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Option: Literature

**The Art of Retelling Fairy Tales: A Study of “Beauty and the Beast” Fairy Tale,
Robin McKinley’s *Beauty: A Retelling of the Story Beauty and the Beast* (1978)
and the 2017 Disney Adaptation**

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Dedication

To the infant in me; keep dreaming high!

To my mother; the heroine I would like to write about one day.

To my father; my source of strength and affection.

To my brothers; the apple of my eyes and my biggest supporters.

To my beloved ones.

To whomever underestimated me, I DID IT!

And to every single fairy tales' addict.

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to investigate how female characters are represented in classical fairy tales and in their retellings. The study uses the famous fairy tale “Beauty and the Beast” as a case study. Three versions of this fairy tale are examined: James Planché’s English translation “Beauty and the Beast” (1858) as a classic, its retelling by Robin McKinley under the title of *Beauty: A Retelling of the Story of Beauty and the Beast* (1978), and its Disney adaptation of 2017 entitled *Beauty and the Beast*. In addition, the study explores whether the female characters of each narrative are empowered or disempowered. Furthermore, this research traces the message evolution of the classical fairy tale throughout its retellings. Following the analytical and the comparative methods, the present investigation is conducted through the use of two literary approaches. From the one hand, feminism is imperative to this study since the protagonist is a female herself, and because the study tackles female representation as well as female (dis)empowerment. From the other hand, the historical approach permits the assessment of message evolution. The study concludes that while female characters are positively represented as well as fully empowered in McKinley’s retelling because it is a highly feminist tale, their representation and empowerment is only partial and delusional in both the classic and the 2017 adaptation. Finally, though the fairy tale versions are produced in different periods, developed differently and written to accomplish dissimilar purposes, the key message of the classical fairy tale is still the same in both retellings: it did not change but it rather evolved.

Key Words: fairy tale; retelling; fairy tale film; adaptation; message evolution; feminist tales; female representation; female (dis)empowerment.

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Introduction

“Once upon a time.... And they lived happily ever after,” two statements with which large sequences of enchantment, fascination, and amusement are created. These magical storytelling expressions give chills to whomever is keen about fairy tales, and open a great possibility for imagination and day-dreaming. “Sleeping Beauty,” “Cinderella,” and “Beauty and the Beast,” among plenty others, are examples that constitute the fairy tale genre. Since forever, and no matter where in this globe, children were, and are still, being raised watching, reading or listening to such tales. More importantly, their interaction is not quite superficial, but rather they do fantasize about the “what if it was me?” conflict. In addition to the flying fairies, the speaking animals and the gigantic giants; girls get enchanted by the beautiful well-dressed princesses, whereas boys get inspired by the beastly-turned-handsome prince that rescues the love of his life, his princess, to finally live a blissful life. Interestingly, fairy tales are not exclusive to children’s use only, but they also do pervade the interests of adults, and parents in particular.

The significance of fairy tales is not limited to children’s entertainment only, but it can be traced through different facets. Initially, fairy tales are universal and dynamic, they are present in every culture and are transmitted throughout the generations. Moreover, the art of retelling is also a clear manifestation of their importance. The recurrent desire to reproduce these incredible stories differently leads to the emergence of various retold versions of the same fairy tale, whether by different writers or by the same writer. These retellings are revised in a way to fit the socio-cultural changes of the era in which they are written, or to emphasize one point rather than what was emphasized before, based on the storyteller’s convictions and orientations. Last but not least, fairy tales have gained more popularity by the time they started to be adapted into visual materials, whether cartoons, films or series; developing what is known as a “fairy tale film.” While different entertainment productions and companies competed to produce the funniest and

most pleasant version, 'The Walt Disney Company' is well-known for its fabulous and mind blowing representations of fairytales.

Undoubtedly, retelling and adapting fairy tales enhance their importance as well as their popularity and stance whether in literature, cinema, or culture in general. However, these recreations can also be seen as a source of harm and infidelity. From the one hand, since the original fairy tale is retold in different versions by different writers for different readers; or adapted into different scenarios by different filmmakers for different categories of viewers, the original message may not stay the same. In fact, the fairy tale's original message endures some changes, and the extent of this change or modification differs. From the other hand, the original fairy tale is produced in a way in which the different characters are represented in a certain way based on the writer's intentions. Being subject to be retold or adapted, this representation may stay the same as it may alter. More specifically, the depiction of female characters is also distinguished and revised through these retellings and adaptations. Interestingly, Disney adaptations are under criticism for this reason.

The current study uses the famous fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast" as a case study. Three versions of this fairy tale are examined: James Planché's classic "Beauty and the Beast," Robin McKinley's retelling *Beauty: A Retelling of the Story of Beauty and the Beast*, and the recent 2017 Disney adaptation under the title of *Beauty and the Beast*. The research aims at investigating the representation of female characters in the classical fairy tale as well as in its retelling and its adaptation. Furthermore, this work also seeks to examine female empowerment or disempowerment in the three variants of the tale. Finally, since the study automatically traces the development of the fairy tale genre, it also explores the original fairy tale's message change throughout its retellings. Hence, the study attempts to answer the following questions: What are the main differences between classical fairy tales and their retellings? How/to what extent are

female characters represented in each version? How/to what extent does each version empower or disempower its female characters? Does the message of the classic fairy tale actually change in its retellings?

As a fascinating genre, fairy tales did not capture the attention of writers only. In fact, scholars added significant contributions that led to the development of the field. From the one hand, a recent publication dedicated to this genre is Andrew Teverson's *The Fairy Tale World* (2019). The book contains different contributors, such as Donald Haase, Maria Tatar, and Lewis Seifert, who are pioneers in the fairy tale genre. The book discusses the genre from a broader perspective putting together the history, the retellings, the adaptations as well as tales' examples from the different parts of the globe in relation to ethnicity, feminism, sexuality, and environment. From the other hand, in "Once Upon A Time: Fables, Folktales, and Fairy Tales" (1996), Pauline Davey Zeece introduces and distinguishes between three forms of traditional literature which are fables, folktales and fairy tales. For a better understanding of fairy tales, Zeece provides a definition of the genre and illustrates with important figures and fairy tales.

Discussing fairy tales' retellings, Cristina Bacchilega's *Post Modern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies* (1997) investigates and highlights the changes and transformations that are made to this genre in the postmodern era. Bacchilega discusses the ways in which fairy tales have been retold as well as the reasons behind them. Articulating on a feminist perspective, the writer questions and analyses the new depiction and representation of the female characters portrayed by these retellings. She also explores the production of gender in classical fairy tales as re-envisioned in late twentieth-century literature and media. Her work is based on different fairy tales such as "Snow White" and "Little Red Riding Hood." In addition, she discusses the character of Beauty, from a feminist lens, in the fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast."

In her book *Fairy Tale and Film: Old Tales with a New Spin* (2015), Sue Short introduces a short history of fairy tales as well as films, and examines major themes of classical fairytales, including “Beauty and the Beast,” retellings and adaptations. Moreover, she questions how fairytales became a center of interest of film-makers. In the same vein, Disney adaptations raised many controversies in the world of film-making. “Romancing the Plot: The Real Beast of Disney’s Beauty and the Beast” (1995) is an article written by June Cummins in which she attacks Disney for its fairy tales’ adaptations. Based on “Beauty and the Beast” fairy tale as a case study, Cummins believes that Disney’s adaptations focus only on the romantic plot and the love line between the female protagonist and her charming prince, paying no attention to other psychological or moral values displayed in the original fairy tales: its adaptations does not portray the whole message of the fairy tale but only what serves the company’s ideas.

The present study seeks to be part of this ongoing conversation -about the fairy tale genre in general and “Beauty and the Beast” specifically - through studying it along McKinley’s retelling: *Beauty: A Retelling of the Story of Beauty and the Beast* and the 2017 Disney adaptation *Beauty and the Beast*, at the same time. To examine the chosen case studies, this study follows both the analytical and the comparative methods and it relies on two literary approaches. From one hand, feminism imposes itself since the protagonist of the fairy tale is a female, and this research attempts at examining how female characters are represented in the classic and its retellings. A feminist lens helps investigating the empowerment or the (dis)empowerment of the female characters, mainly Beauty, in the three variants. From the other hand, the historical approach is employed to examine the subversive nature of fairy tales. This approach helps tracing the development of the fairy tales’ genre, and the message’s changes throughout the different periods.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter introduces the genres of fairy tales, retellings and adaptations. Each genre's characteristics, themes, and pioneers are explored emphasizing message and female depictions. In addition, the chapter presents a theoretical framework for the feminist and the historical approaches as well as the concept of "intertextuality" being crucial in the analysis of the case study. The second chapter provides an analysis of the three versions of "Beauty and the Beast:" the classic of James Planché "Beauty and the Beast," the retelling of Robin McKinley *Beauty: A retelling of the Story of Beauty and the Beast*, and the 2017 adaptation by Disney *Beauty and the Beast*. The chapter provides a brief historical background on the case study as well as a discussion and an examination of the components of each variant mainly the plot, characters, and themes. Finally, the third chapter presents an analytical comparison between the three selected versions of the chosen fairy tale in reference to three main angles: the peculiar representation of female characters and the extent of its difference in each version; the empowerment or disempowerment of female characters in each narrative; and finally, the fairy tale's message change through time and through reproduction.

This dissertation seeks to investigate how female characters are actually represented, and the ways in which this representation differs between each version of the chosen fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast:" James Planché's classic "Beauty and the Beast," Robin McKinley's retelling *Beauty: A Retelling of the Story of Beauty and the Beast*, and Disney's 2017 adaptation *Beauty and the Beast*. In the same line, the study analyses and compares the empowerment and the disempowerment of female characters in general, and the protagonist Beauty in particular. Finally, the work investigates whether the message of the classic fairy tale is actually altered in the other two retellings.

Chapter One: Fairy Tales and Their Retellings: An Ever Lasting Passion

The chapter in hand provides a theoretical basis for this study. The three major segments of the research namely: *fairy tales*, *retellings*, and *adaptations* are to be discussed briefly. The chapter explores a collection of selected characteristics, themes, main figures and works of each genre paying more attention to female representation and message identification. In addition, this chapter presents a theoretical framework for the two main literary approaches to be used in the upcoming chapters, which are: the feminist approach and the historical approach, along the different literary terms and techniques that assist in the analysis of the work.

I.1. Fairy Tales: An Overview

When asked to define fairy tales, one would blindly characterize them as old stories. This make them part of a large series of narratives known as traditional literature. Traditional literature determines a collection of socio-cultural stories produced by anonymous storytellers, designated for and enjoyed by children and adults likewise, and transmitted by word of mouth to the next generations. Thus, it is considered to be “a cumulative record of our history” (Zeece 37). Traditional literature is divided into different branches such as myths, legends, folktales, fables...etc. Characterized by the oral tradition of storytelling, these forms share other various features such as: the ‘Once upon a time’ beginnings and the “happily ever after” endings, short plots, musical language, and identifiable characters and so on (Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson 94).

As for fairy tales, scholars and experts could agree neither on a single and a precise definition nor on a specific categorization of the genre. Definitions and classifications vary through the different angles and perspectives scholars followed in tracing the origins of fairy tales. From the one hand, among others, Lewis Seifert, in his book entitled *Fairy Tales, sexuality and Gender in France, 1690-1715*, argues that though fairy tales are highly crucial, they are, at the same time, excluded from the literary stream if ever considered to be literature (1). From the

other hand, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* classifies the fairy tale as a form of “folk literature” and a “part of the oral tradition” (302). Thereby, some scholars believe that fairy tales do not constitute an independent genre of traditional literature, but rather, a subgenre included in folktales.

The fact that both “fairy tales” and “folktales” are said to be people’s imaginative and oral creation leads to some confusion between the terms. As a result, scholars tend to make a line between them. From their part, Carl Tomlinson and Carol Lynch-Brown classify “fairy tales” as magic tales, a subgenre of folktales, and emphasize that the terms cannot be used interchangeably because “folk tales” contain no magic (100). This implies another characteristic of “fairytales” which is the excessive use of magic and enchantment. In the same line, in her introduction to *Fairy Tales: A New History*, Ruth B. Bottigheimer differentiates between a number of terms including the terms in subject. Her distinction is based on structure, characters, plot and age of both fields. Other differences include the absence of magic and generally the lack of the happy endings in “folktales” (4).

Fairy tales, also known as “*les contes de fées*” in French, are distinguished to be part of magic tales, folk tales and traditional literature respectively. In *The Irresistible Fairy Tale*, Jack Zipes describes a “fairy tale” as “a simple, imaginative oral tale containing magical and miraculous elements and was related to the belief systems, values, rites, and experiences of pagan peoples” (21). Moreover, Graham Anderson in *Fairy tale in the Ancient World* offers a more specific definition to the genre as “short, imaginative, traditional tales with a high moral and magical content” (1). To sum up, fairy tales are old fictional narratives produced orally by unknown folks, which contain morals and mirror the socio-cultural aspects of a particular society in a particular period of time. Furthermore, what makes these tales unique and different from other tales is the extravagant usage of features of magic and wonder.

As a major characteristic of fairy tales is being originated in the oral tradition of storytelling, scholars agree on the fact that there are two kinds of fairy tales namely: oral fairy tales and literary fairy tales. In *Spells of Enchantment*, Jack Zipes provides a simple distinction between the two. From the one hand, oral fairy tales, also known as ‘oral wonder tales’, are the very first stories that were developed orally by normal people in different cultures. These tales were aimed for an illiterate audience, including peasants and ordinary people. Since these tales were socially and culturally constructed, they “have served to stabilize, conserve, or challenge the common beliefs, laws, values, and norms of a group.” As a result, it is logical that these stories are to be modified and reproduced with what fits the societal changes (xii-v).

From the other hand, the term “literary fairy tales” gives insight that these tales are part of literature. And since literature is about recording things down, among other things, these literary tales refer to the very same oral stories and narratives which were “written down” and reproduced in a different form. Since fairy tales started to be written, they required literate people to collect and write them as well as a literate audience that is able to read them mainly the aristocrats. These literary narratives emerged with the emergence of scribes, manuscripts, paper, and print. Since these literary tales were based on the oral ones, they surely kept the same wonders, morals and even the oral tradition and the storytelling criterion. However, this does not mean that oral folk tales disappeared and have been forgotten but rather they existed and still exist until present time (Zipes, *Spells* xii).

