

‘It’s a Pity and a Sin’: Images of Disability, Trauma and Subverted Power in Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast*

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Abstract

This article explores parallels between society’s treatment of those with disabilities and the characters in Disney’s 1991 and 2017 versions of *Beauty and the Beast*. By comparing Gabrielle de Villeneuve’s text with the films, I will highlight where they deviate from the text in order to connect with a disability stereotype. With a focus on the perceived connection between moral character and physical appearance, my article will analyse how the character of The Beast perpetuates the idea that only those with moral deficiencies become disabled. Employing Wolf Wolfensberger’s classifications of deviancy and disability, such as the eternal child, the sub-human organism and others, the article seeks to prove that Disney continues to promote pejorative images of the disabled body. Using trauma theory, I will illustrate how the curse of the Beast is a source of trauma. Lastly, this article analyses Foucault’s principle of subject and object, focusing on how the most recent film versions of *Beauty and the Beast* posits able-bodied characters as subjects over the disabled ones.

Keywords: *Beauty, Beast, Disney, disability, trauma, Wolfensberger*

Stepping Into the Disney Cannon

Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast* features a heroine unlike her counterparts.¹ Belle has no witches offering poison apples, or princes touting glass slippers. In the last stanza of the song ‘Belle,’ the townspeople belt out, ‘It’s a pity and a sin/She doesn’t quite fit in.’ While Belle’s nonconformance to traditional gender roles has made her the target of gossip, the line ‘it’s a pity and a sin [...] doesn’t quite fit in’ is more aptly applied to Disney’s portrayal of the Beast. The Beast is an outlier on the spectrum of Disney heroes: he is neither the adventurous hero that we have come to expect from Disney, nor is he a true villain. Regardless, Disney happily deviates from the character that Gabrielle de Villeneuve presents, and packages him as a lesson by associating the Beast’s outward appearance with morality. Mirroring the line ‘it’s a pity, it’s a sin,’ Disney uses the Beast to showcase antiquated stereotypes of the disabled body. By pigeonholing the Beast into these stereotypes that centre heavily on objectification and passivity, Disney bestows Belle with the ability to become a more active heroine than her predecessors.

First, I explore how Disney departs from Villeneuve’s original text to create a clear connection between the prince’s beastly appearance and the moral model of

¹ *Beauty and the Beast*, dir. Bill Condon (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2017), DVD.

disability.² Second, I analyse how Disney forces characters into pejorative stereotypes based on Wolf Wolfensberger's classifications of the disabled body.³ In order to illustrate Wolfensberger's concepts, I solicit Derrida's deconstructionist strategy which holds that while society has created a power structure that always preferences one type of person over the other that binary opposition has the ability to become fluid and posit the less valued person over the other, making society anxious.⁴ Additionally, using foundational tenants of trauma theory, I examine how embodiment of a disability can affect both the individual and those around him. Furthermore, I enlist Foucault's ideas of subjectification and objectification to explore how the perception of the physically disabled person in film is constantly in the role of an object, rather than a subject that has the ability to act.⁵

Wolfensberger's Categories of Disability in the 21st Century

Significant strides have been made in Disability Studies since the publication of Wolfensberger's article, 'The Concept of Deviancy in Human Management' in 1972. Nonetheless, the classifications of the disabled body have adapted to 21st century life. To demonstrate the timelessness of Wolfensberger's categories, I refer to the 2005 case of Terri Schiavo, an American woman at the heart of the 'right to die' debate. Secondly, I apply the work of Ian Matthews, who analysed how the 2011 Winterbourne View Hospital scandal in the United Kingdom, fits into Wolfensberger's classifications.

The first role that Wolfensberger highlights is that of sub-human organism. Here, society intentionally disassociates humanness from the individual, classifying him as either animal or object.⁶ For example, Terri Schiavo, a woman in a 'persistent vegetative state' was objectified by warring political ideologies on the issue of end-of-life care.⁷ As a 'diseased organism', those with disabilities are defined by the medical model of disability as society seeks to understand, even cure, the limitations of the body.⁸ After Florida courts ruled that Schiavo's feeding tube be removed, the governor ordered healthcare providers to reinsert it. As an 'object of pity,' a person with a disability is viewed as being in need of care and sympathy (*CDHM* 26). In the case of Schiavo, her situation did elicit compassion, with then-president George W. Bush commenting, 'Those who live at the mercy of others deserve our special care and concern.'⁹ Along with the category of pity is the label of 'holy innocent' – one who is considered to be totally

² Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve, 'The Story of Beauty and the Beast by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve,' trans. James Robinson Planché, in *Beauty and the Beast – All Four Versions* (Los Angeles, CA: Enhanced Media, 2017). Hereafter cited as *SBB*, followed by page numbers in the text.

³ Though Wolfensberger's classifications apply exclusively to those with intellectual disabilities, I use them in a broader context.

⁴ Peter Barry, 'Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction,' *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* 2009, 3rd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 63.

⁵ Mary Klages, 'Ideology and Discourse', *Literary Theory: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 5th ed. (London: Continuum, 2012), 143.

⁶ Wolf P. Wolfensberger, 'The Concept of Deviancy in Human Management', in *Leadership and Change in Human Services: Selected Readings from Wolf Wolfensberger*, ed. David Race (New York: Routledge, 2003), 23-24. Hereafter cited as *CDHM*, followed by page number in the text.

⁷ Josh Sanburn, 'How Terri Schiavo Shaped the Right to Die Movement', *Time Magazine* (31 March 2005); available at <http://time.com/3763521/terri-schiavo-right-to-die-brittany-maynard/> [accessed 20 July 2018].

