him home to care for him. When Maurice awakes from unconsciousness, he is overwhelmed with joy and shocked to hear that the "horrible beast" allowed Belle to leave. All of the information that the audience had is now being shared amongst characters. This

helps the audience to identify with the characters and empathize with them since they have the same level of understanding. The audience can hear that Belle is telling her father that the Beast has changed, and see that the man from the insane asylum has arrived to take Maurice into custody.

As Belle becomes aware of Gaston's plan, she refuses to marry him and must prove that her father is not crazy by showing the townspeople the Beast, via the magic mirror. However, this elicits an unexpected response. The townspeople choose to kill the Beast, as they believe he is a danger to them. When Belle tries to stop them, Gaston locks her and her father in the cellar. The entire time she is down there, Belle wishes she could escape to go save the Beast. Chip, who stowed away in Belle's bag, comes to their rescue. Chip sees the ax on Maurice's log-cutting machine and has an idea. He turns the machine on and uses it to cut the doors open. Chip has rescued Belle and Maurice, and they are now able to go to the castle and try to save the Beast.

Before Belle arrives at the castle, the audience can see that the Beast has given up hope and is allowing Gaston to hurt him without fighting back. The audience is engaged and wants to inspire the Beast by telling him that Belle will return for him. This scene is likely to heighten audience engagement. This is because the audience knows that Belle cares for the Beast, and wants the Beast to know he has not lost her forever. At this moment the

anticipation is growing: the audience does not know if Belle will arrive in time to save him and tell him how she feels, therefore, reversing the curse, or if Gaston will kill the Beast and he will die in the form of a beast. When Belle arrives, the Beast finally reacts to Gaston by fighting for his life. After showing mercy by not killing Gaston when given the chance, he is climbing toward Belle. At this moment, Gaston attacks the Beast, stabbing him in the back. As Belle lays the Beast down on the balcony she finally utters, "I love you" as the final petal falls from the rose. These words had been highly anticipated as the audience and servants all knew that they would set him free of his beastly form and lift the curse. Belle had never felt obligated to say how she felt because she had never been informed of the curse. Suddenly, the Beast is lifted into the air and transformed back into his human form.

### **FORESHADOWING**

The film has multiple instances of foreshadowing. This means that specific events or ideas are hinted at early in the film, and, if noticed, can suggest what will happen later in the film. In certain cases, foreshadowing is used to prepare the viewer for something that may happen, or to make the viewer recognize why it did not happen. Such cues are helpful if seen, but not detrimental to the understanding of the story if overlooked.

In the opening scene, during a break in the song, Belle is in the bookstore and she explains that she will borrow the same book that she has already completed twice. When

the bookstore owner chuckles and reminds her of this, Belle reveals that it is her favorite book. This is significant because it indicates that Belle uses reading as an escape from reality because she is unhappy in this little town. This shows the viewer that Belle uses these books to transport herself to places she would rather be. For Belle, as she describes it, the book contains “far off places, daring swordfights, magic spells, and a prince in disguise.” As the bookstore owner sees how happy the book makes Belle, he says, “If you like it all that much, it’s yours.” When the bookstore owner allows Belle to keep the book, it is unbeknownst to the viewer or Belle that he is bestowing these adventures upon her. Later in the film, each of these ideas becomes a reality. Belle is living in the enchanted castle, which is removed from the village, in a far-off place. The fight scene between Gaston and the Beast is comparable to the daring swordfights; they use knives and other objects rather than swords. The entire film is founded on the casting of a magical spell. This spell transformed the castle and all of its inhabitants. All of the servants became household objects, and the Prince became a beast. The most obvious foreshadowing is the prince in disguise. The spell replaced his handsome royal appearance with a beastly, intimidating one.

The second instance of foreshadowing is also during the song, “Belle.” The townsfolk stop singing for a moment as Belle shares part of her favorite book with the sheep. She

sings, "Here's where she meets Prince Charming, but she won't discover that it's him 'til chapter three." Although the audience is aware that the Beast is a prince, Belle is not. Once she is living at the castle, Belle and the Beast spend the majority of their time together and it is apparent that there is a connection forming between them. Belle is confused by the tenderness she is feeling since the Beast had previously been mean and harsh, but now he is showing his softer side. Upon this change, she sings, "True, that he's no Prince Charming, but there's something in him that I simply didn't see." The audience is aware that he is a prince and eagerly awaits the moment when she realizes that he is her Prince Charming.

The final instance of foreshadowing occurs in the first scene of the film. As the narrator is describing the conflict of the story, he makes the situation sound hopeless to the viewer. In his final line, the narrator asks the rhetorical question, "For who could ever learn to love a beast?" As if to answer this question immediately, the next image is of Belle walking out of her house and a song about her ensues. Within this song the townsfolk continuously claim that she is different from the rest of the society. As the viewer quickly learns the ideals of the society, it is apparent that being different is an asset to her personality. Her rejection of Gaston, who is considered to have the perfect appearance, proves that she is not superficial, and would be able to look beyond physical appearance to

connect with someone on a deeper level. Later in the film this assumption comes to fruition as Belle falls in love with the Beast for who he is, rather than his fearsome exterior.

### **MOTIF IN *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST***

Books serve as a motif throughout the film. According to Bordwell and Thompson, motif is “any significant repeated element that contributes to the overall form” (2013, p. 63). Generally, books are used to symbolize knowledge, and can allow a character to vicariously experience the types of adventures that he or she wishes to have. Books are used throughout *Beauty and the Beast* to represent Belle’s love of reading and desire for adventure. This interest defines Belle’s relationships with many different characters. The townsfolk choose to ostracize Belle because they believe her interest in reading is peculiar for a woman. Since she cannot connect with them, Belle desires to find somewhere that she belongs, among people who enjoy and respect books and knowledge as much as she does. These books supply Belle with knowledge of the opportunities that exist outside of her small town.