In terms of major fairy tales, folklorists could not trace the very first oral fairy tale nor what constituted it since it was developed thousands of years ago, and it underwent different changes. However, Zipes concludes that Apuleius’s “Cupid and Psyche” is considered as the earliest and the greatest Latin literary fairy tale. Moreover, he points out that the two Italians, Giovanni Straparola and Giambattista Basile, were the first to write fairy tales in vernaculars. In

addition, Zipes distinguishes the following works to be the major French fairy tales: Marie-Catherine D'Aulnoy's *Les Contes de Fées* (1697), from which the term "fairy tale" is derived, and the author is considered to be the first French woman fairy tale writer; and Charles Perrault's collection entitled *Histoires ou contes du Temps Passé*, also known as *Contes de ma mere L'Oye* (1697) which encompasses different fairy tales such as "Cinderella", "Sleeping Beauty", "Little Red Riding Hood" (*Spells* xvi-ix).

Zipes also mentions other significant publications in the fairy tale world. Initially, the Grimm's collection of the *Kinder-und Hausmarchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*, 1812-15) is regarded as a 'masterpiece' of German fairy tales which comprises German versions of Perrault's tales (*Spells* xxiii). In addition, In Denmark, Hans Christian Anderson's first collection entitled as *Eventyr, Fortalte for Born*, or *Fairy Tales Told for Children* in English, (1835-42) is considered to be the most prominent (*Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* 91). Hence, the collections of Perrault, the Grimms, and Anderson constitute the canon of "classical fairy tale." Furthermore, Seifert, among other scholars, believes that the art of fairy tales started in the East which makes the work of *The Thousand and One Nights* of a great importance in the field that is was translated into different languages ("France" 179). Other fairy tales' examples are: "Snow White," "Bluebeard," "Rapunzel," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Ali Baba and the Forth Thieves."

Folklorists or tale-creators tend to involve features that would leave people amazed, puzzled, astonished providing them with the possibility to dream and to imagine things that would never happen in real life. They create an escape from reality. These elements indicate sources of magic, miracles and supernatural powers in a way or another. They vary from characters like fairies, which are an essence of a fairy tale and from which it derives its name, witches, elves, giants, beasts, ogres, dwarfs; to magical places like "haunted castles, enchanted forests, mysterious huts in the woods, dangerous caves, and underground kingdoms" (Zipes,

Spells xiv); and enchanted objects such as speaking tables, chairs, trees and animals, invisible capes, magic sticks, poisonous charms and healing spells.

The fact that fairy tales are social and cultural products, representations of particular communities, alludes that the themes explored are also culture-specific. This is true to some extent. However, fairy tales around the world still share some standard or general themes. They include existential themes such as: conflicts between evil and good, and no matter how hard things can get, the good always win; wealth and poverty; marriage and divorce; morality and immorality; justice and injustice; individuality and the sense of collaboration; sexuality; friendship; utopia; love; family, motherhood, and sisterhood; honesty; hope; happiness, beauty; passion; life; despair; fear...etc. These common subjects give insight about the universality of fairy tales and folktales in general.

Nevertheless, scholars showed no less interest in this genre than the folklorists. They conducted many researches and helped in reinforcing the role and the significance of fairy tales. Jack Zipes, an American scholar, is considered to be one of the main key figures in the field. He developed and wrote different books in which he explores the source and the origin of the fairy tales. His collection of books includes *Spells of Enchantment* (1991), *Why Fairy Tales Stick* (2006), *The Irresistible Fairy Tale* (2012) among other works. Other contributions to the discipline are Ruth Bottigheimer's *Fairy Tales: A New History* (2009), Propp Vladimir's *Morphology of the Folktale* (2009), Graham Anderson's *Fairy tale in the Ancient World* (2000), Bruno Bettelheim' *The Uses of Enchantment* (1991) among many other significant studies about fairy tales.

The undeniable disagreement and the great interest of scholars in this genre reveal its paramount importance. By definition, fairy tales are collections of stories produced by people. This means that people were passionate enough to develop narratives of what they thought to be

magnificent and magical as well as mirror the socio-cultural features of their lives. Thus, fairy tales permit us trace the history of societies. Furthermore, the fact that fairy tales were at first designated mainly for adults, and then reproduced for young audience in the 19th century, they surely have a great impact on them. Zipes believes that these magic tales "... nurture –children's- great desire for change and independence." Fairy tales do not only entertain children, but also help them develop the sense of imagination and critical thinking. According to him, they "instructed, amused, warned, initiated and enlightened" the youth (*Spells xi-xxiv*).

I.2. The Art of Retelling Fairy Tales: Feminist Retellings

Having roots back to thousands of years ago, fairy tales travelled from continent to continent and from generation to generation by word of mouth. Until they started to be drafted by writers, one can never determine how accurate the versions people transferred over the years are to the "original" narratives. As a result, through telling a story and repeating it to different persons, those persons tell the "same" story to others and so on. The story will definitely be interspersed with some slight changes, and some spices may be added as others may be omitted.

In *Essentials of Children's Literature*, Carl Tomlinson and Carol Lynch- Brown define 'retold tales' as "a version of a tale that is obviously based upon an earlier, well-known tale but in which the language and bits of the plot have been altered to modernize or further dramatize the story" (97). Consequently, telling an already existing or an "original" wonder narrative, and adding some flavor to it is considered as a fairy tale retelling or revision. This involves translating a tale, changing characters' name into a target language, adding some parts, omitting others...etc. The re-teller produces the story differently for different reasons, reasons of what s/he did not really admire in the original story and that needs to be reshaped, redefined or reframed to what s/he thinks more appropriate to his/her perspective.

The history of fairy tale retellings is long and vague. Hence, there are plenty of ways in which fairy tales have been retold and reproduced. First, due to the fact that the first fairy tales were written in Latin and Greek, they were translated into vernaculars and languages for more accessibility. Furthermore, the transformation of the oral fairy tale into the literary fairy tale engendered automatic change dictated by the difference of both traditions (Zipes, *Spells* xvi). Moreover, the documentation of the oral fairy tales in French had a significant influence on other cultures which led to their translation. For instance, the works of Perrault formed the basis for the different German collected versions of the brothers Grimm (Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick* 81). Yet, the reproduction of fairy tales is not limited to these events only but rather it continues through different manners and forms until present time.

Fairy tales are social constructs and culture-specific, they mirror the socio-cultural patterns, norms and values of a community. By the 17 century, they were the French women who further developed the literary fairy tales in their intellectual gatherings known as salons (Seifert, *Fairy Tales* 8). Women portrayed and boosted female characters with empowering and strengthening aspects, aspects that were not true in real life. However, when put into a literary form by men, whether as literature for children or adults, the tales surely have been modified to include men's and societies' perspectives at those times. These perspectives encompass a set of social rules and roles, along with other features, of both men and women which forces males' dominance, power, authority, logic from the one hand; and females' obedience, weakness, submissiveness and irrationality from the other hand (Zipes, *When Dreams Came True* 34-7).

Literature is an imitation of the real world. Whatever which political, economic, social, environmental or religious issues a community faces; they are documented in and can be traced through literature, and fairy tales are of no difference. Due to the fact that fairy tales "were to be shared and exchanged, used and modified according to the needs of the tellers and the listeners,"

they are subject to be retold so as to include these events and mirror the current “new” reality (Zipes, *Spells* xii). For instance, in the United States, the literary sphere has been influenced by the socio-political changes and conditions that took place after the end of the Second World War. Conditions included two rising movements of both the American black people and the American women. Each group called for equal rights and fought against segregation, discrimination, inequality, and unfair treatment. However, the quest for fair treatment and non-discrimination of women is a global issue and not limited to America only.

By time, female writers began questioning the representation of female characters in classical literature. In her essay entitled “Reclaiming the Lost Code: Feminist Imaginations of the Fairy-Tale Genesis,” Vanessa Joosen defines “fairy-tale retellings” as “a creative, fictional discourse that supplements the academic feminist discussion” (163). From this definition, Joosen makes it clear that fairy tale retellings have much to do with feminism, the movement calling for women’s rights, as it has its shades on their production. According to Seifert, it was until the early 1970’s and 1990’s that feminist writers started a revolution in the fairy tale world (*Fairy tales* 3). Writers like Anne Sexton, Angela Carter, Jane Yolen, Tanith Lee, Rosemarie Kunzler, Jay Williams, and Robin McKinley revised and re-wrote the classical tales, those of Perrault, the Grimms, and Anderson (Zipes, *Spells* xxviii).

Just like the impressive number of classical fairy tales, feminist retellings also contribute with a considerable rate to the genre. One important retelling of the Grimm fairy tales is Anne Sexton's *Transformations* (1971) (Campbell 10). Moreover, in “Feminism and Fairy Tales,” Shawn Jarvis lists different feminist retellings of the famous fairy tale entitled “Bluebeard” including: Olga Broumas’s *Beginning with O* (1977); Bachmann’s “Der Fall Franza” or “The Case of Franza” (1978); Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber* (1979); and Margaret Atwood’s *Bluebeard’s Egg* (1983) (157). In addition, in *Revisioning Red Riding Hood around the World:*

An Anthology of International Retellings, Sandra Beckett collects more than fifty retold versions of the famous fairy tale “Red Riding Hood” (vii-xi).

Because of their wide spread and accessibility to all categories of the society, fairy tales present an effective means and a platform for feminist writers to carry out their ideologies. According to Christina Bacchilega, feminists “can view the fairy tale as a powerful discourse which produces representations of gender” (9-10). In their revised versions, feminist writers subvert reality, and revolt against the social and the cultural conventions that are embedded in the tales, and in literature in general, which in one way or another shape and reinforce particular categorization of class and gender. More importantly, due to the fact that children, and especially girls, grow with fairy tales, feminist writers felt the need to “purify” these stories so that girls stop expecting and waiting for a charming prince to come one day, save them and to realize their dreams. Writers wanted to end and destroy the classical image of gender roles where men powerfully dominated and women weakly submitted (Jarvis 157).

In her thesis entitled “Feminist Fairy Tale Retellings: A Genre of Subversion,” Laura Campbell discusses different tactics the feminist writers opted for in order to reach their ideological aims. Accordingly, feminist fairy tales are classified in three types that consist of: (1) reviving underrated fairy tales that empowered female characters; (2) drafting completely new fairy tales with completely new intended messages; and finally, (3) re-writing the already existing fairy tales in a manner that empowers female characters and highlights the feminist ideology. However, Campbell argues that the two first approaches are neither quite efficient nor inclusive. As a consequence, she emphasizes “the multitasking” of the retellings of the third type as “they combat current female stereotypes, critique culture, and engage in feminist debate” (6-7).

As far as the themes are concerned, fairy tale retellings discuss different themes based on the tellers’ different perspectives, and the socio-cultural specificities of the retelling’s period of

production. Obviously, based on gender, retellings written by males may contradict those written by females. While men retellings may be highly conventional and patriarchal, feminist fairy tales examine: “mother- daughter relationship” (Schanoes 33); female subjugation and oppression; imposed passiveness; controlled choices; sexism; sexual abuse; sexual freedom; rape; sexual orientations; gender bias; social roles; patriarchy; forced marriage. Moreover, Shawn Jarvis highlights other themes like: “voice and voicelessness; the commodification of women; gender relations; the importance of female education; a questioning of the redemption motif of marriage as women's only salvation; and a series of other social malaises and gender inequities in patriarchy” (156).

Fairy tale retellings provide endless choices for a fairy tale’ addict to be amused and entertained. The fact that one tale can be retold differently, throughout different eras, by different authors and for different purposes does only indicate the importance of this genre. More precisely, feminist writers have wisely used fairy tales as a vehicle to spread awareness about gender roles, social rules and to make a considerable change against the patriarchal classical fairy tales. Fairy tales are never old-fashioned as they keep evolving with the evolvement of everything else.

I.3. A Fairy Tale Film: Disney Adaptations

The importance of fairy tales does not end either in producing wonder stories to boost the imagination of children or in the necessity to reproduce and to revise them. Much more significance is manifested in the transformation of these narratives into products that people can watch or listen to rather than read. Through the years, and with the development of research and technology, people gained the ability to watch any literary work on televisions or in cinemas without being obliged to access them only through reading. Being a form of retelling in itself, this transformation is technically considered as an “adaptation.” Yet, the term “adaptation” does not

refer only to the process, but also to the product where the final outcome is also distinguished as an “adaptation” (Malarte-Feldman, “Adaptation” 2).

According to *the Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, the term “adaptation” refers to the “re-casting of a work in one medium to fit another” (8). Julie Sanders explains that “[a]daptation can be a transpositional practice, casting a specific genre into another generic mode, an act of re-vision in itself.” Thus, an “adaptation” consists of the transformation or the conversion of any work from its original mode of display to another mode, mainly for causes of vividness, entertainment, and facilitation of people’s lives. An adaptation can be from written to visual or audio-visual, or, from oral to written or visual (18-9). And because what works in one mode does not necessarily work in another, the necessary omissions, modifications and additions to what suits the new mode shall be taken into consideration. However, the term “adaptation” is used in this context to refer to the transformation of written literary works such as novels, plays, short stories into visual or audiovisual materials such as films, animations, series, plays, musicals...etc.

Literary works such as Jane Austin’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*, Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games*, Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter*, and many others constitute the essence and the source material for many adaptations, where each was and is still produced in different versions and by different filmmakers. However, in spite of the fact that many literary works have been converted into films, animations and whatsoever, and although these adaptations reached major success worldwide, maybe even more success than the original works, the process of adaptation was not considered to be neither a film genre nor an academic discipline. It was not until 1950’s that “adaptations” started to be seen as a field and the “adaptation studies” started to emerge and prosper (Aragay 11).

However, in the context of fairy tales' adaptations, the conversion of a tale into a movie is referred to as a "fairy-tale film." Keen and obsessed as he is with fairy tales and everything that concerns them, Zipes published a book, *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale Film* (2011), in which he argues that fairytale films are also disregarded and unrecognized to be a film genre (xi). Zipes defines a "fairy tale film" as "re-create[ing] a known tale or to create and realize cinematically an original screen play with recognizable features of a fairy tale" (9). A "fairy tale film" consists of remaking and reproducing a fairy tale, whether oral or literary, into what people can watch as an audiovisual cinematic depiction making sure to preserve the distinct features of a fairy tale such as the characters, plot, magic and wonder, and changing or adding what seems to be necessary.