⁸ Ian Matthews, 'Not Like Us? Wolfensberger's "Major Historic Roles" Reconsidered', *Disability and Society* 32.9 (2017): 1358. Hereafter cited as *NLU*, followed by page numbers in the text.

⁹ 'Supreme Court Rejects Schiavo Appeal', *CNN* (17 March 2005); available at <http://www.cnn.com/2005/LAW/03/17/schiavo.brain-damaged/> [accessed 20 July 2018].

innocent or 'incapable of sin' (*NLU*, 1357). Although Schiavo was incapacitated, her case attracted the attention of the Vatican, which argued for continuation of life support.¹⁰ Schiavo's situation could make her an 'object of dread' because the legal battles surrounding her case presented a reality that few wanted to consider.¹¹

Contrastingly, Wolfensberger presents the 'menace,' one who poses a threat to societal norms and must be monitored. The staff at Winterbourne viewed their charges as ones who would upset order, and were, therefore, constantly beaten into submission. (*NLU*, 1361) The label of 'eternal child', another of Wolfensberger's category, confines a person with a disability to the societal status of a child, regardless of age (*CDHM* 29). Matthews considers the patients of Winterbourne to be eternal children because they did not have the ability to understand the abuses that were occurring (*NLU*, 1361). It is likely that the Winterbourne patients comprehended the abuse, but had no power to stop it, as they were dependent upon those caregivers for basic functions. The role of 'object of ridicule' places the individual as a source of humour for others (*CDHM* 28). For those patients at Winterbourne, they became amusement for the staff that harmed them (*NLU*, 1362). Matthews' work proves that while Wolfensberger's categorizations may be dated, they are still, unfortunately, applicable to the modern age.

Moral Model of Disability

The moral model of disability argues a connection between a person's behaviour and development of a disability.¹² While the moral model is widely eschewed by practitioners today, previous Western cultures held fast to the Puritan edict.¹³ Nonconformity to Christian ideals, thus displeasing a righteous God, was a logical explanation for physical deviance and illness. An excerpt taken from the diary of Puritan minister, Cotton Mather, shows a perceived connection between ill-health and a vengeful God. Mather, suffering from a headache, correlates the condition to his 'horrible Filthiness, Unthankfulness, and Unfruitfulness,' while soliciting a cure for his impairment by 'imploing pardon, thro' the Blood of Jesus'.¹⁴ Beyond the common illnesses of the time, bearing a child with a visible defect or disability served as a tangible harbinger of personal wrongdoing. As Nielsen explains, 'disability was a material reality for many European colonists, but it also served as a potent metaphor and symbol'.¹⁵ Women who had birthed children with abnormalities were viewed as liable for the conditions of their children. Some mothers were accused of entering into a liaison with Satan.¹⁶ Wolfensberger notes that a child with a disability could be seen as an 'object of dread' because he represented God's displeasure, alienating him from community inclusion (*CDHM*, 26). Disney's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* features villainous Frollo who promulgates the moral model by terming Quasimodo an

¹⁰ Arthur Caplan, 'Ten Years After Terri Schiavo, Death Debate Still Divides Us: Bioethicist', *NBC News*, 31 March 2015; available at <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/bioethicist-tk-n333536> [accessed 20 July 2018].

¹¹ Caplan.

¹² Romel Mackelprang and Richard Salsgiver, *Disability: A Diversity Model Approach in Human Service Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 98.

¹³ Colin Barnes, 'A Brief History of Discrimination and Disabled People', in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York: Routledge, 1997), 21.

¹⁴ Cotton Mather, 'January 1698-99', in *Diary of Cotton Mather 1681-1708*, ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1912), 285.

¹⁵ Kim Nielsen, *A Disability History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), 30.

¹⁶ Barnes, 21.

‘unholy demon’ that should be drowned and ‘sent back to hell’ due to his physicality.¹⁷ *Beauty and the Beast: An Enchanted Christmas* shows the enchantress placing a ‘curse upon [the Prince’s] house and all within it,’ even though the servants have not encouraged the Prince’s actions.¹⁸ Despite the fact that society has largely distanced itself from equating a moral shortcoming with disability, Disney has built a cinematic enterprise around this antiquated model.

Moral Model and the Individual

In Disney’s universe, following the moral model of disability is logical. By correlating good moral character with an attractive outward appearance, and corruption with a scary exterior, dialogue does not need to be spent on explanations. Children quickly understand the implication that those who are unattractive are considered to be villainous and children should not emulate that behaviour.¹⁹ Whether directly stated or not, Disney is teaching lessons about good and evil as tied to bodily image.²⁰ The Disney logic is simple: if a character is attractive, he or she plays a heroic role, while those who are not are relegated to the status of villain.²¹ In many cases, Disney villains are also punished for their evil deeds by changes to their outward appearances. *Tangled* snatches away Gothel’s motivation of immorality and reduces her to dust.²² In a quest to become ‘the fairest of them all’ the witch in *Snow White* dies, not as a beautiful queen, but as a fearful hag.²³ While the moral model of disability is viewed as antediluvian, it still remains heavily prevalent in the above cinematic examples. Henry Giroux explains that ‘the Disney Company is not ignorant of history, it reinvents it as a pedagogical and political tool to secure its own interests, authority and power’.²⁴ On Disney’s didactic watch, even the most feared historical villain can be redeemed and turned into a hero if it the transformation teaches young viewers a lesson. In Disney’s *Blackbeard’s Ghost*, the infamous pirate, Edward ‘Blackbeard’ Teach, is crafted as a bumbling, yet lovable, character who saves his modern-day descendants from financial ruin.²⁵ While creating a correlation between morals and appearance could cause confusion for young viewers, Disney seems to look the other way.