When the audience first encounters Belle, she is walking through town on her way to the bookstore. As discussed earlier, the song “Belle” describes Belle from the point of view of the townsfolk. The townsfolk see her love for reading as “odd” and “peculiar.” During the song, when the baker engages Belle in conversation by asking where she is

headed, he quickly loses interest as she responds “the bookshop” and enthusiastically explains the “wonderful story” she just finished. The audience is aware that he is no longer paying attention, as he cuts her off mid -sentence by saying, “That’s nice” and yelling to his coworker about the need for baguettes. Belle puts away her book, gives an exaggerated sigh and walks away, leaving the baker to his work. The baker serves as Belle’s first interaction, showing the differences between Belle and the townsfolk regarding books. As she attempts to connect with this man, their dissimilarities are heightened, and this conversation serves to introduce Belle’s relationship with the townsfolk. Books fascinate Belle, but this man sees this story as a waste of his time, as he is focused on his job.

Moments later, when Belle walks into the little town bookshop she is cheerfully welcomed by name. Her conversation with the bookseller gives the audience background into Belle’s love for reading. First, as she explains she is returning the book, the man is surprised that she is done already, implying she is a quick reader. As she asks if he’s “got anything new” and the old man responds, “Not since yesterday” with a chuckle, the audience understands Belle’s commitment to reading since she has read every book he has to offer. This is not a large bookstore, so she is not surprised by his answer. As she stands on the ladder in front of the bookshelf and chooses a book, the bookseller laughs since she has already read it twice. This moment is significant, as Belle eagerly explains that this is

her favorite book because it contains “far off places, daring swordfights, magic spells, and a prince in disguise.” It is important that the audience recognize Belle’s desire for an adventure such as this one. The bookseller senses Belle’s love for the book and tells her to keep it. Belle is thrilled as she walks out of the store and opens it immediately. Sharing her love for books, the bookseller appears to be the only person with whom Belle has an actual connection.

The townsfolk continue to sing about Belle having her “nose stuck in a book.” This has a negative connotation and portrays the town’s perception of Belle. They repeat, “She’s different from the rest of us,” citing Belle’s love of books as the main reason for the distinction. However, since Belle is engrossed in this book, she is impervious to the stares and comments of those around her. It is apparent that this is Belle’s daily routine, as she has perfected her ability to read and remain conscious of her surroundings. She walks with ease throughout the town, without needing to lift her head and see where she is going. She jumps through a children’s game of jump rope, uses an overhead sign to avoid a bucket of water which has been spilled out of a window in her direction, and walks over a wheelbarrow, all while focusing solely on her book.

Belle sits atop a fountain and is surrounded by sheep. When she starts singing about the book, a nearby woman who had been using the fountain to wash her clothes, becomes

angry and chooses to leave, rather than listen to Belle discuss her book. Belle's passion for reading is portrayed to the audience; she chooses to share the story with any audience she can find, in this case, sheep.

As Belle walks out of town, still reading, Gaston stops her by taking her book out of her hands. Belle looks shocked and asks to have it back. Gaston, who is looking through the pages confused says, "How can you read this? There are no pictures!" to which Belle replies, "Some people use their imagination." Upon hearing this, Gaston tosses the book in a nearby puddle of mud and says, "It's about time you got your head out of those books and paid attention to more important things." Gaston believes that as a woman Belle should be concerned with finding a husband, and is wasting time by reading books. As Belle moves to grab her book, Gaston stands between her and the book and says, "Like me." Belle reaches around Gaston's body and picks up her muddy book. Gaston continues, "The whole town is talking about it, it's not right for a woman to read. Soon she starts getting ideas and thinking." As he is speaking, his face provides evidence of his disapproval of Belle's lifestyle, and his actions prove that he has no respect for knowledge or intelligence. Belle is surprised that her response, "Gaston, you are positively primeval" elicits a proud "Thank you" from Gaston, proving he does not understand what that means, or that it was an insult. Belle is not interested in spending time with Gaston; she'd prefer to be with someone who

shares her interests. In a last attempt to persuade Belle, Gaston slyly grabs her book and points it to the tavern while inviting her to look at his trophies. The audience is aware of Belle's disinterest at this point, as she says, "Maybe some other time" and she "must get home to help her father." Belle grabs the book out of his hand and starts walking back out of the town and toward her home. This entire conversation serves as another example of separating Belle's interests from the interests of the townsfolk. They find her desire to read to be improper, while she finds their outlook on women to be offensive and deeply misogynistic. When she calls Gaston "primeval" she means to say he is primitive and old fashioned, and needs to accept that times have changed and understand that women are capable of more than they are allowed in this village.

When Belle arrives home to her father, Maurice, he asks her if she had a good time in town. Belle is holding her book and responds, "I got a new book." Then, she asks her father if he thinks she's odd because she doesn't think she fits in here. Belle is aware that there is no one who shares her interests, or beliefs. As her conversation with Gaston proves, what it means to be a woman in this town does not coincide with Belle's idea of womanhood. The audience gains the insight that Belle is aware she does not fit in this community, but she is also not willing to change herself to be more like these people, because that would be regression. By clutching onto her book throughout this scene, Belle shows the audience

that she will choose to remain strong in her convictions. The book serves as a tangible symbol of distinction between Belle and the community.