Along with the magnificent fame the oral and the literary fairy tales gained overtime, their adaptations attained a booming popularity and success likewise. Some of the reasons of this boom can be traced back to the original fairy tales that were already successful and popular in addition to their entertaining nature. Also, the opportunity of getting access to these tales without being obliged of sitting and reading the written form but rather watching them directly. Besides, the vividness of the characters and the scenes where, for instance, the viewer can actually observe the speaking chair and the dancing tree. Another reason is the capability of meeting and even exceeding the viewers' expectations and imagination of what they have visualized from the original fairytales. Finally, the additional filmic and artistic features that would turn the fairy tale film into an extraordinary experience.

As filmmakers made use of the popularity of fairytales and initiated them to the world of film and cinema, viewers find themselves in front of numerous fairy tale films and various films of the very same tale produced by different corporations and filmmakers. The filmmakers base their works whether on the source fairy tale as it is; take only the essence of the tale and refresh it

in a manner to stay recognizable for the viewers; or get inspired by other film contributions (Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen* 9). As a result, fairy tales such as “Cinderella,” “Sleeping Beauty,” “Snow White,” “The Little Mermaid,” “Little Red Riding Hood,” “One Thousand Night and One” have been created and recreated in plenty of versions, and each version is said to be the translation and the interpretation of the filmmaker based on what s/he believes to be fundamental and what needs to be more highlighted.

However, since filmmakers artistically add their vision to produce new versions of fairy tales, these final versions are distinguished to be appropriations of the original works. The act of appropriation means making use of someone else’s work and refashioning it to what suits one’s needs. As a result, filmmakers appropriate fairy tales to what fits their own perspectives and aims. Furthermore, and as any other field where a person takes an original work and recreates it, there always occurs the problem of faithfulness and fidelity to the source work, and a debate is to be maintained. Nonetheless, Zipes, among other scholars, argues that fidelity to a primary source is “irrelevant” since one neither can be faithful one hundred percent to the original work nor adaptations are meant to be kept the same without one’s personal touch (*The Enchanted Screen* 10-1).

Despite the huge number of tale adaptations, what comes into one’s mind when talking about fairy-tale films are those movies and animations produced by Disney. However, in Europe, particularly in France, the first producer to be acknowledged for making a kind of revolution in the cinematic field by adapting fairy tales is the French magician Georges Méliès by the early 1890’s. Méliès is considered to be the pioneer of fairy-tale films and “the prime “appropriator” of the *féerie* for the film industry in its infancy” (Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen* 21). *Féerie* is “a type of melodrama in which acrobatics, music, and mime were the main elements.... The plots of *féeries* were usually adapted from fairy tales in which supernatural creatures intervened in the

lives of men” (Kovács 1-2). They were “the forms, the designs, the costumes, tricks, and machines” he used that made his films original and special (Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen* 38).

In the other part of the world, and precisely America, Disney adaptations are the ones of great fame worldwide and one can never deny the place and the impact they occupy in the cinematic sphere. Currently known as ‘The Walt Disney Company,’ the American company was originally labeled as ‘The Disney Brothers Cartoon Studios’ after the two brothers Walt Disney and Roy Disney released their first cartoon series entitled *Alice Comedies*, based on “Alice in Wonderland,” by October 1923. The cartoon paved the way to other masterpieces such as the famous *Mickey Mouse* cartoon (1928). More importantly, Disney productions were not limited to cartoons only, but they also included live-action films, educational films, Disney TV shows and TV series, books, press, magazines, merchandise, and various amusement parks known as the Disneyland parks (“Disney History”).

Moreover, Disney has also participated with a great deal in the realization and development of fairy tale films and animations. Before starting ‘The Disney Brothers Studios,’ Walt Disney produced and directed a collection of fairy tale adaptations for ‘Laugh-O-Grams Studio,’ a production company of his that was not successful, in 1922. The collection consists of *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Puss in Boots* and *Cinderella* and others. However, for his new company, Disney’s first animated film which is based on a fairy tale dates back to 1937, under the title of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Later, the Disney company has produced other fairy tale adaptations such as: *Pinocchio* (1940), *Cinderella* (1950), *Peter Pan* (1953), *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), and *Aladdin* (1992) (Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen* 401-2).

All of these adaptations are of a major success as they contributed to the fame and popularization of the Disney world. In *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, Zipes points out that Disney “was the first to use Technicolor” (xxx). Disney’s adaptations celebrate “true love...

[and a] love's first kiss is the only spell-breaker" which make them very tempting and dreamy (Wood 132). In addition to the 'true love always wins' spell, they portray fairy tales in an Americanized vision as they idealize "democracy, technology and modernity" (*Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* 199). However, although it is true that Walt Disney himself used fairy tales as a beneficial vehicle to realize his dreams and accomplish a fabulous career, he is not the only one who benefited from this action. It can be argued that fairy tales are also a winning part of this equation. Disney gave life to fairy tales, revived them, and made them gain more accessibility. As a result, it is a win-win situation.

Consequently, both fame and significance of fairy tales are not only limited to the literary sphere. In fact, these tales have been a major concern of the cinematic domain. Significantly, fairy tales benefit from the technological development in this field as they get more vivid and aesthetically well-developed each time they get adapted. In contrast, the audience is of no less importance. Screenplay writers and directors engage in the adventure of adventure for the sake of producing something that captures the feelings and the senses of the audience, their quest is to make the audience eager to watch each time the producers release a new adaptation. For instance, Disney's *Maleficent*, *Moana*, and *Beauty and the Beast* contribute to both the fairy tale genre as well as the movie production.

I.4. A Theoretical Framework

In order to conduct the study, two approaches are followed to critically analyze the fairy tale in its three forms. From the one hand, the discussion is based on gender criticism and feminist approach. Feminist criticism permits an investigation on the representation of female characters and to see if the adaptation technique used by Disney empowers or disempowers these characters. From the other hand, the historical approach is utilized to better understand and trace whether the message have changed in the fairy tale's retelling and its adaptation; and if yes, to

what extent it did change. In addition to these two approaches, the term “intertextuality” is referred to as it is a crucial element in the discussion.

From the one hand, in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, Wilfred Guerin et al. define “feminism” as “an overtly *political* approach and can attack other approaches for their false assumptions about women” (223). Furthermore, *The Merriam Webster Online Dictionary* explains that “feminism” is “the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes; [it is an] organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests” (Feminism). Feminism, simply put, is the socio-political movement developed by women to restore women’s rights and fight any kind of oppression, stereotypes and biased conventions. Scholars agree that the development of Feminism underwent two phases and each phase had its own claims. While, “first wave” feminism of the early twentieth century seeks equality, “second wave” feminism of the late twentieth century targets the “sexual and family rights of women” (Walters 137).

When applied to literature, the critical literary sphere expanded to include a new approach known as feminist literary criticism by the late 1900’s. However, writers like George Eliot, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Virginia Woolf are considered to be pioneers of the first wave feminist writing. The Second wave feminism, known also as gender criticism, is established after the crucial works of: Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949), Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and Kate Millett’s *Sexual Politics* (1970) (Guerin et al. 223). Feminist literary criticism questions how literature is used by men to embed the social and cultural conventions about male dominance, superiority and patriarchy. Moreover, it seeks to deconstruct the typical image and traditional representation of women and female characters in works produced by men. In the same vein, analyzing fairy tales from a feminist perspective gives insight

of how traditional fairy tales, as social constructs, are considered as a means to carry out and emphasize these conventions.

From the other hand, the historical approach “seeks to understand a literary work by investigating the social, cultural, and intellectual context that produced it—a context that necessarily includes the artist’s biography and milieu” (Kennedy and Gioia 1798). Analyzing a work from the historical approach results in knowing the conditions in which the text was written. It gives insight about the historical, economic, socio-cultural and political circumstances that surrounded the writing of the work. Moreover, in order to analyze a literary work, one should know more about the author himself/herself. The text is a product of both the depiction of real life mixed with the author’s feelings, ideologies, thoughts, perspectives and imagination. The historical approach permits the investigation on the reasons that led the writer to write such text.

In order to analyze the retelling and the adaptation, the crucial concept “intertextuality” needs to be explained. In “Intertextuality,” Van Zoonen refers to the term “intertextuality” as “a term to indicate that all texts, whether written or spoken, whether formal or informal, whether artistic or mundane, are in some ways related to each other” (1). Intertextuality, coined primarily by Julia Kristeva in her book entitled *Séméiotikè: Recherches pour une Sémanalyse* (1960), focuses on the idea that all texts are consciously or unconsciously interconnected to each other. Not only the interconnectedness, but also “the interdependence” of any literary product with those that have been written before: “any text is an absorption and transformation of another” (Cuddon 424). As a result, this technique falls against the idea of originality since, in one way or another, the writer gives hints to other works and s/he cannot be completely original.

Fairy tales are crucially dynamic. Their nature consists of a recurrent remaking and an unlimited movement worldwide. Moreover, in addition to oral diffusion, a key factor that led to the emergence, and later on the development, of fairy tales as a literary canon is the fact that

writers all over the world transmitted other cultures' tales through translation. Taking out a fairy tale from its linguistic sociopolitical space and introducing it to new ones will definitely engender "necessary" changes. However, through retelling and recreating these tales differently, the key components of the "original" tale are wisely protected to make sure the audience stay aware of the fact that this new product is a retelling of an older version. In this regard, Karen Seago describes fairy tales as "a protean form, intertextual by definition in its process of endless creation with reference to related tales, previous versions and different cultural environments." Consequently, fairy tales' retellings are indeed newly molded in a certain way, but they do not present a purely original product. This proves the fact that the relationship between fairy tales and their retelling is an intertextual one (3-4).

As a conclusion, the first chapter is a theoretical introduction for the whole thesis. It provides a simple and a brief overview and history of the three genres: the art of fairy tales, the art of retellings, and the adaptations. Each section of the chapter discusses one genre with its history, characteristics, themes, main works and figures. The last section introduces the two literary critical approaches that are to be used in order to analyze the chosen case study, in addition to a term that is important for the analysis.

Chapter Two: The Fairy Tale, The Retelling and the Adaptation: An Introduction to the Story of “Beauty and the Beast”

The second chapter provides a practical part for the current research. Throughout this chapter, the chosen fairy tale entitled “Beauty and the Beast” is to be analyzed from different angles. The chapter begins with a brief historical background on the case study referring back to the first version. Moreover, it includes reviews and discussions of three selected versions of “Beauty and the Beast:” the English translated version of Madame de Villeneuve by J.R. Planché, the retold version by Robin McKinley and the Disney adaptation of 2017. The examination of the fairy tales highlights the major components of a story: the plot, characterization, themes as well as other significant elements that are specific to each variant.

II.1. “Beauty and the Beast:” A Historical Background

Growing up watching and listening to bed-time stories about different fairy tales, children find themselves amazed by the wonders that the characters achieved or the magical places in which they lived. Enchanted, they day-dream of the princes or princesses they might become and imagine the deeds they might attain against the “evil powers” one day. Among thousands of stunning and fascinating fairy tales worldwide, “Beauty and the Beast” occupies a special and a distinctive place in the literary canon as well as in the memory, the imagination, and the culture of people. Part of the great significance of this tale is proved by the fact that this tale has a rich history. Maria Tatar affirms that “Beauty and the Beast” “ranks among the most popular of all fairy tales. It has been retold, adapted, remixed, and mashed-up by countless storytellers, writers, filmmakers, philosophers, and poets” (IX).

Tracing its roots back to the eighteenth century, and more precisely to 1740, the famous fairy tale that is known in English as “Beauty and the Beast” was first introduced to the literary tradition. It was published in France in *La Jeune Américaine et les Contes Marins* under the title

of “Histoire de La Belle et la Bête” by the French writer Madame Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve (Bottigheimer, “Beauty” 47). Madame de Villeneuve’s version of “Beauty and the Beast” is a novel-length fairy tale that exceeds one hundred pages and is composed of two parts. The first part narrates the journey of the merchant which caused him to enter the castle as well as the adventure of his daughter, Belle, with Bête and her life in the castle. The second part of the tale is entitled as “Histoire de la Bête” which brings to light the reasons and the circumstances of Bête’s transformation as well as Belle’s legitimate family lineage (Mme de Villeneuve, “La Belle et la Bête”).

“La Belle et la Bête” recites the story of Belle, the virtuous, clever, exceptionally beautiful and the youngest favorite daughter of a bankrupted merchant. Previously extremely wealthy, the father ventures in his lost-cargo-regaining journey. His quest brings misfortunes to the family as he picks a rose that Belle wanted, and gets threatened by Bête to lose his life. However, Belle sacrifices her life for the safety of her father’s. Living her best life in the castle, she is visited by Bête every night. Being madly in love with Belle, their conversations always end by her refusal to sleep with him. Later on, she returns to her home for a two-months duration to see her family. However, as soon as she dreams of Bête dead, and thinking she is the reason, Belle puts an end to her sisters’ envy and rejoins him just to find him lying on the ground. She tenderly caresses him, brings him water, and admits her love and her pure affection, which are enough to refresh him up. By the end, Belle finally and willingly accepts to marry and to sleep with Bête, as a result, his enchantment is broken as he returns to the charming prince he was before, the one she dreamt of recurrently. Moreover, a fairy, which appears in Belle’s dreams, reveals the reasons of the prince’s spell as well as Belle’s bloodline being a princess herself, and makes a magical ceremony for the newlyweds (Mme de Villeneuve, “La Belle et la Bête”).

With all the fascinating details, the seductive plot, the enchantments and the bewitching characters, it is believed that, though Madame de Villeneuve is the first writer to develop the story of “Beauty and the Beast” as we know it today, she was mainly influenced by the work of Apuleius Lucius entitled “Cupid and Psyche” (2nd Century A.D.) for they share, to a great extent, the same plot and protagonists’ characteristics. For instance, Psyche is extremely beautiful like Belle; Cupid is an angel and is said to be a monster, a serpent, just like Bête; both Cupid and Bête live in castles and possess loads of jewelries and gold; both Psyche and Belle have sisters that envy them, and they both accept and submit to their fate that is somehow guided by their fathers, and finally both couples get married and they live happily ever after (Adlington, “Cupid and Psyche”). Thus, all these similarities give credit to Lucius’s work for being the basis of Madame de Villeneuve’s masterpiece. In addition to the work of Apuleius, Ruth Bottigheimer lists other previous works that may have influenced Mme de Villeneuve such as Basile’s *Pentamerone*; Perrault’s “Riquet à la Houppe” (1697) and D’Aulnoy’s “Le Mouton” (1697) (“Beauty” 45-7).