In both the animated and live-action versions of *Beauty and the Beast*, the Prince is transformed due to his pride and vanity. Both opening scenes show the Prince heartlessly turning away a beggar asking for shelter, even after being warned: ‘not to be

¹⁷ *The Hunchback of Notre Dame.*, dirs. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, 1996. (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1997), DVD.

¹⁸ *Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas*, dir. Andrew Knight, 1997 (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1997), DVD.

¹⁹ Doris Bazzini, Lisa Curtin, Serena Joslin, Shilpa Regan and Denise Martz, ‘Do Animated Disney Characters Portray and Promote the Beauty-Goodness Stereotype?’, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 40.10 (2010): 2688-97.

²⁰ Annalee R. Ward, *Mouse Morality: The Rhetoric of Disney Animated Film* (Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 2002), 81-2.

²¹ Bazzini *et al.*, 2697.

²² *Tangled*, dirs. Nathan Greno and Byron Howard, 2010 (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2011), DVD.

²³ *Snow White*, Dirs. William Cottrell, David Hand, Wilfred Jackson, Larry Morey, Perce Pearce, Ben Sharpsteen, 1937 (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2009), DVD.

²⁴ Henry Giroux, ‘Memory and Pedagogy in the ‘Wonderful World of Disney’: Beyond the Politics of Innocence’, in *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*, eds Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas, and Laura Sells (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 46.

²⁵ *Blackbeard’s Ghost*, dir. Norman Tokar, 1968 (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), DVD.

deceived by appearances.' Villeneuve's plotline, however, puts forth an adolescent prince who gently refuses the marriage proposal of an aging fairy instead of a socialite obsessed with appearances. By straying from the text and relying on flawed logic that associates appearance and morality, Disney reinforces a stereotype that is hard to undo. Schwartz, Lutfiyya, and Hansen explain that negative perceptions of a person based on a single characteristic can lead to the diminishment of a person's worth in the eyes of those that heed normative culture.²⁶ The idea of homogeneity creates a divisive, and flawed, mindset – one is either accepted or part of the other. For example, the work of Robinson, Callister, Magoffin and Moore showed that elderly characters in Disney films were often classified by viewers as being 'senile' 'sad' 'helpless' and 'object[s] of ridicule,' which reinforces the concept that they are not meant to be viewed positively.²⁷ By equating the Beast's transformation with a lack of decorum, there is a similar risk of creating a larger divide between the non-disabled and disabled populations.

Disney's Absconded Morals and Mothers

Parental fault is at the heart of the moral model, as well as some of Disney's most beloved cinematic tales. Several films center on a king or queen having displeased a deity or other supernatural creature. Like in Puritanism, a child is often the crux upon which retribution is focused. In Disney's *Hercules*, an envious Hades, god of the underworld, conspires to turn Zeus' son mortal so that he can overthrow his brother without interference.²⁸ In *Sleeping Beauty*, Aurora faces the prospect of death at the prick of spindle because her royal parents refuse to welcome Maleficent to the infant's Christening.²⁹ Interestingly, Disney creates conflict where none existed before. In the legend of Hercules, Hades had no desire to overthrow his brother, as the two were bestowed their respective kingdoms by chance instead of Hades being banished to the underworld by his brother, as the Disney film suggests.³⁰ However, in Villeneuve's *Beauty and the Beast*, it is the vanity of the mother, not the Prince turned Beast, which incites the anger of the aged fairy. When the Prince rejects the fairy's marriage proposal, the Queen brings up appearances, saying, 'Deign to contemplate without prejudice, the object this glass presents to you, and let it reply for me' (*SBB*, 59). In this version, the Prince plays a minor role in his transformation, but, due to the words of his mother, he is left to suffer the consequences.

Given Disney's propensity for parental-based conflict, the vanishing mother seems contradictory.³¹ In the 2017 version of *Beauty and the Beast*, the mother is removed from the storyline by death, thereby leaving the prince to be raised by a vice-ridden father. The mother's death has a deconstruction-like effect which leaves him vulnerable and open to other parental influences without any counterbalance. Lynda Haas notes that 'the

²⁶ Karen Schwartz, Zana Marie Lutfiyya and Nancy Hansen, 'Dopey's Legacy: Stereotypical Portrayals of Intellectual Disability in the Classic Animated Films' in *Diversity in Disney Films: Critical Essays on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality and Disability*, ed. Johnson Cheu (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company Publishers, 2013), 180.

²⁷ Tom Robinson, Mark Callister, Dawn Magoffin and Jennifer Moore, 'The Portrayal of Older Characters in Disney Animated Films', *Journal of Aging Studies* 21.3 (2007): 207.

²⁸ *Hercules*, dirs. Ron Clement and John Musker, 1997 (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1999), DVD.

²⁹ *Sleeping Beauty*, dir. Clyde Geronimi, 1959 (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2008), DVD.

³⁰ William F. Hanson, *Handbook of Classical Mythology* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 179-180.