The following day, Belle is peacefully sitting home reading her new book (unaware that most of the town is outside at the wedding that Gaston has planned for himself and Belle). When she hears a knock on the door, she places her book on the table and walks to answer it. Although Belle is not interested in speaking to Gaston, she is polite in greeting him. Gaston walks in and makes himself at home. In doing so, he places his muddy boots directly on Belle's book. This is the second instance of Gaston showing the audience that he does not respect Belle or her love of books. Gaston kicks off his boots but, his smelly feet remain on Belle's book, which is distracting her from the speech he is giving. As he is describing the life he thinks she should be thrilled to have (married to him with multiple children) he is neglecting the only item she does care about, her book. When he stands, she quickly moves the book to safety on the bookshelf. The priorities of both characters are distinctly shown at odds in this scene. As Gaston is selfishly concerned with himself and having Belle as a trophy wife, Belle's main concern is not allowing him to damage her book. Belle wants to find someone who is similar to her, and Gaston's complete disregard of her book proves that he is not this person.

Later, during Belle's first night in the enchanted castle, she wants to explore.

Lumiere, the candlestick, and Cogsworth, the clock, take her for a tour, rather than allowing her to walk around alone, in order to keep her away from the forbidden West Wing (which contains the wilting rose). Belle tries to sneak away toward the West Wing, and is stopped.

In a desperate attempt to redirect her interest, Lumiere and Cogsworth name other places in the castle that may be of more interest. She ignores their suggestions until they say there is a library. Belle is excited and they appear relieved, and think Belle is following as they hastily move away from the stairs leading to the West Wing. There is a moment where Belle appears to be deciding between following them to the library of books, where she can continue to read about adventures as she has always done, or following her curiosity into the West Wing and finally experiencing this adventure firsthand. She chooses to experience the adventure. At this moment, the audience must recognize that Belle is not acting out of character or disregarding a library full of books, but rather that this decision has been inspired by all of the reading she has done. If Belle had never read about numerous adventures, she would not have the imagination that she has, which stimulated this curiosity.

After the Beast finds Belle in the West Wing, she runs away from the castle frightened. The Beast follows after her, saving her from the wolves in the forest. In saving

her, he is injured, but rather than running away she chooses to bring him back to the castle and stay to care for him. After this moment, it is clear that they care for one another. The Beast elicits the help of Lumiere and Cogsworth, telling them that he has never felt this way for anyone and would like to do something special for her. Lumiere has an epiphany, and the audience is expected to realize that he remembers Belle's excitement when they had mentioned the library. In the next scene the Beast is standing outside of a room with its doors closed, and tells her he has a surprise for her. She closes her eyes, showing trust in his intentions, and walks inside. The Beast opens all of the curtains, illuminating the room with light. Excitedly, he tells her she can open her eyes, and Belle realizes that she is inside a beautiful library, surrounded by more books than she has ever seen. The camera moves around the library to show the audience that it appears limitless in size, every wall filled to the ceiling with books. The Beast, similar to the bookstore owner, is elated to see how happy the library makes her, and tells her that it's hers. She is overwhelmed, but manages to thank him before they are speechless, holding hands and looking into each other's eyes. At this moment, the audience sees that there is a true connection between Belle and the Beast. The Beast's actions show that he approves of her love of reading, and wants to make her happy. For Belle, this generous act shows that she has found someone who will accept her for who she is, and respect her thirst for knowledge. On a more implicit level, the Beast

is proving his comfort and appreciation for Belle's intelligence and independence, showing he is not misogynistic. This is a direct contrast to Gaston and the townsfolk, who are adamantly against Belle's reading since they believe women should be content in their place in society, and Belle's thinking poses a potential threat to their status quo.

The day after the Beast gives Belle the library, they spend time outdoors, playing in the snow and feeding birds. When they return inside, they sit together by the fire and Belle is holding a book. The servants are looking at them, singing, "There may be something there that wasn't there before." This could be interpreted in many ways. Explicitly, the servants are saying they see a new tenderness in the Beast and a connection between him and Belle. However, it can also imply there is someone there (the Beast) who wants to share Belle's interest in reading and encourage it with his actions, which Belle has never had before.

The film cuts to the servants singing and preparing the castle for a romantic evening for Belle and the Beast. It then returns to Belle and the Beast who are now sitting at a table in the library with stacks of books beside them. Belle is reading Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to the Beast who is sitting and listening, engaged in the story. The Beast proves he is genuinely enjoying the story, as he immediately asks her to read it again upon completion. Recognizing his excitement, Belle hands the book to the Beast and says he can read it to

her. He hesitantly agrees, and struggles for a few moments before appearing ashamed, and admitting that he cannot read. Belle looks surprised and says, "You mean you never learned?" to which he responds, "I learned, a little, it's just been so long." Belle enthusiastically says, "Well here, I'll help you." It is clear from his tone of voice and attempted justifications that the Beast had been embarrassed by this, and expected her to think poorly of him. When Belle excitedly volunteers to help him, he accepts. This is another instance where the Beast's actions show his respect for Belle's intelligence, and that he is not too prideful to allow a woman to teach him. As he starts, Belle helps him with the first word, but in a calming way that helps his confidence and puts him at ease, enabling him to read the rest. Belle appears to be in a state of contentment; she closes her eyes and imagines the story as he is reading it. This scene provides another distinction between the Beast and Gaston. When Gaston had opened her book earlier in the film, he realized that it did not contain pictures, and asked how she could read it. When Belle told him that people use their imagination, Gaston chose to toss her book into the mud to show that he is not interested in learning to read or use his imagination. This moment also shows that Gaston would be too proud to allow Belle to teach him. (Needing a woman to teach him anything would mean admitting inferiority and weakness.)