Targeting “Beauty and the Beast” in a more general sense, the tale contains an enchanted beast-character that falls in love with and is willing to marry a mortal human being, consequently, it is classified as an “animal groom” tale type (Silver 41). More specifically, in *The Types of the Folktale* by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, also known as the ‘Aarne -Thompson Index,’ the fairy tale “Beauty and the Beast” is classified as AT (or AaTh) 425C in the following order respectively: ordinary folktales; tales of magic; supernatural or enchanted husband (wife) or other relatives; husband; 425. *the search for the lost husband*; 425C. *Beauty and the Beast*. The AT displays a number of criteria that may be present in different tales included under the umbrella section, like in the search for the lost husband, from which an analysis of a specific tale, like “Beauty and the Beast,” is driven, as well as motifs and a list of different variants of each tale (140-3).

Regardless, Mme de Villeneuve's story did not reach the fame it deserved nor the audience's attention it aspired to target. Consequently, it was until Madame Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont adapted the work and republished it in *Le Magasin des Enfants* by 1757 that the fairy tale reached a great success to the point that it is referenced, in many works, to be hers and little attention was, and is still, paid to the original author. Being a French teacher, Mme Leprince de Beaumont's *Le Magasin des Enfants* is an educational and a didactic pedagogical French book. It aims at the good constructive upbringing, breeding, as well as the incarnation of sociocultural norms and values in the minds of young girls through showing them the ways in which they should behave. Furthermore, *Le Magasin des Enfants* emphasizes the good manners and traits a noble Lady should possess (Zipes, "Leprince de Beaumont" 294). The book features the dialogues that Mademoiselle Bonne, a governess, has shared with her seven young English Ladies, aged between five and thirteen years old. The dialogues are concerned with the different lessons, historical stories and tales, including "La Belle et la Bête," that are narrated by the governess, and end by some deduced morals (Leprince de Beaumont, "La Belle et la Bête").

As for the fame it reached, Mme Leprince de Beaumont's fairy tale is special due to the fact that it revised the original version with slight modifications. From the one hand, and in contrast to the original narrative, Mme Leprince de Beaumont developed the tale into a shorter version through omitting details such as Belle's bloodlines and the dream sequences. From the other hand, it was moderately modified to a less sexualized plot as Bête asks her to marry him instead of sleeping with him and his disenchantment is due to her love confession only. She also tended to simplify and smoothen her versions as she targeted young girls. Her goal consisted of producing narratives that would initiate young children into the world of reading and literature. In addition, Mme Leprince de Beaumont insisted that the love for reading is enhanced by the books children read: "le dégoût de la plupart des enfants pour la lecture vient de la nature des livres

qu'on leur met entre les mains, ils ne les comprennent pas: de la nait inévitablement l'ennui" (qtd. in Belloc). She believes that children get easily bored from reading since they are subject to books that are too difficult for them to understand. As a result, Zipes concludes that, by devoting her literature to young audience, she is said to be the one to establish "the literary fairy tale for children" (*When Dreams Came True* 49).

Zipes points out that Mme Leprince de Beaumont's "La Belle et la Bête" has been written in a manner to teach girls life lessons and to prohibit them from doing errors (*When Dreams Came True* 50). She emphasizes the importance of virtue, compassion, acceptance, and sacrifice in one's growth and life. The moral of the story is if Belle did not sacrifice her life for her father's, if she was not virtuous and kind and did not see the kindness and the virtues of Bête, and if she did not accept her fate and accept Bête as he is, the charms would not have been dissolved and she would have never got married to the prince and became a princess herself. More importantly, seeing her reward, one can notice that another advice lies in the fact that happy endings would only be the reality of the good girls while envious ones would destroy their own lives (as her two sisters who were turned into statues). Finally, though her version is considered to be a magnificent success and it was translated into different languages and was adapted into other forms, including Cocteau's and Walt Disney's films which were successful (Swain 571), a major part of the credit to this success should be given to Madame Gabrielle de Villeneuve for her fascinating tale.

II.2. James Planché's Classic: "Beauty and the Beast"

As the fairy tale tradition emerged and flourished mainly because of the act of transmission and sharing between people, and cultures in general, the story of "Beauty and the Beast" was no less concerned. Significantly, following the process that consisted of the fact that a great portion of fairy tales was produced first in France and then dispatched abroad (Zipes, *Fairy*

Tales and the Art of Subversion 31), and emphasizing the peculiarities of “La Belle et la Bête” being unique, captivating, notably new and remarkably successful, it undoubtedly needed to be known and read in other cultures. As a consequence, whether Mme de Villeneuve’s or Mme Leprince de Beaumont’s version, it was through translation, among other forms, that this fairy tale started to be dispatched in Europe and other parts of the world.

In the case of Mme Leprince de Beaumont’s version, her book was translated into the English language as *Young Misses Magazine* in 1759 (Haase, “Pedagogy” 734). In *Fairy Tales: A New History*, Bottigheimer points out that this version of “La Belle et la Bête” was also translated by other folklorists into other European languages and it was available in Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Sweden, Italy, and Greece (55). In counterpart, in the middle of the nineteenth century, it was James Planché (1796-1880), an English dramatist and famous translator of French fairy tales, who translated Madame de Villeneuve’s “Histoire de La Belle et la Bête” into the English language as “The Story of Beauty and the Beast.” Planché published a book entitled *Four and Twenty Fairy Tales* (1858) in which he released translated versions of twenty-four famous French fairy tales. Since the current research is a comparative study between a classic, a retelling and an adaptation, Planché’s version is utilized and considered as the original version and a “classic” from which data will be processed.

Planché’s fairy tale is only a one-hundred-page-length fairy tale. Consequently, it is short and concise for he deleted some details, to which he comments “I have omitted a dozen lines, and softened one objectionable expression,” however, the general plot pattern of the tale was not damaged (535). It is narrated by a third-person omniscient and it is developed in a simple language and simple acts. The story regards a merchant who suddenly loses his wealth and moves to a village with his family. Later, he undertakes a journey back to the city to restore a possible surviving cargo. In his way back home, he picks a rose his youngest daughter, Beauty, asked for,

and gets threatened to lose his life by the master of the castle, Beast. Willingly and courageously, Beauty, whose name reflects her extreme beauty, sacrifices herself to save him. Subsequently, she gets accustomed to her life in the castle and refuses the recurrent demands of Beast, who loves her, to marry him. Finally, after she dreams that he is dead, she confesses her truthful love and accepts to marry him leading to his disenchantment from the spell. The Beast returns to his natural form to be a prince again, and gets married with Beauty, who is revealed to be a princess herself (“Beauty and the Beast”).

Despite some modifications in the translation like: the switch between Beast asking Beauty “to marry” him rather than “to sleep” with him (249); and Beast’s disenchantment occurs by her promise to marry him (275-6), Planché’s tale still constitutes of two sections similar to the original tale. Moreover, it contains two crucial illustrations. The first one represents the merchant, the father of Beauty, riding the horse in a tremendous speed (236), while the second highlights the act of Beauty pouring drops of water on the Beast’s face, after she thought he died, hoping they would ease him up (273). Concerning the characterization, the main characters include the widowed merchant and his six daughters, who are jealous of their youngest sister, Beauty, the protagonist of the tale. The merchant also has six sons who love him dearly and care for Beauty much. Another protagonist is Beast, a prince who was enchanted to be a monster and finally gets disenchanted by the love of Beauty. Other characters include the honorable Fairy, Beauty’s Unknown lover (who turns out to be the Beast), the Queen (mother of the prince) as well as the enchanted animals, instruments and utensils (“Beauty and the Beast”).

As for what it tackles, “Beauty and the Beast” is rich in themes. First of all, it deals with *change* and how one’s life may get reversed one day to another as quick as sudden incidents occur. This is highlighted in how the merchant suddenly becomes broke after he was extremely wealthy before. *Change* is also seen in the way Beauty and her father used to perceive Beast as a

monster, and how they start to think of him as generous and kind. Accordingly, it is due to this *change* that all the actions have taken place resulting in Beauty becoming a princess herself. Second, it discusses the theme of *love*. It is out of love and affection that Beauty wants to sacrifice her life to save her father and siblings. *Love* is also linked to the theme of *beauty*. *Beauty* is relative, what one may see beautiful may seem less, or not beautiful at all, to another. Beast's spell targeted his beauty, he became a monster and is not perceived beautiful for whomever sees him. It is through his virtues, care, and kindness that Beauty is able to see him internally beautiful. It is through this beauty that she is able to love him purely and accepts to marry him. *Love* and internal *beauty* are the reasons for the enchantment as well as the disenchantment of Beast.

Moreover, other important themes are *self-sacrifice* and *responsibility*. Beauty feels like it is her responsibility to be the only one to sacrifice herself to save her father. If she did not ask her father for a rose, he would not have picked one from Beast's castle and would not be threatened to lose his life. In addition, "Beauty and the Beast" discusses themes like *family* and *sisterhood*. Beauty loves and cares much about her family, she feels sorry for her father's misfortune and she refuses to get married in the city just to stay with him and help him in his new life. She also cares about her siblings, and she refuses to let anyone sacrifice himself but her. Though her feelings are reciprocal with her brothers and her father, her sisters do not really share them. They are jealous of her, and they are happy that she is going to live with a beast. Other themes include virtue, trust, obedience, and honor ("Beauty and the Beast").

The story of "Beauty and the Beast" is special due to the existence of the dream sequence and the way dreams are described. Throughout Beauty's residence in the castle, she is subject to recurrent dreams in which she sees a prince. She addresses him as "the unknown" and she falls in his love to the point that she is eager to fall asleep just to meet her beloved. Beauty also dreams of

a wise woman who gives her pieces of advice and asks her to stay virtuous as she is, and that her virtue will grant her wonders. By the end of the story, when Beast is disenchanted, Beauty is surprised to find out that Beast is actually her beloved. Additionally, she discovers that the wise woman is the fairy who is the reason to set everything up to help the disenchantment of the prince. As a result, it can be said that Beauty, while seeing the dreams, she is seeing the future without realizing it, she only has to do what she is asked to make it real. Moreover, to assert that dreams play a great significance in the tale, it is through the dream Beauty sees at her father's house that she goes back to the castle to find the Beast lying on the ground dead. It is the dream that makes Beauty acknowledges within herself, and later to Beast, the feelings she has, and it is the dream that disenchant the Beast and makes the truth come to light.

Planché's translated version of Madam de Villeneuve is important in the establishment of "Beauty and the Beast" as one of the great fairy tales of all times. Planché was the first to translate Mme de Villeneuve's original story nearly as it is, with all its constituents, into the English language. More importantly, and even if he omitted and slightly modified certain parts, the major story is still there, and a reader, reading in English, is still able to see the complete image. His work still incorporates: the reason behind Beast's enchantment, the reason why Beauty is a princess and not the merchant's actual daughter, and the dream sequence, which is almost entirely absent in Mme Leprince de Beaumont's tale for it is abridged in itself.

II.3. Robin McKinley's Retelling: *Beauty*

As "Beauty and the Beast" significantly positioned itself in the literary canon, it undoubtedly would not be treated as a museum static memorial, but rather, its memory evolved with the evolution and growth of people as it was created and re-created. In addition to its heavy history, the collection of the recreations, the revisions as well as the retellings of the tale is heavier and broader, varying from literature, to cinema and art. As a result, by mid twentieth

century, this fairy tale was molded into many interesting retellings including: Philippa Pearce's *Beauty and the Beast* (1972), Angela Carter's "The Tiger's Bride" (1979), as well as Robin McKinley's famous literary work entitled *Beauty*.

According to Betsy Hearne, Robin McKinley (1952) is an American fantasy young-adults' writer who is interested in the fairy tale genre and from which most of her works are inspired ("McKinley" 310). In the same vein, Hearne adds that McKinley published her first and one of her well-known and remarkable works that she entitled *Beauty: A Retelling of the Story of Beauty and the Beast* in 1978. As it can be deduced from the title, her 247-page work is based on "Beauty and the Beast" fairy tale which she revised and recreated differently according to her proper style, vision as well as her interest. This made it possible to be recognized in "Notable Children's Books and the Best Books for Young Adults lists" of the same year of its publication ("Beauty" 91). The title also reveals that the story is about Beauty, the protagonist whose real name is Honour, and who finds the concept too abstract to understand, she prefers to be called Beauty instead. The story is narrated by a first-person omniscient, who is Beauty herself, as she tells her journey as well as her father's, distributing them upon three chapters, each sub-divided (*Beauty*).

In one of her interviews, Robin McKinley shares her interest in reproducing fairy tales: "I haven't the slightest idea. I don't know why fairy tales call me strongly, I only know that they do. It seems to me that a good fairy tale goes clearly and directly to the heart of what it means to be human without wasting time over frivolous bugbears like reality" (McKinley). Accordingly, she discusses her attraction towards "Beauty and the Beast" fairy tale:

"Beauty and the Beast" is about the recognizing the truth; whatever hairy skin it may be wrapped up in. It's also about taking the responsibility for your own actions, which was a revelation to me as a child in the 50s, when girls stayed at home and did the

vacuuming, and the fairy tale anthologies most readily available featured princesses who wept and wrung their hands and waited to be rescued by princes. “Beauty and the Beast” rescued me. (“INTERVIEW: Robin McKinley”)

In the first chapter, Beauty presents herself as a daughter of a widowed wealthy merchant, Roderick Huston. Mr. Huston has lost his beloved wife, Lady Marguerite, when she was giving birth to their fourth child, Mercy, who passed away after her birth. Beauty, actually named Honour Huston, explains the reason behind her nickname, and presents her two sisters, Grace and Hope, whom she believes are more beautiful than her. After Roderick loses his fortune, the family feels obliged to sell every valuable thing to regain some money. Their strategy consists of leaving the city to a small village called Blue Hill with Hope’s future husband Mr. Gervain Woodhouse. By the time they arrive to their new house, they meet Melinda, Gervain’s aunt, and they progressively get accustomed to their new life style as they divide the housework between them and start enjoying doing it. Clever, curious and boyish, Beauty is warned by Gervain from entering the ‘enchanted’ forest near them. A rose-lover as she is, she asks her father, because he insisted to know their desires, to bring her rose-seeds from his journey back to the city to recuperate a ship of his that was believed to be lost (*Beauty*).