³¹ Lynda Haas, "'86 The Mother: Murder, Matricide, and Good Mothers', in *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*, eds Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas and Laura Sells (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 196.

mother/woman is the mirror into which men look to find their [...] identity [while] she has no identity of her own'.³² Mrs. Potts, the teapot, informs Belle that the Prince's moral character was affected by his 'cruel' father who 'twisted [the Prince] up to be just like him.' Judith Herman points out in her book, *Trauma and Recovery*, that a child's sense of safety is rooted in a 'caretaker's benign use of power'.³³ Perhaps the Prince emulated his father's uncaring demeanour in order to cope with the change in lifestyle. The addition of an unkind father lines up with the moral model of disability, but Disney rejects the idea of the son paying for the sins of the parent. By having the Prince transformed by his *own* selfish department, the Beast can at least earn internal redemption in an act of selflessness. In the latter half of the film, the Beast releases Belle from her incarceration in order to allow her to save her father – which will also seal the Beast's fate. As Belle rides from the castle, the Beast laments in the song *Evermore* that '*I was the one who had it all/ I was the master of my fate/ I never needed anybody in my life/ I learned the truth too late.*'³⁴ Disney takes the opportunity to teach a lesson fit for a hero: think of others first and yourself last. The first line of *Evermore* alludes to previous selfishness and arrogance. The last line shows acceptance of responsibility, personal growth, and the importance of doing the right thing. Disney's deletion of the mother and slight mention of the father deviates from the moral model but realigns when the servants are punished for the Beast's actions.

Community Retribution and the Eternal Child

Part of the moral model inflicts punishment for an individual's conduct upon the community. *Beauty and the Beast* emphasizes this feature through backstory of the Prince's childhood. The Beast is not apologetic for his role in robbing his staff of human form, but this may be because he does not hold himself responsible. The concept of the eternal child places a person in a societal holding pattern of childhood. Despite actual age, a person who is classified as an eternal child is excused from the expectations of adulthood, including the need to be held accountable for his tenure (*CDHM*, 29). An example of the traditional use of the eternal child stereotype is seen through Dopey, the dwarf in *Snow White* who does not speak and is looked after by the other dwarves.³⁵ An eternal child stereotype is also put in place by the environment in which the Beast functions. The staff adapt themselves to the needs of the Beast, even shouldering the blame for his deeds, rather than forcing him to change his demeanour. Mrs. Potts' statement of 'We've made our bed' and implying that her status as a teapot is directly tied to the fact that she allowed the Prince-turned-Beast to be raised without morals, is curious. Mrs. Potts' comment is reminiscent of someone who was too traumatized to stop the abuse of a child (*TRAV*, 83). Even when Belle, unbeknownst of the opportunity she has to break the curse, offers to help, Mrs. Potts dismisses the idea, saying that it is 'nothing for you to worry about, dear.' Even though they had no parental right to interfere in the upbringing of the Prince, Disney reinforces the eternal child stereotype and moral model by holding the community accountable for his ways. The Beast is excused from

³² Haas, 196.

³³ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 52. Hereafter cited as *TRAV*, followed by page numbers in the text.

³⁴ Dan Stevens, *Evermore* (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Records, 2017); available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=diLa-gpHRKc>, emphasis added [accessed 30 September 2018].

³⁵ Schwartz *et al.*, 183-5.

culpability, and even in the days before the curse becomes permanent, the Beast has still to learn the lesson for which the curse was bestowed.³⁶ While the Beast's insolent manner is disappointing, it is what the film industry has applied to disabled characters in order to keep able-bodied characters, like Belle, or even the servants, in control. Perhaps interacting with his anthropomorphised household staff is too much of a traumatic reminder of the Prince's role in ruining the human lives of the staff, which is why he isolates himself and resorts to childish acts. Similar to the 1991 version, the live-action *Beauty and the Beast* features a Beast who is chided when he roars, has to be told to show empathy, taught basic social skills, and has to be educated on how to eat like a human, even though the Beast is in his early twenties. All of the aforementioned tasks are led by others who are acting on behalf of the Beast because he is unable to do them on his own. Marilyn Dahl comments on the contrast between the disabled and non-disabled heroes asserting the following: '[t]he images [of people with disabilities in film] equate disability with childlike behaviour and an infantile condition, a minor role, while the healthy, normal star has the spotlight, status and prestige'.³⁷ In the previously-mentioned scenes, the servants seem to be raising a sulky child more than breaking a time-sensitive curse. Indeed, it is only until the very end of the 2017 version of *Beauty and the Beast* that the re-transformed adult Prince seems to acknowledge the human existence of the staff that he has belittled and shouted at throughout the film. Suddenly, upon transformation, the childish doings disappear and the Prince is returned to the status of a perfect gentleman who embraces his staff warmly, without any apology. However, after the transformation from Beast to Prince, the Prince no longer has to keep his staff at a distance. The previous compartments displayed by the Prince seem to be excused by the eternal child stereotype and forgotten about because the adult, and able-bodied, Prince has returned.

In Disney's universe, the Beast seems to deserve his curse due to his earlier antics but his textual counterpart is quite the opposite.³⁸ Villeneuve's version portrays a Beast that is still physically alarming, but chivalrous and generous to Beauty. From the beginning of the tale, there is no connection between a lack of moral character and appearance. This Beast is polite, providing Beauty with everything that she needs upon her arrival, even gifting Beauty's father with enough riches to be removed from poverty. Even when Beauty continuously rejects his proposal of marriage, the Beast is described as being 'quiet' and 'docile,' a high contrast to the Disney Beast who *eventually* learns how to be a gentleman (*SBB*, 27). In Villeneuve's text, the Beast is a character that acts with maturity, respect, and foresight, shunning child-like actions that Disney uses. The attitude that the Beast demonstrates in both cinematic versions illustrates a desperate attempt to regain power and normalcy by physical and emotional intimidation, even though able-bodied Belle is the only one who can truly restore order.