The final allusion made to books is made by Chip, once he has been returned to his human state in the final scene. He asks, "Are they gonna live happily ever after, Momma?" His mother, Mrs. Potts, replies, "Of course, my dear, of course." This word choice is specifically used by Chip to allude to the fact that many love stories end by saying, "And they lived happily ever after." This line acknowledges that their love story has been the adventure Belle desired, and it could be its own book. It also suggests that Belle has found someone who respects and appreciates her love of books, and enjoys reading them with her.

#### **GOAL- ORIENTED PLOT: THEME OF FREEDOM V. CAPTIVITY**

*Beauty and the Beast* follows a goal- oriented plot. As Bordwell and Thompson discuss, a goal- oriented plot is a pattern of development in which the film centers on the goal of the characters and how they attempt to achieve that goal (2013, p.85). The film follows the interweaving goals of three main characters: Belle, the Beast, and Gaston. These goals affect the rest of the characters in the film, but are central to these characters. Belle desires a life full of the types of adventures she reads about in her books. Gaston wants to marry Belle. The Beast yearns to be freed of the curse and return to his human state. These goals are somewhat contradictory to one another; all three cannot be attained simultaneously. Throughout the story, the filmmaker employs the ideas of freedom and

captivity to demonstrate contrasts between the depths to which each character will go to achieve their goals.

*Beast's Goal Affecting Belle and Gaston*

In the opening scene revealing the background, the audience becomes aware that the Beast had previously been a handsome Prince. The filmmaker reveals why the spell was cast on the castle, and how it could be reversed. The Beast must learn to love another, and earn a woman's love in return, before the last petal falls. However, since he refuses to leave the castle, he has imprisoned himself, and made his own goal seem futile. If he fails, he will remain a Beast, and the household objects will not return to their human form either.

Although the Beast would not leave the castle, he recognizes an opportunity to reverse the spell when Belle asks to switch positions with Maurice, and remain the Beast's prisoner. This forces Belle to accept that she will never have the adventures and freedom that she has always desired. Initially, the Beast thinks that by imprisoning Belle he can force her to love him and reverse the spell. However, he quickly learns to treat Belle with respect, and chooses to allow her to live as his guest, rather than his prisoner. Over time, Belle and the Beast show genuine care for one another. The Beast is willing to do anything possible to make Belle happy, so he allows her to use the magic mirror to see how her father is. When she recognizes that Maurice needs her, the Beast grants Belle her freedom

by releasing her as prisoner. It is because he loves Belle that he chooses to set her free and allow her to go to Maurice, rather than what would be best for him. If he had chosen to be selfish and keep her there in order to reverse the spell, he would not be exhibiting true love, or be deserving of her love. When the townsfolk become aware of the Beast, Gaston chooses to lead a mob to kill him. Belle tries to stop them but fails. She chooses to return to the castle in order to warn him of the impending attack, but is too late. When she arrives, Gaston is attacking the Beast who appears too upset over losing Belle to fight back. Once he sees that she has returned, he is inspired to fight back. Given the opportunity to kill Gaston, he chooses to control his temper and allow him to live if he will leave immediately. As the Beast climbs the roof toward the balcony on which Belle is standing, Gaston stabs the Beast from behind. Gaston then loses his grip and falls to his death. Belle grabs the Beast and helps him onto the balcony where she tells him she loves him as he is drifting out of unconsciousness. At this moment the spell is reversed, and the Beast becomes human once again. He has attained his goal.

However, throughout the time that Belle is trapped in the castle, the Beast is interrupting Gaston's plan of marrying her, although Gaston is unaware she's gone. At this time, the Beast's goal of finding a woman to love him, by taking Belle prisoner, is affecting Gaston's ability to marry her, which is Gaston's goal. Then, once Belle returns to the town

from the castle, she must defend her father against the man from the insane asylum who is trying to take him away. By showing the townsfolk the Beast and saying kind words about him, Gaston recognizes that Belle has feelings for the Beast. At this point, Belle's feelings for the Beast are affecting Gaston's goal. Outraged and jealous, Gaston believes that he must kill the Beast so Belle is forced to marry him.

*Belle's Goal Affecting Gaston and the Beast*

As for Belle, the audience learns of her goals through her singing of "Belle" and "Belle (Reprise)." Belle repeats that this small town life is not the right type of life for her. She needs a world filled with adventure and excitement. She does not want to be stuck in a small town where she will never be anything more than someone's wife. As she sings, "I want much more than this provincial life. I want adventure in the great, white somewhere. I want it more than I can tell. And for once it might be grand to have someone understand. I want so much more than they've got planned" she is running through a field, appearing free. The audience recognizes she has just stated her life goal. She wants to go beyond the provincial town in which she lives and see what journeys life has to offer and other people with whom she can relate.

In order for Belle to pursue her goals, she must leave this town. This directly affects Gaston's dreams because she will not remain here and create a family with him. Belle

realizes that he only wants to marry her for her beauty, and she wants to find someone who understands her. The idea of being “[Gaston’s] little wife” to Belle is unbearable. She “guarantees” that it won’t ever be her. At this moment, the audience is aware that Gaston will likely act as an obstacle to Belle’s goals, and fail to attain his own.

The Beast also acts as an interruption to Belle’s goals. She selflessly chooses to switch places with her father if it means that the Beast will release Maurice. In doing so, she acknowledges that she will never find the adventure for which she is desperately yearning. However, she is treated more as a guest than a prisoner, and has the opportunity to experience new adventures in an enchanted castle. She is able to connect with the Beast, on a deeper level, as she never could with those in her village. Although released as prisoner, Belle chooses to return to the castle and experience all of the adventures of life with the Beast, as she has attained her goal.