Their life gets more complicated after Mr. Huston returns back to his house, and narrates his journey and the obstacles he encountered in the second chapter. Mr. Huston, on his way home, entered an unknown castle from which he picked a rose for Beauty because he was not able to find rose- seeds. However, the rose almost cost him dearly as he was threatened by the owner of the castle, a man-like Beast, that he shall die for his deed. Negotiating with the Beast that the rose was desired by one of his daughters, the father is asked to let one of his daughters sacrifice herself for him. Hearing the news, Beauty determines and argues with her family members that she must be the one to sacrifice herself and save her father from this horrible fate.

In a one-month period, Beauty prepares herself for her new life, and makes presumptions about the Beast as he shall be: honorable, funny, roses-lover and a reader just like herself (*Beauty*).

In the last chapter, Beauty arrives at the castle and meets different enchanted tools to which she gets accustomed immediately. She also meets the Beast who asks her repeatedly to marry him but she refuses. Beauty's prejudgments about the beast are affirmed, and they both grow fond of each other as they meet so often and they enjoy different similar activities like reading books to each other, and riding Beauty's dearest horse Greatheart. Dreaming of her family, and seeing them with the help of Beast's magic, Beauty goes home for a one-week duration. Her quest consists of preventing her oldest sister, Grace, from getting married, and she asks her to wait for the man she loves, Robert Tucker, who is thought to be dead in their father's shipwreck, is still alive. In the seventh night, Beauty dreams of the Beast sitting dead-like without moving, she returns back to the castle to find him just as she dreamt, and relieves him up with water. Beauty admits her love and her approval to marry him. Consequently, he is disenchanted. Moreover, Beauty is also transformed to a more beautiful young lady who gets married to her prince. Finally, a triplet wedding is arranged: Beauty and the Prince, Grace and Robert as well as Melinda and Mr. Roderick Huston (*Beauty*).

As for the characterization, *Beauty* involves two protagonists: Beauty, Honour Huston, who saves her father, and the Beast, who is actually a prince that is enchanted by a magician and needs true love for his disenchantment. Other characters that are essential in the development of the story are: Gervain, Hope's husband, a gentleman who persuades the Hustons to leave with him to the village near the enchanted forest; the father, Roderick Huston, the previously rich merchant who leaves to the village, works as a carpenter instead, and picks the rose that leads to Beauty's journey; the two sisters: Hope Huston and Grace Huston who take care of the house in Beauty's absence; Robin Tucker who is found to be alive and gets married to Grace; the two

voices Beauty can hear: Bessie and Lydia; the Breeze which Beauty feels each time she gets changed or served; and Beauty's horse Greatheart which keeps her company in the castle. Other less-important characters are: Melinda and her children; Fredy, the boy who kisses Beauty; the other horses; and the enchanted chairs, tables, plates, gates, chambers...etc (*Beauty*).

Beauty is developed through simple comprehensible language as well as simple events that are easy to follow making the retelling more vivid, raising the suspense and opening the possibility of prediction and imagination. Among the different themes that are discussed, two main themes prevail. First, the story highlights the importance of *internal beauty*. From the one hand, Beauty describes herself as plain, less beautiful than her sisters, and boyish as she enjoys cutting the wood, an activity practiced by men generally. From the other hand, Beast is described as an ugly hairy terrifying monster. However, both Beauty and Beast are good-hearted, honorable, and virtuous. They care for others and they possess favorable values that attract one another. In fact, Beauty and Beast both affirm the proverb saying that "beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder." Ironically, they both judge themselves from what their bodies reflect on mirrors, but they can see each other's beauty in the virtues and charms each internally possess, ignoring any traits of physical appearance. Consequently, this beauty permits them to fall for each other and to get married by the end (*Beauty*).

Throughout her retelling, McKinley introduces and stresses the notion of *family love* and *loyalty* to which she comments on in one of her interviews: "Beauty's family in both my books is kind and careful, rather than selfish and bullying as in the usual versions" ("Robin McKinley | Penguin Random House"). From the beginning of the novel, Huston's family members can be seen to be very close and united. By the time the father loses his wealth, his daughters support him and accept to move to the village. They all struggle to fit in their new life and share the housework. *Family love* is also reflected in the father-daughter relationship. Roderick Huston

cares for his daughters and so they do. Before leaving to the city again, he inquires their desires, however, the girls ask nothing but his safety making him insist more. In counterpart, his love for his daughters almost costs him his life when he picks a rose that Beauty requested, from Beast's castle. Each of the three girls wants to be the one to sacrifice herself to save him, but it is Beauty who wins the debate being the one responsible for asking the rose. *Family love* includes sister-sister relationship as well. Throughout the novel, though Beauty feels less beautiful than her sisters, she is not jealous, neither they are, considering the fact she is cleverer. The sisters look after and try to protect one another. Their love is manifested in how the sisters cannot let Beauty go the castle easily, and how Beauty urges the Beast to let her inform her sister, Grace, that the man she loves and to whom she stayed loyal is still alive (*Beauty*).

Another important aspect about the novel is the use of dreams. Though Beauty is subject to dreams two times only, they are enough to direct the course of the events. First, Beauty dreams and is able to hear a conversation between the members of her family. She can also know that her sister, Grace, is willing to marry a man who proposed to her. Beside this dream, Beast helps her, using magic, to see Grace's Beloved Mr. Robert Tucker. As a result, she leaves the castle to inform the family about the news. Her second dream occurs during the last night in her house in which she sees the Beast dead. Consequently, she leaves back to the castle, tries to find him and confesses her love and willingness to marry him leading to his disenchantment. The two dreams are significant because they complete each other. If the first dream did not take place, Beauty would not have left to her house, she would not have been persuaded to stay one more day, she would not have dreamt of the Beast and would not admit her feelings which were the key to break the spell, and would not have married the prince (*Beauty*).

In the *Encyclopedia of Feminist Literature*, McKinley's *Beauty* is classified and falls under three genres: children's literature, fairy tale, and gothic literature (Snodgrass 608-12). It is considered to be a success and an important publication that retells and revises a classic fairy tale in the twentieth century. McKinley's interest in "Beauty and the Beast" fairy tale did not end with writing and publishing *Beauty*. In 1997, nearly two decades after her first retelling, McKinley published her second revision of this tale that she entitled *Rose Daughter*, in which she puts more focus on the motif of the rose. Her retellings are special because she invests in developing her fairy tales through using "realism and detail to the bare bones of recognizable plots" (Tiffin 612).

II.4. Walt Disney's 2017 Adaptation: *Beauty and the Beast*

In the film-making industry, "Beauty and the Beast" has also captured the attention of the different companies and producers. More precisely, it was adapted into different forms and by different cultures. In *The Enchanted Screen*, Zipes lists various versions of this fairy tale such as: Lucien Nonguet's silent film (1908), the Russian Lev Atamanov's feature animated film *The Scarlet Flower* (1952), the American Friz Freleng's cartoon (1934), distributed by Warner Brothers Cartoons, the German animated short movie by Katja Georgi (1976), and the French Jean Cocteau's fairy-tale film (1946). More importantly, several adaptations produced by the famous American Disney Corporation are featured such as the animated feature films trilogy: *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas* (1997) and *Belle's Magical World* (1998) (389-408).

Disney's interest in "Beauty and the Beast" did not end by the end of the twentieth century, but rather the producers of the 'Disney Studios' remained faithful to the tale and it was adapted again, as the latest version was just released on March 2017. Disney's 2017 *Beauty and the Beast* is a 129-minute-length American musical romantic fantasy live-action film. It is an adaptation of the 1991 Disney animated feature film of the same name, which is in itself an

adaptation of Jeanne Marie Leprince de Beaumont's "La Belle et la Bête." The film is written by Stephen Chbosky and Evan Spiliotopoulos and directed by Bill Condon. It is produced by David Hoberman and Todd Lieberman under the Mandeville Films, and distributed by the Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures (*Beauty and the Beast* 2017). The story is developed in the English language, narrated by a third person female omniscient, and with a "budget of 160 million dollars" ("Beauty and the Beast (2017)").

The movie opens with a scene of a red rose that is picked by a hand of an old woman. Later on, the same rose is offered by the old lady to a prince, who lives in France, seeking shelter from the storm. Being unkind and selfish, the prince refuses the request of the woman who turns into a beautiful enchantress, and enchants him, along the castle and its people, to become a monster. To break the spell, he shall love and be loved for his true heart before the last petal shall fall, or else, he shall be doomed to stay a beast forever. The story is about a young lady, Belle, a single daughter of an artist named Maurice, who lives in a village called Villeneuve, and wishes to experience something different than her "provincial" life. Considered to be awkwardly funny by the villagers because she can read, Belle's life changes as her father gets imprisoned by the owner of a castle, Beast, for he picks a rose she desired and consequently is treated as a thief. Later, she meets the frightening Beast, replaces her father as a prisoner at the castle, and meets the enchanted utensils who serve her and joyfully affect her stay at the castle (*Beauty and the Beast* 2017).

Trying to rescue her, Maurice seeks help from the villagers, however, he gets abandoned in the woods by Gaston, a young man who proposed to and got rejected by Belle and her father. As for Belle, it is until she runs away and gets saved from the wolves by Beast that she starts to get along with and loosen her temper towards him. In fact, she admires him more as she discovers that he is a book-passionate like her. Using magic, they time-travel to Paris where she discovers

that plague is the secret behind her mother's death. After sharing a dance, Belle could see through a glass that her father is in trouble, and because Beast loves her, he sets her free to save him. At the village, she finds out that Gaston captures her father, confirms her father's sanity by showing them the Beast but she gets captured herself. The folk, led by Gaston, depart to the castle willing to end the Beast. Lumière, the servants' master that is enchanted in the form of a candelabra, and the others defend the castle. Beast is shot by Gaston and dies between the hands of Belle (who escaped), the last rose petal falls and the tools start to freeze. Finally, the same enchantress sets Beast free and disenchant him as she could witness Belle's love confession. Finally, Beast turns back to a prince and kisses Belle, and the castle, the servants and the people are finally disenchanted. In this occasion, a ceremony is organized to celebrate the wedding of Belle and her charming prince (*Beauty and the Beast* 2017).

Regarding the characterization, the movie is starred by two protagonists: Emma Watson as Belle, a book-addict and an inventor young girl who saves her father from the beast with whom she falls in love by the end; and Dan Stevens as Beast, a man-like monster who needs love to break his magic spell. The story also includes an antagonist, a rival of Beast, performed by Luke Evans in the role of Gaston. Gaston is portrayed as the village's hero, arrogant and selfish, as a result, he shoots Beast and dies in the bridge breakdown. Maurice is starred by Kevin Kline who performs the role of Belle's father, he is a miserable artist who falls into different incidents as a consequence of his willingness to protect his daughter. Other characters include: Josh Gad as LeFou, Gaston's best friend, Hattie Morahan as the enchantress, Maurice's horse Philip as well as the different utensils: Lumière, a candelabra; Cogsworth, a clock; Mrs. Potts, a teapot; her son Chip, a teacup; Madame de Garderobe, a wardrobe; Plumette, a duster, among others (*Beauty and the Beast* 2017).

Disney adaptation explores diverse themes. In addition to *sacrifice*, and *beauty*, the concept of *family love* is also dominant in the movie. Throughout the novel, Belle and Maurice emphasize the father-daughter relationship through their reactions towards each other's difficulties. From the one hand, though Belle was the reason behind her father's misfortune at the castle, she quickly rides to the castle, replaces him as the Beast's hostage and sets him free. Moreover, she leaves the castle as soon as she sees that he is in trouble and tries to rescue him from Gaston and the villagers. From the other hand, Maurice tries to satisfy his daughter's desire by picking a rose for which he gets treated as a thief. He also seeks help twice from the villagers to save his daughter from the Beast's teeth, however, he gets treated as a crazy old man and endures other misfortunes. Consequently, Belle and her father represent a perfect father-daughter relation based on care, protection, love and loyalty. *Family love* is also approached by Maurice's sorrow and eternal grief on his dear wife, Lady Marguerite, whom he had to leave in order to save his daughter from plague (*Beauty and the Beast 2017*).

Another prevailing theme is *loyalty*. As Belle and Maurice strengthen their loyalty to each other each time one faces a misadventure, the villagers also tighten their loyalty to each other as a community, and gather against any possible treat. The villagers are loyal to Gaston as they worship his heroism, and they follow him in whatever decision he makes: they capture Maurice, and they march to the castle to kill the Beast. However, Gaston's loyal best friend LeFou does not really agree on what he does to Maurice, LeFou leaves his side by the time Gaston leaves him struggling. The theme is also enlarged by how the servants stay loyal to the Beast despite the fact that he was unkind and ungrateful, they serve him and cheerfully serve Belle and insist on him to treat her kindly. Belle's return to the castle after the villagers broke in can also be seen as a sign of loyalty and trust. The Beast let her go to rescue her father because he loves her. His bet is that if she

loves him, she surely would come back for him, which is the case after all (*Beauty and the Beast* 2017).

As any other Disney product, *Beauty and the Beast* received favorable reviews and is considered to be a great and a vivid adaptation of a fairy tale. The work received two nominations for an Academy Award for Best Costume Design and Academy Award for Best Production Design, and reached more than a one billion American Dollars gross revenue worldwide in the Box Office three months after its release (“Beauty and the Beast (2017)”). A. O. Scott, a New York Times journalist, describes the movie as “good, moves gracefully, and leaves a clean and invigorating after taste. I almost didn’t recognize the flavor: I think the name of it is joy” (qtd.in “Beauty and the Beast (2017)”).

Indeed, this chapter introduces the analysis of the chosen case study entitled “Beauty and the Beast.” The chapter traces the history of the fairy tale to its first appearance as well as the works on which it was based. The chapter discusses three versions of the tale: James Planché’s first translation of Madame de Villeneuve’s “Beauty and the Beast” (1858), Robin McKinley’s first fairy-tale work *Beauty: A Retelling of Beauty and the Beast* (1978), and Walt Disney’s fairy-tale film *Beauty and the Beast* (2017). The chapter examines the different plots, characters, themes as well as other features.

Chapter Three: The Art of Retelling: What Happened to the Story?

The third chapter presents the major practical analysis for the research as it contains the final results and outcomes drawn upon the different hypotheses. This section provides an analytical comparison between the three selected versions of the chosen fairy tale: the classic version by Planché, McKinley's retelling and the adaptation of Disney. The discussion is established in reference to three main axes. First, it investigates the depiction of female characters, the extent into which it differs in each version, and the reasons behind the peculiar portrayal in each variant. Second, and in the same vein of female representation, the examination seeks to determine whether these variants empower or disempower female characters. Third and finally, the comparison highlights the development and evolution of the fairy tale's message through time and through reproduction.