A Subhuman, But Powerless, Beast

Disney and Villeneuve differ in the way that they choose to physically portray the Beast. Villeneuve describes 'a horrible beast' with a 'terrific voice' and a 'kind of trunk,

³⁶ Susan Jeffords, 'The Curse of Masculinity in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*', in *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*, eds Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas and Laura Sells (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 168-9.

³⁷ Marilyn Dahl, 'The Role of the Media in Promoting Images of Disability-Disability as Metaphor: The Evil Crip', *Canadian Journal of Communication* 18.1 (1993): 75.

³⁸ Jeffords, 168.

resembling an elephant's' (*SBB*, 13). The conglomeration of animals making up the Beast describes him as physically intimidating, setting him apart from any human characteristic. In the textual scene in which the Beast seeks recompense for the stolen rose, his imposing, animalistic qualities are juxtaposed by the timid and sincere nature of Beauty's father. The Beast demands that the father die for his crime or persuade one of the daughters to take their father's place as implied victim. The unfeeling nature and unnecessary cruelty of the Beast further alienates him from being classified as human. Even Beauty's father questions the humanity of the demanded solution, saying, "could I be so inhuman as to save my own life at the expense of one of my children's?" (*SBB*, 14). Again, the concerned nature of the father compared with the detached nature of the Beast is important. It is from these 'inhuman' requests that the Beast draws his power. The Beast's temper is ignited by human addressment, when Beauty's father pleads with him by saying, "my lord [...] Have mercy on me" (*SBB*, 13). Replying the Beast roars, "I am not my Lord; I am the Beast, and thou shalt not escape the death thou deservest" (*SBB*, 13). In rejecting human qualities, Villeneuve's beast places himself in direct comparison to Wolfensberger's classification of the disabled body as a subhuman organism. The subhuman organism is defined as a person without fully human characteristics, or a person whom society views as being illogical, unintellectual, unfeeling, and animalistic (*CDHM*, 23-4). By instilling fear and rejecting any human similarity, the Beast becomes a menace, an object of dread, and a sub-human organism that forces Beauty to arrive on the castle doorstep.

The interactions between the Beast and Beauty's father can be compared to the medical and social models of disability. Villeneuve's words describe a body that is beyond normative limits and must be cured in order to be a part of society.³⁹ Beauty's father's remark about the Beast's inhumanness, highlights that the Beast's behaviour, as well as his body, are not standard. The very appearance of the Beast creates instability for an able-bodied character because it is a reminder that ability is not permanent (*DT*, 60). For the Beast, Beauty's father represents the social model as he symbolizes norms of an inaccessible culture (*DT*, 25). As he would not be accepted into a wider community in his current state, the Beast must adapt to the isolated world in which he lives. In order to escape the visage of the Beast, the man must sacrifice his daughter, which means nothing changes. The body of the Beast is not altered by its interaction with the man, but the larger society does not have to adapt in order to accommodate the Beast.

The balance of power in Villeneuve's text places the Beast as the wielder of power and Beauty as the object that is sacrificed to appease the Beast's temper. When the father returns to the familial home, he gifts Beauty the rose, but declares, "there is what thou hast demanded of me, but thou wilt pay dearly for it" (*SBB*, 17). In this statement, Beauty has very little power, as he names her as the one who will pay the debt that is owed to the Beast. The Beast, again, takes the role of subject through physical presence. The power that the Beast displays, though, is a façade. In the ending, the transformed Prince reveals that in punishing Beauty's father for stealing the rose, he did not have autonomy. Alternatively, the Beast was acted upon by yet another fairy who sought to help him undo the curse by luring Beauty to the castle. The Beast/Prince explains his actions to Beauty saying, "I executed exactly the fairy's commands" (*SBB*, 64). In the text version, the Beast has no desire to be a fear-inducing creature, nor does he lack sympathy – he is, simply, the object of a supernatural being. The fact that the Beast/Prince has no authority over his

³⁹ Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 3. Hereafter cited as *DT*, followed by page numbers in the text.

actions leads to conflicting emotions. In being complicit with the fairy's plan, the Prince is subjected to the trauma of 'total surrender' and must 'violate [his] own moral principles and betray [...] basic human attachments' (*TRAV*, 83). Revealing himself to have been an object who was required to create a persona of rage and indifference, the Beast/Prince cannot be held responsible for his previous lack of decorum. Disney, however, deletes the ubiquitous fairy from the storyline and creates a Beast who is less sub-human in appearance but more so in moral character.

Disney reduces the physical ferocity and sub-human appearance of the Beast by removing the elephant trunk and creating a body that is similar to a lion than a collection of different animals. Furthermore, the Beast is imbued with human qualities and characteristics, which, Villeneuve's Beast lacks. The humanization of the Beast may have been done to lessen potential trauma on audience members, as Walt Disney was known to 'overlook [the] more horrific aspects' of a story.⁴⁰ The revulsion, and subsequent humanization, of the Beast's disabled body arises from the fact that it is visibly unnatural and different from the body of the non-disabled viewer. While the non-disabled audience finds the disabled body 'exotic' because it is something rare and interesting, that same audience is afraid of the body because having a functioning mind in a deformed body creates what James Elkins terms 'visual desperation.'⁴¹ The audience does not know how to categorize the disabled body as either a subject or object, and this places the audience in a state of cognitive dissonance.⁴² The Beast also represents the fallible nature of the human body and symbolizes the fact ability and disability exist cyclically, creating trauma for those audience members who currently have normative bodies (*DT*, 60). Therefore, in order to enjoy gazing upon the disabled body, but have a sanitized version of it, the film industry accommodates the non-disabled viewer by providing a buffer between the reality of the disability and what the audience can cope with seeing.⁴³ The cinematic version of the Beast walks upright, wears clothing, and still has the capacity to feel emotion. The Beast is certainly not the last animal to be anthropomorphized at the hand of Disney, as *Brave* features a queen-turned-bear who still wears her crown and tries to cover her nakedness with quilts, despite being covered with fur.⁴⁴ The humanization of these characters shares a common goal: to make the character relatable and less animalistic. The cinematic Beast is not restricted in the actions that he can utilize to pursue Belle's affections, as Villeneuve's Beast is, but chooses to act more animalistic than he looks. Disney's Beast refuses to treat either Belle or her father with decency, even though there is nothing stated in *this* curse that says he cannot. In both Disney versions of *Beauty and the Beast*, the outward appearance of the Beast is meant to match the internal character. The Beast descends furiously upon Belle when she discovers her father, shivering, in the tower.