#### *Gaston’s Goal Affecting Belle and the Beast*

Lastly, since Gaston is the alpha male of this society, he knows he has his pick of marrying whomever he would please. After deciding that Belle is the most beautiful woman in town, he declares that he is “making plans to woo and marry Belle.”

In marrying Belle, she would essentially become his property. Women in this type of society must answer to their husbands’ requests. Immediately after Belle says, “There must

be more than this provincial town." Gaston sings, "Just watch I'm going to make Belle my wife." If Gaston attains his goal of marrying Belle, then Belle's dreams would be disregarded and she would never escape this provincial life. During Gaston's proposal to Belle, he says, "This is the day your dreams come true." To which Belle responds, "What do you know about my dreams?" Gaston begins to describe what their life together would be like, "rustic hunting lodge, my latest kill roasting on the fire, and my little wife, massaging my feet while the little ones play on the floor with the dogs. We'll have six or seven [strapping boys]." The life he has planned is customary to the society in which they live and would be enticing to most of the women in this village, however, that is not the future Belle wants for herself. He wants to trap her in this town, unable to pursue her own dreams, which would be a type of imprisonment.

After Belle rejects this proposal, Gaston is furious. He says to LeFou, "I'll have Belle as my wife; make no mistake about it." After scheming with LeFou, they decide to take advantage of Belle's good nature by paying the man who runs the insane asylum to lock up her father. Gaston knows that Belle would do anything to protect Maurice, which includes agreeing to marry Gaston. He is willing to trick Belle into a life she doesn't want, if that is what he must do to make her his wife. Gaston does not respect Belle; he treats her like a

trophy he can win and show off to others. His selfishness and heartlessness are undeniable to the audience.

When Gaston recognizes that Belle cares for the Beast at the end, his jealousy creates an incentive for him to kill the Beast. The Beast, who has chosen to release Belle, is gently accepting the fact that he has lost Belle and will forever remain in this form. Gaston recognizes that the Beast is acting as a barrier to his goals, and tries to kill him. Gaston does not attain his goal at the end, as Belle reaches out her hand to save the Beast and Gaston falls to his death.

## **CONCLUSION**

Throughout *Beauty and the Beast*, many techniques are utilized to enhance the storyline. These techniques allow the viewer to understand the characters more fully, and become invested in their goals and remain more engaged, overall. As Gaston is defeated and Belle and the Beast live happily ever after, the audience is inspired to judge people based on their inner beauty, rather than their outer appearances.

## **COMPARING AND CONTRASTING *CINDERELLA* WITH *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST***

### **INTRODUCTION**

This section will bring deeper meaning to the ideas expressed in the earlier sections, by presenting them for comparison. In the first two sections, *Cinderella* (1950) and *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) were dissected and analyzed to portray how each feature is working within the overall construct of the film and its associated significance. This third section

will use the aforementioned details to illuminate the similarities and differences between the messages conveyed by each film. The forty- one year span between the releases of these films allowed for numerous advances in stylistic approaches, including less stereotypical physical depictions and plot decisions. This led to the creation of stronger female heroines, such as Belle, with internal strength and desired independence.

#### ***CINDERELLA V. BEAUTY AND THE BEAST WITH REGARD TO INNER & OUTER BEAUTY***

As discussed in the previous two sections, the physical appearance of the characters is essential in motivating the storylines. In each film, the respective filmmaker made specific choices about the appearance of each character, in order to represent their inner goodness or lack thereof. Although the beauty ideals did not remain constant throughout those forty-one years, the filmmakers of both of these films employed numerous devices to ensure that the audience would understand the representation of these characters, and how they are reflective of the time period in which the film is set.

Cinderella's beauty is described in great detail (for reference see p. 10-12). As the Prince lays his eyes upon her, he is drawn to her, immediately walking over to her. By stating that she is beautiful enough for the Prince, the film makes the claim that Cinderella's golden hair, blue eyes, small feet, and thin body are regarded as the standard for beauty in this society. In this film, the audience is told of the jealousy that Lady Tremaine bears

toward Cinderella for having such beauty. This information, along with the disgusted faces made by the Prince, King, and Grand Duke toward the stepsisters, allows the audience to recognize that they are considered highly unattractive by this society. Anastasia and Drizella are shown with disproportionate facial features that are emphasized by the displeased faces they make throughout the entire film. When they are shown taking pleasure in something, they reveal an unappealing smirk. This is because they take pleasure in impure situations, such as the misfortune of others, especially Cinderella.

Similarly, in *Beauty and the Beast*, everyone in town regards Belle for her beauty (for reference see p. 41-42, 53-54). She is considered the most beautiful woman in the village, despite their disapproval of her love for reading. However, the filmmaker's choice to give Belle modest beauty, brown hair, hazel eyes, and unimpressive clothing, shows progress in society's view of women. To make this point more clear, the filmmaker employs the contrast between Belle and the Bimbettes. This sets three seemingly perfect women (blonde hair, voluptuous bodies, perfect make-up and elegant costuming) as the antithesis of the meaning of beauty in the film. They are given coloring reminiscent of Cinderella, with golden hair and blue eyes; however, they are not modest in clothing or body type, accentuating their sexuality. These women have been costumed ostentatiously so the audience realizes they are meant to be looked at, but have nothing more significant to offer

to the plot. There is a crucial point that must be made here: the audience is expected to recognize the Bimbettes' beauty. This means they must not deduce that because Belle's modest attractiveness is the standard for beauty, the Bimbettes' obvious beauty is considered unattractive by this society. Instead, the filmmaker can rely upon the old standards of beauty, set by characters such as Cinderella, which is less valuable as time progresses. By doing this, the film is taking a stand, claiming that women can no longer rely solely on their physical attractiveness, but must have more depth to them, as Belle does. Belle is regarded as odd in her village, but it is clear to viewers that the village members are wrong for disapproving of her intelligence, rather than she is wrong for having it.