III.1. Female Representation in the Fairy Tale and its Retellings

Since the beginning of the time, plenty of debates and controversies shared "women" as a central theme. In literature, among other fields, discussions are twofold and the approached issues vary, both in their nature as well as objective, between those raised by men on the one hand, and by women on the other hand. While the majority of men, using religion and culture as a pretext, tend to affirm the already existing norms and binaries, women allow themselves to detect and examine these social and gender roles in order to deconstruct them and reconstruct new ones that are believed to be "fair." Through the feminist movement, the first step that permits the progress in the process of change is to explore how female characters are represented in literature written generally by men. As fairy tales function as significant demonstrations of a society, they inevitably may reflect its patriarchal façade, if ever available, and "Beauty and the Beast" is a great example.

First of all, as for the classic, Planché's translation of Madame de Villeneuve "Beauty and the Beast" encompasses a considerable number of female characters. Initially, the merchant's daughters play a significant role in the development of the story. As in any normal situation, one would logically infer that the more a person gets older the more s/he evolves to be wiser and rational. However, this is not exactly the case with Beauty's sisters. Throughout the novel, a reader can have the assumption that though the sisters are older, they are foolish, ignorant, and selfish: they care only about themselves, their dresses, and their future husbands. When their father's misfortune takes place, their entourage is indifferent towards them: "From the hour they became poor, every one, without exception, ceased to know them. Some were even cruel enough to impute their misfortunes to their own acts." It is due to their extravagances and ignorance that people believe that they get what they deserve. Not being able to assure a decent husband before leaving the town, their misery expands to the new life they have to hold. The sisters find it difficult to accommodate to their new low lifestyle: "like the poor peasant girls, they found themselves obliged to employ their delicate hands in all the labours of a rural life" ("Beauty and the Beast" 226).

Their despicable attitudes are not only apparent in their ignorance, but also they also expand to include their excessive bad treatment vis-à-vis their youngest sister, Beauty. In fact, the sisters do not miss any chance to denigrate Beauty's well-being or to make her sense their jealousy and even hatred. She "was so handsome that she was called "The Beauty." Known by this name only, what more was required to increase the jealousy and hatred of her sisters?" ("Beauty and the Beast" 228). As her name signifies, her sisters' jealousy can be excused considering the pretty face she has, not only it takes the breaths of whomever sees her, but also it takes the hearts of their intended lovers. However, the envy they accumulate in their hearts reaches its peak as soon as their father shares his tragic story. Terrified, the moment they know

that one of them should leave to join the Beast, they seize the opportunity to shed so much anger and grudge on Beauty. They believe that she is the one to be sacrificed because it is she, asking for a rose, the cause of this misery:

Here is the fruit of the moderation and perpetual preaching of this unhappy girl! Why did she not ask, like us for a good stock of clothes and jewels...But she must need, by her singular caprice, bring on us all this misfortune. It is she who has caused it, and they wish us to pay the penalty. We will not be her dupe. She had brought it on herself, and she must find the remedy. (“Beauty and the Beast” 239)

In counterpart, Beauty, the protagonist of the fairy tale, and the youngest child of her siblings, seems to have a lighter spirit. For a sixteen years old teenager, Beauty is not only gorgeous and irresistible, but shows much more maturity than it is expected from girls at her age: “[s]he was a perfectly beautiful young creature, her good temper rendered her adorable. A generous and tender heart was visible in all her words and actions. Quite as much alive to the reverses that had overwhelmed her family as either of her sisters, by a strength of mind which is not common in her sex” (“Beauty and the Beast” 227). Throughout the story, Beauty is distinguished to be firm, prudent, generous, amiable, gentle, modest, caring, smart, hardworking as well as a bookworm with different other hobbies such as playing on different instruments. Instead of reminiscing, like her sisters, about the elegant-high-class life they previously held, she tenderly consoles her father and siblings, and joyfully takes care of the household: “[t]he youngest girl, however, displayed greater perseverance and firmness in their common misfortune... Anxious to console herself and her brothers, by her amiable disposition and sprightliness, there was nothing she did not do to amuse them” (“Beauty and the Beast” 227).

Moreover, she manages her relationship with her sisters in a very thoughtful manner and faces their constant reproaches with tranquility and delicateness. Blaming her for the misfortune,

Beauty calmly replies: “I am the cause of this misfortune...It cannot be imputed to anyone else. I will risk my life,” pursued she, in a firm tone, ‘to release my father from his fatal engagement. I will go to find the Beast; too happy in being able to die in order to preserve the life of him from whom I received mine, and to silence your murmurs’” (“Beauty and the Beast” 239). Even though Beauty knows that her sisters are jealous of her, she confronts them with maturity holding neither grudge nor hatred towards them. In addition, her virtue and love for her father makes her blindly decide to save him. Not only Beautiful, but she is also courageous, determined, and responsible for her actions. She is simply perfect as her Unknown lover addresses her in one of the dreams: “Excelling all other women as far in the qualities of thy mind as thou excellest them in Beauty.” However, a sense of submissiveness and obedience can be also detected as she replies to Beast’s interrogation: “what may please you,’ said she; ‘my life is at your disposal, and I submit blindly to the fate which you may doom me to’” (“Beauty and the Beast” 239-47).

Other female characters include the Queen and the Fairy. While the Queen makes appearance, with her majestic airs, only by the end of the story after Beast is finally disenchanted, and gets convinced by the Fairy that the two shall be married; the Fairy has followed Beauty’s stay in the enchanted castle. In her recurrent dreams, Beauty would see, in addition to her Unknown beloved, a woman whom she is not able to recognize: “[a]fter this first dream, she fancied she was in a magnificent cabinet with a lady, whose majestic mien and surprising beauty created in her heart a feeling of profound respect” (“Beauty and the Beast” 247). Whereas the Fairy insists on Beauty to have faith in the power of virtue, which will definitely lead to the greatest happiness, she also has the airs of a wise woman, a woman whose forethought and mindfulness led to splendid revelations. In fact, Beauty’s mother is herself a fairy who married a King, and the Fairy is Beauty’s aunt who declares that she saved her niece’s life by giving her to the merchant as if she is his own daughter. In addition, the Fairy gave her word to the prince’s

mother, the Queen, to find a way to break the spell. Accordingly, she made sure that Beauty grows and be the one to save Beast.

Second, as far as McKinley's retelling *Beauty* is concerned, the narrative is developed through the existence of a proper number of female characters mainly: the merchant's three daughters and Melinda. From the one hand, the two eldest daughters of the merchant, Grace and Hope, are described by their youngest sister, Beauty, as pretty in and out, heart and soul. Their charms enable them to steal the heart of any man they come across: "Grace and Hope went on being innocently and ravishingly lovely, with every eligible young man—and many more that were neither—dying of love for them... they were as good-hearted as they were beautiful, and their kindness was sincerely meant" (*Beauty* 2). Though they feel sorry for leaving their bright life, it is until they started doing things by themselves that they "realized just how spoiled [they] were, and how unsuited for a life without servants" (*Beauty* 12). Throughout their journey, they show great sympathy and tenderness towards the other members of the family. The girls divide the housework, and make an effort to keep a high spirit in order not to worry their father. They also maintain a righteous and pleasant relationship towards each other, and towards their little sister to whom they gave great affection as well as breeding after they lost their mother.

From the other hand, the protagonist and the youngest sibling, Beauty, provides a description of herself showing her dissatisfaction with the way she looks in many occasions. First, ironically, her nickname "Beauty" does not match neither the way she sees herself nor the way she describes herself as "thin, awkward, and undersized, with big long-fingered hands and huge feet" (*Beauty* 2). Furthermore, as her work consists of gathering wood, splitting it, chopping it, and stacking it, she grows in a boyish way which she does not really appreciate: "I did what was left over... and often thought that it would have been much more convenient if I had been a boy— not least because I looked like one," she also worries that "[she] was becoming more boy

than girl, it seemed” (*Beauty* 13). Additionally, in Hope’s wedding, feeling distinguished by her distinct features from her sisters, she comments: “I was brown...; and I was also very strong, although this is not considered an important virtue in a woman” (*Beauty* 16). Beauty also uses her look to convince her father and sisters that she shall be the one to front this doomed fate: “the rose was for me, and I’m the youngest—and ugliest. The world isn’t losing much in me” (*Beauty* 26). Though her sisters never reproached her over her look, she keeps comparing herself to them thinking she is less beautiful, ugly and man-looking.

The only thing that consoles Beauty is the fact that she is cleverer than her sisters: “[m]y intellectual abilities gave me a release, and an excuse” (*Beauty* 2). She adores and enjoys reading, something to which her sisters do not give so much importance. When the father shares his story, she is the first to fearlessly propose herself to replace him. Finally, Beauty stubbornly succeeds in convincing her family: “I will go, and what’s more, if you don’t promise right now to take me with you when the time comes, I will run off tonight while you’re asleep.” Significantly, her forethought makes her deduce some traits, proved later, about the Beast without even knowing him: “this Beast has a sense of humour, at least. We shall get along quite well together, perhaps;” she also adds “it is an honourable Beast... He cannot be so bad if he loves roses so much;” “if the Beast wants me to look fine, he’ll have to produce his own tailor;” “a Beast who talks like a man,’ I said, ‘Perhaps he reads like a man too’” (*Beauty* 25-8). Stubborn, Beauty is not a person who practices submissiveness and obedience, a great example is her reply to Gervain’s warning in regards to the forest: “are you sure you’re not making it all up to scare me into obedience? It won’t work, you know; it’ll only make me mad” (*Beauty* 14).

Finally, another crucial female character is Melinda. Though her presence in the novel is not very apparent, she gives a good model of a lady. Quite old in comparison to the merchant’s daughters, Melinda Honeybourne is Gervain’s aunt, a mother to six children, and a widow of four

years who runs the entire management of the Griffin, a tiny public house. Melinda is “simple, kind and forthright” (*Beauty* 13), and is the one to prepare and clean the house for the Huston family after they have left the city. In this small village, Melinda has the airs of a respectful and successful single mother, and a woman in general, that is able to independently survive her life. She effectively plays her roles in the society: a woman, a mother and a worker. The Hustons like Melinda and they feel thankful for her help as well as “lucky, because everyone in town liked anyone Melinda liked” (*Beauty* 12), as a result, they do not have to fear about being the new comers. Consequently, she is the real incarnation of a “strong independent woman.”

Third, and finally, Disney’s 2017 adaptation, in contrast, does not highlight many female characters. From the one hand, while the village’s female teenagers care about their looks and wish they get married to Gaston, the hero; the old women seem to be tough and illiterate. Throughout the movie, they are always wearing an apron, holding their children or doing the laundry. They think of Belle as being odd and awkward, and they object her wish in “teaching a girl how to read.” In Villeneuve, the village, only boys have the right to go to class and be educated, as a result, girls have to learn, at a young age, how to take care of the household and help their mothers in the different tasks. These women, and all the villagers, are described by Belle’s father as “small-minded.” They put much stress on their duties as house-wives and mothers with no reflections to their own being and aspirations. These women can be seen as weak-minded because they do not seem to think for themselves. In fact, an old woman is the first to oppose the girl’s education by Beauty. The female villagers blindly follow Gaston in his attack on the castle, and encourage him to capture Belle and make her join her father in the prison because they feel that she is dangerous. As a result, ignorant and brainless, they give the insinuation that, not only they do not support other women, they do fight them the same way men do (*Beauty and the Beast* 2017).

From the other hand, Belle, the protagonist, shows a much more distinct personality. The villagers see her as strange, very different from the rest of them, and funny because she is fond of books. In contrast, Père Robert, the man who lends her books, and Gaston's best friend, LeFou, proudly distinguish her as "the only bookworm in town," and "so well-read" respectively (*Beauty and the Beast* 2017). Belle is peculiarly beautiful, well-educated, smart, mature, ahead of her time, and positively different. Moreover, she is romantic but not foolishly dreamy. Although she adores books because they give her the space to dream about the prince charming, she refuses Gaston's proposal because she believes that they "cannot make each other happy". Her aspirations in life cannot be summarized in marriage for marriage sake, but rather feeling connected to someone who understands her sense of adventure, not a simple "little" wife she dreams of, but "so much more than they have got planned". Additionally, she is as much beautiful as courageous. Belle saves her dear father two times in the film. First, she determinably follows him to Beast's castle, and replaces him in the prison without thinking what would happen to her, and second, she leaves the castle in order to rescue him after Gaston and the villagers imprison him (*Beauty and the Beast* 2017).

As a consequence, whether the protagonist or the other "minor" characters, the way in which these female individuals are represented is dissimilar in each version of the fairy tale. First, concerning the beauty criterion, while Beauty is depicted as a remarkably pretty young lady in both the classic and the adaptation, McKinley, in her highly feminist retelling, opted for a female character who is described as less-beautiful and ugly. McKinley's intention from this transformation is to break the conventional spell that glorifies females' external beauty over the beauty of the mind and soul. It stresses the fact that not only beautiful girls have fascinating ends, but rather, even if a woman sees herself as "less" beautiful, she can still experience great things and even get her prince charming. In fact, McKinley herself is the embodiment of the plain

characters she creates (levy), but her characters are also strong and adventurous as she writes about “girls who do things” (qtd.in L. Sanders). In addition, the three versions can be compared according to the submissiveness of the female characters. Even though Beauty is courageous in the three narratives, she, contrary to the classic, reveals a great sense of adventure as well as dynamism only in the two other recreations. She works on realizing her own vision of life and rejects the “ordinary” life she is expected to live. She neither shows obedience nor docility in her relationship with the Beast, but rather she is strong enough to clearly express her dissatisfaction or disapproval with different things in many occasions. In this regard, Evelyn Petty comments to McKinley’s retellings, including *Beauty*: “McKinley’s protagonists—almost always females—are girls who do things, who get to have adventures... Frustrated with passive heroines in the books in which she grew up, McKinley righted this wrong in her own work” (xvi).