⁴⁰ Tammy Berberi and Viktor Berberi, 'A Place at the Table: On Being Human in the *Beauty and the Beast* Tradition', in *Diversity in Disney Films: Critical Essays on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality and Disability*, ed. Johnson Cheu (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company Publishers, 2013), 197.

⁴¹ James Elkins, *Pictures of the Body: Pain and Metamorphosis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 220.

⁴² Elkins, 220.

⁴³ Charles A. Riley, 'I'd Like to Thank the Academy: Losing Focus on Disability in Movies and Television'. *Disability and the Media: Prescriptions for Change* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2005), 72.

⁴⁴ *Brave*, dirs. Mark Andrews, Brenda Chapman, and Steve Percell, 2012. (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2012), DVD.

Though the Beast is aware of what is necessary to break the curse, he seems to embrace the sub-human characteristics that Wolfensberger describes by trying to defy his reality and ignore the logic that the rest of the castle sees – that Belle could break the curse. Henry Tiebout notes that defiance allows one to live ‘unperturbed.’⁴⁵ Perhaps the Beast has lived so long in isolation that he believes he does not need to be human again, or he is unwilling to realize that he needs *Belle* in order to be human. The Beast is engaging in what trauma theorists’ term ‘learned helplessness.’⁴⁶ The Beast has become so accustomed to his current situation that he considers escape from it to be futile. The solution to learned helplessness is for someone else to remove the traumatized party from the environment (*BWWRD*, 54-5). However, even as Belle unknowingly attempts to remove the Beast from his animal-like stasis by presenting herself as a solution to her father’s imprisonment, the Beast seems unaware of what Belle’s presence could mean. Indeed, in the 1991 version, the Beast roars, ‘There’s nothing you can do, he is my prisoner.’ While Villeneuve’s Beast’s motives are calculated in order to bring Beauty to him, Disney’s Beast remains indifferent to her presence.

Belle takes her father’s place, and by doing so, she is able to gain a small amount of power because she *chooses* her fate instead of being the ‘doomed [...] prey’ that Villeneuve’s version dictates (*SBB*, 64). The transformation from Beauty to Belle shows an addition of spunk and independence that the original character lacked. Moving Belle into a subject position was a timely choice. The culture of late 20th century America demanded that Disney rebrand the female role as one who takes action instead of waiting to be rescued.⁴⁷ The title character in *Mulan*, for example, boldly passes as a male to keep her father from conscription.⁴⁸ *Frozen* deviates from the traditional Disney narrative of the helpless woman by having Anna sacrifice herself for her sister.⁴⁹ Amy Davis showcases the shift from damsels in distress to heroines, stating, ‘[u]nlike the earlier films, in which the heroine’s honour was depicted and proven simply through goodness and acquiescence, the heroines of Disney’s animated films [...] show their integrity through their action rather than through their inaction’.⁵⁰ Putting her father’s needs before her own comfort solidifies Belle as the hero of the story and presents the lesson that the Beast himself needs to learn.

Belle’s agency in the tower is brief, but it is in the tower scene that Belle validates the Beast’s status as a sub-human organism and is to be feared. In the 1991 film, it is only after agreeing to take her father’s place, that Belle asks the Beast to ‘step into the light,’ and when he does so, Belle recoils, placing her hand over her mouth.⁵¹ Emma Watson’s Belle is made more formidable by seeing the Beast’s visage *before* she decides to become the prisoner, but her reaction is still one of horror. Belle’s reaction relieves any guilt that the non-disabled audience may harbour over their own reaction to the physicality of the Beast because Belle’s initial reaction conveys that same shock. Martin Norden states in

⁴⁵ Henry Tiebout, in *Silkworth*, ‘The Act of Surrender in the Therapeutic Process’; available at http://silkworth.net/pages/tiebout/tiebout_surrender.php [accessed 25 June 2018].

⁴⁶ Bruce Perry and Maia Szalavitz, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 54-5. Hereafter cited as *BWWRD*, followed by page numbers in the text.

⁴⁷ Amy Davis, *Good Girls and Wicked Witches: Women in Disney’s Feature Animation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 169-71.

⁴⁸ *Mulan*, dirs. Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook, 1998 (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1998), DVD.

⁴⁹ *Frozen*, dirs. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee, 2013 (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2014), DVD.

⁵⁰ Davis, 171.