Once this physical distinction is made apparent, the audience can breach the next level, their inner qualities. Both filmmakers focus on levels beyond the physical beauty in order to expand their characters and the depth of meaning within the film. In *Cinderella* each character is a reflection of their inner goodness, the physically attractive characters are kind, morally responsible, and act as symbols of goodness. The physically unattractive characters are immoral, unethical, and vile, clearly portrayed symbols for evil. This is simplistic and easily understood by the audience. *Beauty and the Beast* is more complex in its depictions of characters. By simply looking at these characters it is impossible to make assumptions about their inner characteristics. The filmmaker implores the audience to

make judgments about these characters on the basis of their words and actions, as they have been given depth and 3-dimensionality. In *Beauty and the Beast*, the contrast between Gaston and the Beast serves as the perfect example for the complexities of characterization. Gaston is revered by the townspeople for his beautiful physical appearance, and it makes him the most sought after man in the community. However, he is selfish, superficial, rude, and primitive. The Beast appears hideously unattractive, but is kind, protective, and supportive of Belle. This enhances audience involvement because the viewer must decipher the motives of each village member and then consider how this is connected to their physical appearance, and what statement that makes about them as a character within this society. The ability to produce such complex ideas in short, cartoon films shows the progress that has been made in the years between the releases of these films.

### **CINDERELLA V. BELLE AND THEIR “DREAMS” OF FREEDOM**

Although the films are constructed differently, in distinct settings and times, both heroines were motivated to seek freedom from captivity, in order to pursue their dreams. Cinderella and Belle were both dreaming of places far away from their homes, with exciting adventures, and true love.

Neither woman had physical shackles stopping her from escaping the captivity, but both were bound by their word and their fear. Cinderella was treated as a captive servant.

She was forced to live in the tower and serve her stepmother and stepsisters. Technically, she was free to leave, but she had no money or anywhere else to go or live. She was bound by the societal constraints, causing her dream of freedom to be seemingly out of reach.

Belle voluntarily became the Beast's prisoner, in choosing to take her father's place. Her father had been locked in a dark, cold cell in the tower, where she assumed she would also be placed. Since Belle had given the Beast her word that she would not leave, he allowed her to move into a bedroom, and gave her access to the entire castle (except the West Wing). Although, technically she was his prisoner, she was not supervised or chained in any way. The one time when she was frightened that he was going to harm her, she ran away in terror. In doing this, a pack of wolves attacked her and the Beast saved her. Then, when she could have easily escaped his captivity, she chose to keep her word and bring him back to the castle, where she cared for him.

Both Cinderella and Belle were held captive in large castles that appeared run-down from the outside, showing that the joy that once existed in those places, was no more.

Although grand in size, Cinderella's château had been ruined after years of neglect. The inside remained clean and tidy, as Cinderella is shown scrubbing the floors. The castle in *Beauty and the Beast*, which was once filled with royalty, light, and happy servants, has become dark and gloomy, appearing abandoned from the outside. Inside, it has a full staff

of servants who keep it clean and neat, as it is sizeable and filled with a library, fireplace, and plenty else to entertain Belle.

The way in which each “prisoner” is kept captive is an interesting contrast.

Cinderella is technically free to leave at her own will, yet she acts as a servant and is locked away in a small tower. However, Belle is called a prisoner, and treated better. Belle is given a large bedroom, full wardrobe, gourmet dinners, and a full staff to wait on her every request. It seems counterintuitive that Belle is the prisoner and Cinderella is the free servant.

The society had placed Cinderella in an inescapable situation. Without money or a husband, she would not be able to create a life for herself. However, living locked away as an unpaid servant, she would never be able to leave the estate and meet someone to marry, nor would she be able to make money in order to save it and leave. There is nothing that she can actively do to avoid or escape her cruel life. If the invitation to the ball had not been brought to the door, or if the Grand Duke had not come searching for her, she would have remained within the castle’s walls with no hope of escape.

There is a build up leading to the exact point in each film when the audience watches both Cinderella and Belle lose hope that their dreams will ever come true. Until that moment in *Beauty and the Beast*, the film had shown how serious Belle was about her

dreams because she refused to marry Gaston, which would have been the easy choice in life. That would have meant that she would be accepted by everyone in her community and praised for being married to him. Instead, she proclaims that she wants adventure and to travel and experience all of the places she has read about in her books. Later, when Belle agrees to remain as prisoner, and does not have the chance to say goodbye to her father, she breaks down in tears. It is at this moment, that she has lost hope of ever achieving her dreams. As the Beast asks her to eat dinner with him, she refuses. Belle is obstinate, a quality that is never shown by Cinderella. Belle is ready to fight for her dreams, until she chooses unselfishly, to take her father's place. Cinderella spends more time dreaming about what she wishes would happen than she spends putting in work to achieve it, because she cannot see any way to make progress on it. Once she learns of the ball, she sees a direct plan to put her dreams in motion. She works hard to finish her chores. Although difficult, she finishes the chores in time to go and is about to lose hope when the mice give her a dress to wear. Then, as her stepsisters notice pieces of their old garments and rip her dress to shreds, she has hit the moment where she loses all hope. She runs to the courtyard sobbing. It is at this moment when the Fairy Godmother arrives and gives Cinderella all she needs to go to the ball, saving her from this moment of weakness.

#### **SOCIAL ORIENTATION OF THE SERVANTS**

*Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast* create many types of relationships based on different positions of power or friendship. Cinderella is a servant to her stepmother and stepsisters, the mice and birds act as servants to Cinderella, because they care for her, and the Beast has a house full of servants who changed into household objects upon the spell being cast over the castle.