Completely absent in the Disney adaptation, Beauty’s sisters are significantly depicted differently in the other two narratives. In the retelling, McKinley tended to portray them as good-hearted, sweet, more beautiful, caring and holding a smooth relationship with their youngest sister, rather than hard-hearted and jealous of her, as they were depicted in the classic. McKinley dared this alteration in order to falsify and discontinue the conventional stereotype made about sisterhood, not all sisters are evil and not all of them are envious (Hearne 92). However, while Melinda, in the retelling, is an example of an old successful independent woman, and the Fairy, in the classic, presents the true image of a wise rational old lady, Disney’s female villagers are the embodiment of female subordination and ignorance. They do worship the cultural norms and fight the change that Belle wants to make (teaching a young girl how to read) the same way the Queen, in Planché’s variant, worships the rank tradition that forbids the fusion of social classes, and a peasant’s daughter (Beauty) shall never marry a prince.

In this regard, one can conclude that while some female characters are omitted and others are added in both retellings, each author of each version have represented his/her female characters differently. McKinley puts more stress and positively enhances the classical representation in a way that gives female characters more power and free will. Disney represents females as naïve and voiceless on the one hand, and manipulates the character of Beauty on the other hand. She is a heroine who celebrates her self-sacrifice at the same time.

III.2. (Dis)Empowering Female Characters in the Fairy Tale and its Retellings

As female representation is a crucial step in the study of literary works from a feminist point of view, the feminist movement also permits to decipher the writer's intentions from such representation. As a result, the depiction of female characters gives insights about whether these characters are empowered or disempowered. While the first known use of the term "empower" occurred in 1648 under the meaning of "enable," it is also defined as: "to promote the self-actualization or influence" (empower). By empowering a character, an author gives more strength, worth, freedom of choice, independence and ability to evolve whether psychologically or professionally. In contrast, disempowering a character refers to stripping of his/her accessibility to the previous features, thus, a character is weak, helpless, naïve, and voiceless. Female empowerment is basic to the feminist writers as: "[t]hese feminists endeavored to redefine women's lives by breaking the established stereotypes of women as helpless, dependent damsels in distress in fairy tales" (Ismael and Saleh 64).

Starting by the classic, Beauty determinably decides to sacrifice herself to save her father's life. She is responsible, trustworthy and honorable as she returns to Beast's castle in the promised time. More importantly, her power lies in the fact that she, a female character, is the one to save a male, Beast, and succeeds in his disenchantment. This is a clear contrast towards the other fairy tales where the male protagonist is the one to save his princess. McKinley herself

expresses her interest in this classic tale lies in the strengthened representation of Beauty: “when I was growing up in the fifties, [“Beauty and the Beast”] was the only fairy tale I ever read that has the heroine doing something rather than drooping like a tulip in a vase and waiting to be rescued by the hero. I was a girl and I wanted adventures; I didn’t want to hang around on some hero’s arm and agenda” (“Robin McKinley | Penguin Random House”). In spite the fact that this can be seen as an embodiment of female heroism and bravery, she does also highlight her submissiveness and obedience to the Beast as “she [was] determined to obey the Beast” (“Beauty and the Beast” 243). Beauty’s relationship with the Beast is mainly based on gratitude for the gifts he occasionally sent to her family. While she cannot agree to her father’s proposal to marry Beast for she holds no affection towards him, her love and feelings are all given to her Unknown lover: “she was not restrained by the rigid customs of society, and slumber left her free to act naturally. She acknowledged to him her love with a frankness...” (“Beauty and the Beast” 263).

Indeed, the society’s norms were “rigid.” Being a translation, the story originally dates back to the 1740’s, and was written as a reaction to the existing social values and customs in France at that time (Swain, “Beauty” 104-5). Significantly, Beauty is herself the reverse to “some” of these social norms personified in both her sisters’ character and the Queen’s. For instance, one can deduce that women do not have the right to be educated, they grow to become housewives, and those who are not lucky enough to hire maids, have to do the household themselves, they get married out of reason and class’ imperatives rather than love, and they are expected to accept and tame “the beast” present in any man, as well as submit, obey, and sacrifice themselves whenever “needed.” In contrast, Beauty is passionate about reading and is well-educated, she refuses to marry the Beast just because he is “generous,” but she also does the housework nicely, sacrifices herself to save her father, and accepts to sacrifice her love for the prince as soon as she discovers he is noble. Moreover, while the society was dominated by males,

the fairy tale displays a whole community ruled by fairies, female beings that have super powers and are able to enforce their own rules and norms.

However, even though it seems that Beauty bravely offered to sacrifice herself instead of her father, it might not be the case! Yes, she felt responsible for her action, but her decision was not “natural.” Her father did not try to prevent her because he “remember[ed] an ancient prediction, by which he had learnt that this daughter should save his life, and that she should be the source of happiness to all her family” (“Beauty and the Beast” 240). Moreover, her love for the Beast is kind of forced and guided. Initially, the fairy in her dreams promises her great happiness if she acts kind and do not get fooled by appearances. Additionally, the Unknown lover, who is the prince himself, confesses his affection the first time he appears in her dreams. He also keeps comparing himself to the Beast to shake her opinion about the latter and to make her admit her love. Finally, her father asks her to marry the Beast for his generosity disregarding his beastly look. Furthermore, even if she is praised for her virtue and kindheartedness, it is revealed that her virtue is the consequence of her noble blood, being a princess herself, a virtue that is not met in ordinary ladies such as her sisters. Thereafter, the truth is that Beauty is actually empowered and disempowered at the same time. While she is empowered because she saves her father, refuses to marry the Beast out of reason, and is the only one to be able to disenchant him, her power seems to be delusional. As a matter of fact, it is only a consequence of her nobility, and she herself is only a means to an end and is played upon for a male’s sake. The only empowered female character in the tale is the Fairy, Beauty’s aunt, who arranges and organizes Beauty’s life as well as frees the Beast.

While fairytales performed a perfect background for feminists to manifest their orientations over decades, McKinley’s *Beauty* is also a highly “feminist tale.” As a result, her narrative presents “an explicit critique of both the patriarchal structures in [the French “Beauty

and the Beast” fairy tale] and the socialization of the social norms [it] perform[s]” (Seifert, “Feminist Tales” 338). Throughout the story, McKinley tackles different crucial subjects such as marriage and education. First, Beauty, in addition to her other sisters are educated. Much more, Beauty is keen on reading books and wishes to finish her studies at the university. Though she feels less-pretty, she is strong as she perfectly manages to perform activities that are more or less mannish such as wood chopping and horse breeding; she has a high sense of adventure and fearlessness. A reader may also notice her confidence, stubbornness and freedom since she bravely shares her opinions and disapproval towards things. Moreover, she is responsible and mature: she saves her father’s life from a damned fate, she stops her sister from marrying a man to whom she is not attracted and saves her marital future, she saves the Beast’s life and be to the cause for his disenchantment. As a result, Beauty, not only helps herself, but also her family and Beast. She proves that being virtuous is not necessarily a consequence of nobility, but rather an ordinary innate trait, as McKinley expresses it: “I also want to believe that gentleness and thoughtfulness about other people is the standard, and that Beauty isn’t so extraordinary by possessing such virtues!” (“Robin McKinley | Penguin Random House”). She is different, pleasantly unique, and a proof that girls can also be strong, adventurous and make their own lives freely.

Second, the father does not oblige his daughters to marry someone he thinks of being the suitable one, but rather gives them the ability to choose and speak up their minds. On the one hand, while Grace gets engaged to a gentleman she likes, her sister, Hope, gets married to another young man she has feelings and attraction toward. The father does not oblige Grace to marry another man than her beloved one who was thought to be dead, but rather, he gives her all the time she needs to heal. She waits for him for over than a six-year period and does get married to him at the end. Beauty, on the other hand, refuses the recurrent demands to marry Beast,

however, starts developing feelings towards him as she discovers that they have many things in common, and to whom she reveals her true affection and intimacy later on. More importantly, the siblings are indeed empowered and they do empower each other. They care, support and advise one another and maintain a sound relationship. Furthermore, McKinley empowers single mothers, divorced or widowed ladies through the character of Melinda. She is an example of a strong independent woman, a successful as well as a respectful and valued old lady who falls in love with Beauty's father and accepts to start her life over again by his side. As a result, all female characters originated in McKinley's fairy tale are significantly empowered. Ziad Ismael and Asmaa Saleh comment on McKinley's female characters: "McKinley depicts an ideal community in which men and women live in harmony and in which women enjoy the freedom and strength that many women crave in real life. The role of women in the text is fundamental ..." (65). They make proof to the fact that a marriage is more about love than reason, real love always wins and love is neither about appearance nor about class but only about being THE ONE!

As far as the adaptation is concerned, 2017 Disney's Belle is represented as a pretty-looking young lady that is eager to adventure and discover the world. She wishes to build her life the way she desires, and refuses to settle for the ordinary role she is expected to inherit as Emma Watson describes her Belle character: "[She is] absolutely a Disney princess, but she's not a passive character — she's in charge of her own destiny" (qtd. in Ross). She is intellectual, clever, strong, and continually expresses her thoughts, for example, aggressively refusing Beast's invitation for dinner. Embraced even by the father, her choice of refusing Gaston, the hero of the village and the dream of every young woman, as a husband highlights her free will and autonomy in selecting a future partner. She is courageous enough to save: her father twice, as well as the Beast by disenchanting him along the entire castle and its residents (the servants as well as the citizens who were turned into instruments and statues respectively). She also saves her own life

by obtaining the quest she aspired and getting married to a prince. In contrast, the female villagers feature a more or less submissive, ignorant, weak-minded, uneducated, and voiceless women. They accept the embedded social norms and gender roles dictated by males and refuse the slightest change Belle wished to make.

Consequently, these villagers are obviously disempowered. However, Belle is empowered in reference to the strength and freedom she possesses, from the one hand, as Emma Watson expresses it: “[T]here’s this kind of outsider quality that Belle had, and the fact she had this really empowering defiance of what was expected of her. In a strange way she challenges the status quo of the place she lives in, and I found that really inspiring” (qtd. in Purcell). However, Belle is at the same time disempowered because her relationship with Beast is sort of enhanced by the enchanted utensils that know she is their only chance to escape their current state. They amuse her and convince Beast to treat her properly in order to fall in love with him; their only salvation, which is actually similar to the way in which Beauty is manipulated in the classic fairy tale. Nevertheless, this representation is not very shocking when it comes to a Disney adaptation. As a matter of fact, Disney Production has a long history in being attacked for its reinforcement of the conventional social norms and gender discrimination. In this regard, Seifert argues that: “the fairy tales popularized for the mass market (the most obvious example being the films made by the Walt Disney Studios) continue to valorize generic structures such as the marriage closure that reinforce highly conservative gender norms, even while featuring more active heroines” (*Fairy Tales* 4).

In the same line, and in many of his works, Jack Zipes assigns chapters and even whole books in which he discusses Disney’s success and its different adaptations from different angles. It is no wonder that Tracey Mollet describes him as “Disney’s staunchest critic” (221). While the personification of the different characters and enchantments is pleasantly aesthetic and

technologically invested, Disney adaptations do reinforce the implanted socio-cultural values and promote gender stereotypes and the negative representation of female characters, as Zipes states in his book *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*:

No matter what they do, women cannot chart their own life without male manipulation and intervention... The manner in which he [Disney himself] copied the musical plays and films of his time and his close adaptation of fairy tales with patriarchal codes indicate that all the technical experiments would be used not to foster social change in America but to keep power in the hands of individuals like himself, who felt empowered to design and create worlds... The power of Disney's fairy-tale films resides... in Disney's great talent for holding still many antiquated views of the civilizing process through animation and his use to his advantage of the latest technological developments in cinema. (204-7)

Finally, while Planché's "Beauty and the Beast," which is the translation of Mme de Villeneuve, is a female writer's attempt to react to the previous male-written fairy tales, it is not quite the case when it comes to Beauty who is empowered and disempowered at the same time. Similarly, Disney's 2017 *Beauty and the Beast* disempowers the protagonist implicitly and celebrates the naivety of the other females explicitly. The only version that gives high potentials and voice to each and every female character is McKinley's *Beauty* which is described by Evelyn Perry as "a feminist articulation of character and social setting" (xvi).

III.3. Message Evolution Behind Beauty's Story

"Change is the only constant in life," said Heraclitus. Whether one believes it or not, nothing is static in this existence, and literature makes a great example. A common definition of literature highlights its dynamism: literature is an imitation of real life. As a result, every time the reality changes, this newness becomes apparent in the literary sphere. Much more, given the fact

that fairy tales are also dynamic in nature, as the very first fairy tales were transmitted by word of mouth between generations and cultures, and are still being forwarded through different means taking into consideration the specificities of each, it is evident that the original story may have slightly gained more or lost some features.

Putting it into context, Planché's "Beauty and the Beast" is an English translation of Madame Villeneuve's French fairy tale entitled "La Belle et la Bête." The original story was written in 1740, the beginnings of the age of Enlightenment. In this regard, Seifert states that "specialists of the French fairy tales generally acknowledge that there were two major "waves" or "vogues" of publication between 1690 and 1789: the first extending through approximately 1715 and the second from 1730 to 1758." From the one hand, first wave fairy tales were developed by aristocratic female writers, such as Mme d'Aulnoy and Mlle L'Héritier, in their salons. Female writers questioned the gender roles that existed in France at that time, and kind of gave themselves, and their female characters, more strength and voice. From the other hand, second wave tales, including "Beauty and the Beast," are only a continuation and a progression in what the elders have already started, they used fairy tales to verbalize their feelings and thoughts (*Fairy Tales* 5-9). Significantly, Seifert asserts, "one of Villeneuve's most important contributions is her representation of women" ("Villeneuve" 540). Her representation of Beauty can be discussed from a feminist lens as she is given more heroic airs being the one to save her father as well as the Beast. Villeneuve's revolution over a patriarchal society is also manifested in the creation of realms that are ruled by female fairies who employ their own "rules" and get to influence a male-ruled society.

In *The Art of Subversion*, Zipes bases his study on exploring the fairy-tales' dynamism in reflecting the history. He, in different parts of his book, defines "subversion" as: "to use the fairy-tale discourse in a variety of startling imaginative ways to comment on social problems that were

affecting the course of the civilizing process” (159); and “to liberate the form for progressive purposes” (167). The dynamic part of fairy tales makes them a perfect tool for embodying whatever perspectives drawn by the writers throughout times. Zipes affirms that indeed French female writers, like Madame de Villeneuve, used fairy tales, such as “Beauty and the Beast,” to subvert the classics as well as the “male code.” They worked on replacing the old representation of female characters made by males with a new one through giving them the rights they actually needed in reality: education and freedom of choice (32). Madame de Villeneuve portrays a smart and an educated protagonist that is characterized “by a strength of mind which is not common in her sex” (“Beauty and the Beast” 227). As a result, she subverts and denounces the social norms that celebrate passive, stupid and illiterate females.