⁵¹ *Beauty and the Beast*, dirs. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, 1991 (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002,) DVD.

his book *The Cinema of Isolation*, that 'Movie makers photograph and edit works to reflect the able-bodied point of view.'⁵² Belle's response to the physical appearance of the Beast reinforces that he is dangerous and to be feared by the majority, which is exactly the attitude that the sub-human stereotype promotes. Upon seeing the Beast, Belle shrinks back, instinctively trying to become less noticeable, which might be interpreted as an act of disassociation (*BWWRD*, 50). The body's reaction to trauma is to engage the 'fight or flight' system, which asks the individual to choose between running from the perceived danger or fighting it. As Belle cannot flee the castle without sacrificing her father, she must remain in the situation. Along with their heroine, the audience may experience the initial desire to escape the Beast, which could manifest in looking away from the screen or covering of eyes.⁵³ However, as Belle represents the majority of the audience, her ability to remain in the situation and fight her natural instinct, extends to the audience. Belle's presence in those first interactions with the Beast not only allows the viewer to create a clear binary between the heroine and the other, but also allows the audience to regulate their own sense of fear through Belle's response.

Like the Beast, people with disabilities have, historically, been focal points of societal fear. Negative images of the disabled body have created the idea that, if left unchecked, the disabled body could upset the hegemony created by society. The representation of the disabled body as monstrous has been portrayed in film, leaving able-bodied audiences concerned about the possibility of carnival, as seen in the 1932 film *Freaks*.⁵⁴ Belle's presence stabilizes the able/disabled binary that has been created. Wolfensberger acknowledges that subhuman organisms often required 'supervision' from another, presumably able-bodied, individual (*CDHM*, 24). As it is Belle who must fall in love with the Beast and see past his outward appearance, this reassures the audience that the Beast cannot be restored to a subject position without the permission of the non-disabled character. Additionally, the Beast's animalistic tendencies are lessened by Belle's tutelage and presence. The idea of seeing someone who has been deemed an 'other' overcome obstacles is part of what makes disability, and trauma, in the cinema so popular. Audiences may be curious about the disabled body, but they are not comfortable with the idea that it could easily become the subject rather than the object. In a scene specific to the 2017 edition of *Beauty and the Beast*, the Beast presents Belle with a book that would take them anywhere she wants to go, but states that 'the world has no place for a creature like me'. The reminder that this, now gentle, character is perceived as something to be feared inspires yet another emotion in the audience member – pity.

Object of Pity

The role of the disabled body is typically categorized into two moulds—monstrous or helpless. In order to subvert the fear that the disabled person might wield a sort of unchecked power over the non-disabled person, the disabled person is relegated to the status of a helpless creature.⁵⁵ The film industry, as Martin Norden cites, has placed

⁵² Martin Norden, 'Politics, Movies, and Physical Disability', in *The Cinema of Isolation: A History of Physical Disabilities in the Movies* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 1.

⁵³ Inna Arnaudova and Muriel Hageraars, 'Lights... Action: Comparison of Trauma Films for Use in the Trauma Film Paradigm', *Behavior Research and Therapy* 93 (2017): 74.

⁵⁴ *Freaks* is a 1932 film that chronicles the lives of disabled and deformed circus performers who maim a non-disabled woman because she is the only one of them who is not disabled.

⁵⁵ Norden, 11.

people with disabilities into two categories, the ‘demonic cripple,’ which is disconcerting to the non-disabled public, and the ‘charity cripple,’ who soothes the audience into feeling that this character is not a threat.⁵⁶ The classifying of the disabled character as more of a weakling than a monster can be done by appealing to Biblical images of the disabled man begging for alms.⁵⁷ Here, the disabled man is voided of any violence, or even dignity, and is forced to act as a sweet, humble and grateful recipient of the charity of others – contributing greatly to the film industry’s promotion of Tiny Tim as the tottering champion of the disability-themed film, instead of the leering, deformed monster. Wolfensberger adds that while society is more accepting of the disabled body as an object of pity, it is often a role that is ‘devoid of respect’ (*CDHM*, 26). In Villeneuve’s version of *Beauty and the Beast*, the character that subdues the Beast into an object role, and calms the audience, is the Unknown. The Unknown, the Prince trapped within the Beast, is presented as a parallel character and is only exposed to Beauty through her dreams. The Unknown is everything that the Beast is not – handsome, sensitive, articulate, heroic – and Beauty immediately falls in love with him. Beauty expresses love to The Unknown while feeling gratitude and obligation toward the Beast. The Unknown is representative of the non-disabled fear of the ‘other’ and the need to relegate the disabled body to a place of submission, but it is also the Unknown that furthers Beauty’s pity for the Beast. When The Unknown jealously tries to kill the Beast in order to be sure of Beauty’s affection, the Beast remains passive and ‘offer[s] his neck to the blow with [...] submission and calmness’ (*SBB*, 34). In offering his neck, the Beast is an object that has no power and it is Beauty who must intercede on his behalf, crying, ‘Harm not my benefactor or else kill me [...] I owe everything to the Beast’ (*SBB*, 34). Beauty’s utterances about the Beast do not equal love, they reflect pity. Villeneuve makes it clear that Beauty is sacrificing her own happiness to ensure the safety of the Beast, even though she does not care for him romantically. In addition to showing gratitude toward the Beast, Beauty also makes herself into a martyr figure by putting duty before true love. Beauty is aware that the Beast loves her, as he proposes to her each night after supper, but each night, she refuses. Beauty’s father capitalizes on his daughter’s sense of pity and obligation toward the Beast. ‘I advise thee not to refuse him [when the offer of marriage approaches again]’, Beauty’s father suggests (*SBB*, 39). Beauty’s father rationalizes that Beauty should consent to the marriage rather than wait for true love or beauty because he realizes that the Beast will treat his daughter with kindness – something that could not always be guaranteed at the time. Beauty, again, in the literary version is an object whose future is decided by men. Out of pity and obligation, Beauty agrees to a marriage that will leave her economically secure, but not truly happy.