Cinderella maintains a respectful relationship with her stepmother and stepsisters to ensure she is not kicked out of the house. She treats them well, but they do not reciprocate this kindness. They treat her with disgust and act as if she is nothing more than a servant. They do not act as though they are family. The stepsisters have no qualms about ordering her around, scolding her, or complaining to their mother about her.

Oppositely, the service that the mice give to Cinderella, in helping to make her a dress and saving her when she is locked in the tower, comes from a place of respect and care. Cinderella helps clothe, feed, and care for the mice, keeping them safe from Lucifer, the cat. The mice want to remain in this castle with Cinderella because they are her friends and it is a relationship filled with mutual respect. Although Cinderella never asks anything from them, they are willing to do anything they can to help her. As mice, they are low in social status, as is Cinderella. They can connect with her on this level and show that even though they are small, they can make progress if they all work together. This is similar to

the servants in *Beauty and the Beast*. They were not forced to be there, but once the castle was placed under the spell, they became the objects with which they had worked closely. Since Belle is kind to them, they are respectful to her. They aim to please Belle, as she is their first guest in many years. When the castle is being stormed by the angry mob out to kill the Beast, the servants warn the Beast immediately. Once he shows that he has given up, because he is heartbroken over Belle, the servants choose to fight for him. They wait in the foyer and act as a team to attack the intruders. These servants are a family, loyal to their master. They are willing to fight to protect their home and their master, showing that they care. Just as the mice in *Cinderella* were able to sew a beautiful dress in a short time by working together, the servants in *Beauty and the Beast* are a strong force that the angry mob cannot overcome because of their ability to work together. Although they are just household objects, they were able to use their resources to scare off the mob. This makes the statement that if people are dedicated and loyal to a cause, they will be successful. Similarly, Belle and Cinderella are dedicated to their goals; they never give up and are successful.

#### **MOTIF IN *CINDERELLA* AND *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST***

The filmmakers for both *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast* placed importance on specific items by having them serve as motifs. These motifs are quite different. In *Cinderella*

it is a part of her appearance, specifically her petite feet. *Beauty and the Beast* uses books, focusing on the interest of the heroine, rather than the physical depiction. This is an important difference as it shows the progression from primarily looking at women, to allowing them inner substance.

In *Cinderella*, the filmmaker uses the repeated focus on her feet as a way to imply their importance to the audience. Essentially, these uniquely tiny feet are the reason she is rescued from her life of servitude, as they are the only feet in the kingdom that can fit into the specially made glass slippers. Although Cinderella has many other redeeming qualities, such as her kindness and loyalty, the audience is made to focus on her appearance subconsciously, through repeated focus on her feet. This portrays the idea that these inner qualities are not as powerful as physical beauty when it comes to attaining dreams.

In *Beauty and the Beast*, the filmmaker repeatedly shows books. From the opening scene, the audience is aware of Belle's love for books. By dressing her in casual clothing, and placing emphasis on her books, the filmmaker is moving away from the importance of appearance, and allowing the viewers to understand Belle's interests. It is also important to recognize that her interest is in something intellectual, a book, rather than make-up or clothing, items that would still allude to superficial tendencies. This allows Belle to have the substance and depth that were previously awarded to men. The audience can be aware that

she is smart, and that will lead her to the attainment of her dreams, rather than relying upon her appearance.

**FINAL THOUGHTS: DEPICTIONS OF WOMEN IN *CINDERELLA* AND *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*: PRODUCTS OF THEIR SOCIETIES**

When watching *Cinderella* or *Beauty and the Beast* from the perspective of someone in the twenty-first century, it is easy to critique the flaws and weaknesses of the female characters. However, that is viewing these films with far too progressive views. In order to fairly criticize and understand these females, it is necessary to consider the time period and setting in which these films take place. That will allow for a true consideration of the societal and cultural barriers that would have been imposed upon them. These films were created to provide a realistic, yet romanticized, lens through which to experience these periods. (The parts that are unrealistic, such as the addition of magic and talking animals, are used for entertainment, as that is the purpose of these fictional films.)

*Cinderella* is meant to be an uplifting story of what could happen if people are brave enough to make their dreams come true. The eponymous character serves as the ideal standard for a woman in her society. She is humble, disciplined, charming, and graceful. Although *Cinderella* is constantly expressing her desire to pursue her dreams, she is limited in her ability to proactively do so. To fairly criticize her, it is necessary to consider the

cultural and societal constraints by which she would be bound in the nineteenth century. (As described on p. 11-12, it is assumed to be in this time period due to the filmmaker's decisions about mise-en-scene). As an unmarried woman, with no family or status, she would be denied many rights, such as the ability to obtain a job outside the home, or obtain property. Cinderella was trapped in this awful situation, living as servant to her stepmother and stepsisters. It is admirable that she remained strong, optimistic, and kind through their unrelenting cruel treatment. Although Cinderella's kindness and trustworthiness are essential to her good heartedness, which earns her the support and friendship of the mice, this leads to her most apparent character flaw: her naivety. Because she is good-hearted, she cannot believe that anyone would purposely do harm to her. After many years of mistreatment by her stepmother, she was quick to believe that Lady Tremaine would allow her to go to the ball. Cinderella should be aware of her stepmother's maliciousness, and not just accept her word.