Feminist fairy tales did not end by the end of the eighteenth century. In fact, in the period from the mid through the end of the twentieth century, female writers of the second wave of feminism, a more or less a sociopolitical movement, used fairy tales as a means to question the social codes and reverse them to what suits the feminist ideologies. Undoubtedly, 1978 Robin McKinley’s *Beauty* forms a perfect illustration. In the retelling, she “fights against the passive and often negative portrayal of women in fairy tales.” Mrs. McKinley is herself personified in the character of Beauty, her protagonist: they both like horses, books and adventures (“Beauty: A Retelling of the Story of Beauty and the Beast | Encyclopedia.Com”). Whether Beauty, her sisters or Melinda, each of these female characters is significantly empowered from every single perspective. The author has also discussed crucial themes that are debatable in nature including forced marriage, love versus reason and the education of females. However, while Betsy Hearne favorably describes the novel as a “captivating first-person fantasy novel that explores and expands some of the compelling elements of the original tale while leaving others untouched;” Patty Campbell writes to *Wilson Library Bulletin* that McKinley uses the classic fairy tale and

“turns it into an adolescent identity novel,” “making changes that weaken the original message of the tale” (qtd. in Gale).

In the same vein, Zipes explains that fairy tale retellings are written “to shift the direction of [the fairy-tale tradition] in a radical way” (*Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* 121). He also asserts that retellings, including McKinley’s *Beauty*, are subversive and “liberating.” Zipes argues that these retellings provide “combined activism” to both males, like Beast, and females, like Beauty, to reach the fair rights and roles of the female characters which were previously disguised by males as well as the society (*Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* 187-8). Unlike the classics, the males do not denigrate female characters but they rather support them to achieve their goals. More importantly, Beauty describes herself as “very strong, although this is not considered an important virtue in a woman” (*Beauty* 16). This passage gives a clear image of how women should look like and what virtues they shall hold. Beauty feels proud of herself having a strong-build, but also feels sorry for herself that being strong is not a female trait. Females need to be calm, beautiful, and feminine in all sorts; they can be anything but strong and brilliant. McKinley successfully subverted these realities through her empowering representation of her tale’s female characters (discussed previously).

In the field of movie production, no one can deny that Disney’s 2017 fairy tale film entitled *Beauty and the Beast* is an artistically well-captivating cinematic work. It actually gives the intention that much investment was put on the portrayal of the characters, as Allie Rosen puts it: “the best aspects...are the costuming and production design. The Beast’s castle is rife with beautiful architecture and the customs of every single character are beautiful and extravagant. The attention to detail in each set and costume is something to be appreciated” (Rosen). However, being a remake of 1991 Disney’s animated movie, viewers cannot help themselves but to compare both versions. Allie Rosen believes that it was needless to produce another film of this

fairy tale for it added nothing new to the story: “[t]he original “Beauty and the Beast” did not need a remake. The characters... are meant to be cartoons and do not translate well when brought to life” (Rosen). Similarly, Kristen Acuna harshly attacks the new adaptation and claims that the original film “won two Oscars and earned another four nods, ... This isn’t getting a best picture nod. Neither will this new interpretation take the place of the original... If you had to pick between this and the animated version, no one’s going to want to rewatch this over and over again instead” (Acuna).

From all that have been said, both works of McKinley and Disney are not generated as isolated or original products, by they are only retellings or revisions of the classic fairy tale “Beauty and the Beast,” that of Madame Villeneuve. However, even if they share the same source, they are expressed differently and they do not serve the same purpose. Whether the three versions: overlook some characters or bring other new ones into life; fully empower or foolishly-empower the protagonist; glorify female’s awareness and worthiness or praise their passiveness and ignorance; mold a man-like-beast or a beastly-beast; among many other differences that have been stated in the other two sections, the messages of the original tale are still the same. They are still discussed in both recreations, only with considerable alterations that the authors felt the need to make. As a matter of fact, writers are influenced by the reality they live in, as well as the perspectives that shape their minds; their quest is to artistically portray these facts whether to share and inform readers on the one hand, or to incite readers to make a change on the other hand. This fact makes it logically impossible to produce something as neat as the original work, unless the author’s aim is to be neutral and objectively absent in his work. Consequently, both retellings still explore the two main messages developed in the classic: beauty of the body versus beauty of the soul, and sacrificial love; themes that are already discussed in this chapter and the former one.

Finally, it is true that the three versions are produced by three of the most crucial figures in the fairy tale world, in totally different periods of time as well as socio-political spheres, and to completely different target audiences; it is only a proof of the smoothness of fairy tales and their dynamic nature. More precisely, since the classical fairy tale of Villeneuve is in itself feminist to some extent, it is only reinforced and blank-filled by McKinley's retelling; but also debatably both improved and regressed by Disney's adaptation (as it was discussed in the previous section). As a result, the message did not actually change, but rather, it evolved to fit the changes of each era and each author.

This chapter, indeed is a comparative analysis of the whole dissertation. The chapter is divided into three sections, and each discusses and mainly answers the research questions and hypotheses. This final chapter investigates how female characters are represented in each of the three versions and in what ways this representation differs among them. In addition, it also gives analysis about whether and how these female characters are actually empowered or disempowered. Last but not least, the chapter explores the difference of the message between the classic fairy tale and the other versions.

Conclusion

Long time ago, people developed stories orally for their entertainment. Those stories were transmitted by word of mouth, scribes and manuscripts, paintings, musicals, novels and short stories, until they finally reached cinema and movies. Fairy tales are a subgenre of magic tales, folktales and tradition literature respectively. They are characterized by the excessive use of magic, they are socio-cultural products, and are divided into two types: oral and literary. Perrault, the brothers Grimm, and Hans Anderson's fairy tale collections constitute the classics of the fairy tale canon. The popularity of fairy tales resulted in multiple recreations, reformulations and reproductions, to reach the form in which they are known today.

Fairy tales' retellings differ by the difference of each writer's orientations and purposes. By the middle of the twentieth century, particularly in USA, fairy tales were subject to a wave of revolution and development. Labeled as feminist fairy tales or feminist retellings, they are a reflection to the feminist movement that emerged at that time. Feminist writers used fairy tales, due to their wide spread and accessibility by the different segments of the society, as a vehicle to highlight their interests and ideologies. First, feminists analyzed the classical fairy tales to examine how female characters are represented. Then, they retold these tales and they revised them in a way to subvert the representations that they found misleading and unfair. Their quest was to diminish and stop the patriarchal conventional stereotypes about gender roles and social rules, dictated mainly by males.

The industrial revolution as well as the massive technological development had also their shades on fairy tales also. In the cinematic field, fairy tales were also translated into the form of audio-visual products: movies, animations, series, cartoons, among other forms. Known as 'Fairy tale films' or adaptations, these products have added a great significance and value to this literary genre, whether in terms of popularity, vividness or entertainment. In the United States of

America, and unsurprisingly worldwide, the famous ‘Walt Disney Company’ is a leading corporation in producing fairy tale films as well as adaptations in all sorts.

Fairy tales are unlimited. One of the well-established fairy tales in the literary canon is “Beauty and the Beast.” Having its roots back to 1740, the tale was first published by Madame de Villeneuve. It was considered as an amazing addition to the fairy tales’ sphere at that time, and it is reproduced and recreated in every possible way and in every existing medium since then. The tale was first translated into the English language by James Planché in 1858, it was retold by the American Robin McKinley in 1978, and was adapted by Disney many times, the last adaptation was in 2017. Each of these three versions makes a crucial development as well as a beneficial contribution in the history of this tale in particular, and in the fairy tale world in general. These fairy tales provide a good comparative-analytical study in terms of female representation, female (dis)empowerment, and message evolution.

First, using the feminist approach, the representation of female characters can be easily unveiled. In fact, the female characters are not quite the same in all versions, some additions and omissions are made. Concerning the protagonist, and except for the feeling of obedience and submissiveness she has towards Beast in the classic, Beauty is given too much praise and voice in all versions. She is beautiful (except in the retelling), kind, warm-hearted, intellectual, and courageous, simply a heroine. However, submissiveness is the trait that characterizes Beauty’s sisters in the classic, as well as the female villagers in the adaptation. It is only in McKinley’s retelling that the other female characters are given voice the same as the protagonist.

Second, through the same lens, female empowerment is not quite the same in the versions. In both the classic and the adaptation, though Beauty is given strength and power to save her father, the Beast, and herself through marrying the prince; she is only a puppet that is manipulated for a male’s sake. Her life and misadventure can be said to be a lie; she endures what

her “fate” requires just to satisfy a male as her quest consists of disenchanting the Beast. As a result, she is empowered and disempowered at the same time. Not only the protagonist, Beauty, who is disempowered. Whether her sisters, in the classic, or the female villagers in the adaptations, these characters are marginalized and naïve. They follow the rigid rules dictated by males blindly, and they even stand against Beauty as she wants to break these rules: they are the incarnation of the French proverb that says “A woman’s worst enemy is a woman.” However, the only version that includes empowered female characters, whether the protagonist or the others, is McKinley’s retelling. Beauty, her sisters, or Melinda are not only empowered, but they also support each other and stand in each other’s back.

Finally, the fact that these versions were written in different socio-political periods, by different writers who have different orientations and purposes, and for completely different audiences would clearly allude that they are different. As a matter of fact, they are not only distinct in their development, but also the original fairy tale’s message may have also endured a possible change. The analysis of the tales gives insight that these retellings are not isolated segments of literary writing, but rather a creative aesthetical continuation of the original tale and its messages. The three versions accentuate sacrificial love as well as the internal versus the external beauty. Thus, the message is not actually changed but rather it evolved and is expressed in a way that serves the surroundings of its production.

As a conclusion, this study sheds light on the ways in which female characters are represented, the extents to which they are empowered and disempowered, and the way in which the message is developed, and how these peculiarities are a consequence of each writer’s intentions. More precisely, while the classical fairy tale of Villeneuve was meant to be a feminist resistance to the socio-cultural environment of the eighteenth century France, it is only

strengthened and embraced by McKinley's retelling. However, Disney's adaptation may be seen as a controversial reproduction of the tale for it both improved and regressed it.

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ملخص

تسعى هذه الأطروحة إلى التحقق من كيفية تمثيل الشخصيات النسائية في القصص الخيالية الكلاسيكية وفي روايتها. تستخدم الدراسة الحكاية الخيالية الشهيرة "الجميلة والوحش" كدراسة حالة. تم فحص ثلاث نسخ من هذه القصة الخيالية: ترجمة جيمس بلانشي الإنجليزية "الجميلة والوحش" (1858) باعتبارها كلاسيكية، رواية روبن ماكينلي تحت عنوان *الجميلة: رواية قصة الجميلة والوحش* (1978)، والفيلم المقتبس من طرف ديزني لعام 2017 بعنوان *الجميلة والوحش*. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تستكشف الدراسة ما إذا كانت الشخصيات الأنثوية في كل قصة تتمتع بالتمكين أو الاستغناء. علاوة على ذلك، يتتبع هذا البحث تطور رسالة الحكاية الخيالية الكلاسيكية من خلال إعادة سردها. باتباع أسلبي التحليل والمقارنة، يتم إجراء البحث الحالي من خلال استخدام نهجين أدبيين. من ناحية، تعتبر النسوية أمرًا ضروريًا لهذه الدراسة نظرًا لأن بطلة الرواية هي نفسها أنثى، ولأن الدراسة تتطرق إلى التمثيل النسائي بالإضافة إلى (عدم) تمكين الإناث. من ناحية أخرى، يسمح النهج التاريخي بتقييم تطور الرسالة. خلصت الدراسة إلى أنه في حين يتم تمثيل الشخصيات النسائية بشكل إيجابي ويتم تمكينها بالكامل في رواية ماكينلي لأنها حكاية نسوية بحثة، فإن تمثيلها وتمكينها يكون جزئيًا ووهميًا في كل من القصة الخيالية الكلاسيكية والفيلم المقتبس عام 2017. أخيرًا، على الرغم من أن القصص الخيالية يتم إنتاجها في فترات مختلفة، تم تطويرها بشكل مختلف وكتبت لتحقيق أغراض مختلفة، فإن الرسالة الرئيسية للحكاية الخيالية الكلاسيكية لا تزال هي نفسها في كلتا الروايتين: لم تتغير بل تطورت بالأحرى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: حكاية خرافية؛ رواية؛ فيلم حكاية خرافية؛ فيلم مقتبس؛ تطور الرسالة؛ حكايات نسوية؛ تمثيل نسائي؛ (عدم) التمكين الأنثوي.

Résumé

Cette thèse cherche à étudier comment les personnages féminins sont représentés dans les contes de fées classiques et dans leurs récits. L'étude utilise le célèbre conte de fées "La Belle et la Bête" comme étude de cas. Trois versions de ce conte de fées sont examinées: la traduction Anglaise de James Planché "La Belle et la Bête" (1858) en tant que classique, son récit par Robin McKinley sous le titre de *Beauté: Récit de l'Histoire de la Belle et la Bête* (1978), et son adaptation Disney de 2017 intitulée *La Belle et la Bête*. En outre, l'étude explore si les personnages féminins de chaque récit sont habilités ou démunis. En outre, cette recherche retrace l'évolution du message du conte de fées classique tout au long de ses récits. Suivant les méthodes analytique et comparative, la présente enquête est menée à travers l'utilisation de deux approches littéraires. D'une part, le féminisme est impératif pour cette étude puisque la protagoniste est elle-même une femme, et parce que l'étude aborde la représentation féminine ainsi que la (dés) autonomisation des femmes. D'un autre côté, l'approche historique permet d'évaluer l'évolution du message. L'étude conclut que si les personnages féminins sont représentés positivement et pleinement habilités dans le récit de McKinley car il s'agit d'un conte hautement féministe, leur représentation et leur autonomisation ne sont que partielles et illusoire dans le conte classique et l'adaptation de 2017. Enfin, bien que les versions de contes de fées soient produites à des époques différentes, développées différemment et écrites pour accomplir des objectifs différents, le message clé du conte de fées classique est toujours le même dans les deux récits: il n'a pas changé mais a plutôt évolué.

Mots Clés: conte de fées; récit; film de conte de fées; adaptation; évolution du message; contes féministes; représentation féminine; (dés) autonomisation des femmes.