The role of Lady Tremaine in *Cinderella* is significant when judged from a critic's perspective. She is described as a "woman of good family", which means she had a degree of wealth and status in this society. However, once Cinderella's father passed away, Lady Tremaine used all of his money and her own, attempting to cure Anastasia and Drizella of their horrible awkwardness. With no male in the family to earn money, Lady Tremaine has

wasted the fortune without any source of income. This caused the château to fall apart and leave Cinderella as servant. As a woman who was once of respectable status, Lady Tremaine is too proud to give up her home and she cannot find a job outside the home.

Lady Tremaine can be considered slightly progressive as she raised three daughters as the head of the household, without a male counterpart, by taking on some of the attributes more typical of men of that time. She became strict, demanding, controlling and expected Cinderella to do all of the household chores. Back in that time, women were not given these characteristics because it defied what was expected of them. In 1950 when this movie was released, many women were subservient to their husbands and could relate more to Cinderella than they could to Lady Tremaine, who more closely resembled their husbands. Lady Tremaine does fail as head of the household when she wastes the fortune and cannot keep the estate in respectable condition. Controlling the finances and property were two areas entrusted to men at that time, so her failure could serve to remind the audience that women were not taught these skills.

However masculine some of her attributes, Lady Tremaine was still a woman living within the constructs of a patriarchal society. Because of this, it is interesting to consider that she is just as unable to control her own future as Cinderella is. Cinderella fears Lady Tremaine because she would have nowhere to go if Lady Tremaine chose to kick her out.

However, Lady Tremaine is reliant upon Cinderella to maintain the illusion of status that comes from having a servant. Lady Tremaine is also constantly reminding Anastasia and Drizella that they need to make the Prince fall in love with them so they can have the lavish lifestyle they desire. She does not know how to earn a living for herself because in the nineteenth century women were not put to work. Aside from coaching her daughters on how to attract the Prince, she cannot do much to obtain money herself. In the end, it is her own jealousy which cost her the life she desired. If she had chosen to foster the beauty and charm of Cinderella alongside Anastasia and Drizella, she would have been saved once the Prince chose to marry Cinderella. The larger statement that could be extracted about women in general from that society, based on Cinderella, is that they are expected to simply learn to be content with a bad situation and hope to be rescued by a man, since women cannot effect their own change. When women like Lady Tremaine try to force the change, it is unsuccessful.

In terms of *Beauty and the Beast*, Belle is the main female character and she is immediately cast as an outsider in this village. This film is set in an enchanted castle, in a small patriarchal and chauvinistic village, very long ago. The men do not respect the women enough to care about or encourage their opinion, so the women have never had to be worth more than their appearance. At this time, women were supposed to marry a man

who had respectable standing, and satisfy his every need. Belle is juxtaposed with the three superficial blondes in her village who swoon over Gaston and wish to marry him. They are meant to be the stereotypical women in Belle's society. She does not share their interests or ideals. Belle is a deeply progressive character for this type of society, as she is more focused on her intelligence than her appearance or finding a husband. Even when Gaston asked her to marry him, she refused. Belle has large aspirations; she yearns to be where she belongs, among others who understand her. Since Belle is intellectual, she knows there is more to life than the small town in which she resides. If she did not have to care for her father, she would leave to go to the places she reads about.

Both films begin with a song by the respective societies, describing the main character's outer beauty and inner qualities. The song "Cinderella" describes that she is graceful, lovely, deserving of love and of the attainment of her dreams. The song "Belle" focuses on Belle's physical beauty, and claims that her oddness undermines this beauty. The village is drawing attention to her uniqueness in a negative way, where Cinderella's unique goodness was regarded positively. Although both heroines are good-natured, they offer insight into two different environments and perspectives. Cinderella is a servant in her own home, but she does not do much to defy society's wishes. She would not have dared go to the ball if she was not dressed appropriately. However, Belle provides the

audience with the perspective of a woman who openly defied the wishes of her village.

They wish for her to stay there, marry Gaston, and take care of their many children. She was rebellious, especially for the time period in which she lived.

Belle's uniqueness is crucial to the storyline. Her selflessness lands her locked in the castle, saving her father. It is only she who could see beyond the Beast's exterior and care for the person below. Every distinction made between Belle and the townsfolk leads the audience to recognize the lack of progression of the village. The recurring references to her as "odd" or "peculiar" are meant to be insults, but can be taken as compliments. According to the standards of today's society Belle is an intelligent and relatively independent woman; she should not assimilate to their society, a society in which she could only aspire to be someone's wife.

## **CONCLUSION**

Although the change between *Cinderella* and Belle was over a forty- one-year span, the subsequent Disney heroines were afforded a greater degree of independence and strength quickly after. A year later, Walt Disney Studios released *Aladdin* (1992), containing arguably the sassiest princess of all, Jasmine. She defies her father's wish for her to marry a prince, and runs away to take control of her own destiny. She does get married, but is allowed to choose her own prince. In 1995, *Pocahontas* was released, and the

eponymous heroine chooses family and home over a male companion in the end. Whereas Belle went back to save the Beast, Pocahontas sent John Smith back to England for treatment and did not accompany him, despite his asking (*Pocahontas*, 1995). In a much more progressive story, *Mulan* (1998), the heroine chooses to dress up as a man and go to battle. She is focused on her task, and although she is eventually found to be female, she still saves China from the Huns. In this film, the male suitor comes to seek her out because he has fallen in love with her for all she has done, not her beauty. The largest transformation thus far occurs in *Brave* (2012), and showcases Merida, a young princess who will do whatever is necessary to stop her parents from finding a suitor to whom she will be betrothed. She is given attributes typical of men (bravery and recklessness), and is successful in maintaining her independence by avoiding an arranged marriage. These films allow for the world to see the true progression of women and how the role of women has changed from 1950 until today. *Beauty and the Beast* was instrumental in this progression and continues to show characters who can serve as role models to young children and viewers.

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