Pity for the Beast is something that Disney readily provides through the character of Belle. After the Beast saves her from a pack of wolves, Belle takes weaponised pity on him. The heroic actions that the Beast displays in rescuing Belle place him in a position of power, but he must embrace his animalistic qualities in order to do so. In the 1991 version of *Beauty and the Beast*, the expressions on the face of the Beast and that of the leader of the wolf pack are incredibly similar – both bare teeth and showcase a menacing snarl. The Beast even stands protectively, on all fours, in front of Belle, as if to claim ownership. Before Belle is able to flee, the Beast is attacked. The Beast, previously intimidating, becomes helpless. The audience is eased by the idea that the animalistic, disabled body cannot affect society because it cannot function effectively

⁵⁶ Cited in Norden, 11.

⁵⁷ Barnes, 22-3.

without someone to care for it. The body becomes an object because it is deprived of dignity. Without the ability to fight or run, the Beast is vulnerable and engages in dissociative behaviour by crying out to Belle (*BWWRD*, 50). Belle covers the Beast with her shawl and takes him to the castle. Belle *chooses* to take care of the Beast because he is weak and, at this point, harmless. Again, Belle has control in the situation and it is the Beast who is at her mercy. As Charles Riley puts it, '[p]roducers, directors, and writers package disability in such a way as to safely ensure that the audience feels nobly uplifted, even ethically superior for "supporting" what is in effect a blatantly over sweetened version of life with a disability.'⁵⁸ By placing the able-bodied Belle in a role of subject and the Beast in the role of object that needs assistance, the non-disabled audience, who identifies with Belle, feels vindicated. The heroic status of the disabled man is gained through his ability to inspire, but the audience is still uncomfortable with the disabled character acting as the sole hero of the film. Therefore, to assuage the audience's fears of a deformed or disabled body taking a position of cinematic power, a non-disabled character with more power and prestige than the disabled character is provided in order to assure the audience that the limping disabled hero will not become too powerful throughout the film and upset the able/disabled binary. The resonating takeaway from the wolf attack scene in *Beauty and the Beast* is not that the Beast saved Belle from the wolves, but that *she* saves him. The Beast is not the only male character in Disney history to owe his life to a female character, though. John Smith, from *Pocahontas*, is saved from bludgeoning by the daughter of the chief.⁵⁹ *The Little Mermaid* shows Ariel rescuing Prince Eric from the depths of the sea.⁶⁰ However, in both of the previously mentioned films, the heroines save the men out of affection. Belle saves the Beast out of a sense of duty and charity.

Fools and Foils

The theme of *Beauty and the Beast* is the idea of selflessness and the ability to see past appearances. Disney, unable to promote the Beast as a villain, creates a foil for the Beast that shows the embodiment of unchecked vanity. Gaston's appearance in the story of *Beauty and the Beast* adds a physical parallel to the Beast. Perhaps Gaston is a reminder of what the Prince-turned-Beast might have become – if not for the curse. Gaston continuously uses others for his own gain, often bolstering his own ego at the expense of others who have considerably less status in society. Wolfensberger notes that, historically, disabled people were relegated to roles of ridicule and were not to be taken seriously – such as jesters or 'village idiots' (*CDHM*, 28). Gaston takes advantage of those who should be the focus of the town's compassion. From trying to get Belle's father committed to an asylum to making fun of the town beggar, Gaston has no qualms about making other people the object of his ridicule. However bigoted his character may be, Gaston seems to be the voice for the majority of society. No one steps in to correct his uncouth demeanour – not even Agatha, who, in the 2017 version of *Beauty and the Beast*, is the enchantress in disguise.

⁵⁸ Riley, 71.

⁵⁹ *Pocahontas*, dirs. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, 1995 (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), DVD.

⁶⁰ *The Little Mermaid*, dirs. Ron Clements and John Musker, 1989 (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1999), DVD.

Gaston's presence reinforces the Beast's status as the other and highlights the fact that the Beast will never truly belong as a subject in society, at least in his current physical state. The showdown between Gaston and the Beast may be symbolic of the Beast confronting his own trauma. As Gaston displays some of the same qualities as the Prince before his transformation, Gaston represents the journey that the Beast has taken. By choosing to engage Gaston physically, he proves that he is willing to re-engage with his own trauma, and thus, reclaim his pre-transformation identity (*TRAV*, 196-7). It is only by restraining his animalistic tendencies of violence and embracing a more humanistic level of compassion toward Gaston that the audience sees the progress that the Beast has made. Instead of displaying additional animalistic qualities and seeking revenge as a way to assert power, the Beast attains subjecthood by displaying mercy. By offering Gaston a chance to escape with his life, the Beast is able to transcend being an object of ridicule to become a subject who has begun to heal from his own trauma.

Even though Gaston is a Disney addition, his mannerisms may have roots in the behaviour of the Prince who appears to Beauty in her dreams. The Unknown is continually at odds with his animalistic counterpart. The Unknown derides the Beast, and proclaims that he would rather kill him so as to be assured of Beauty's affection. Even though the Beast and the Unknown are one in the same, the Unknown's commentary on the Beast is concerning. Countering Beauty's devotion to the Beast, the Unknown scathes, "Of what use is he to the world? Will any one be a loser by the destruction of a being who appears on earth to be horror of all nature?" (*SBB*, 37) In naming the Beast a 'horror of all nature,' (*SBB*, 37) the Unknown seeks to separate himself from the Beast and behaves more as an able-bodied captor who degrades and 'destroys the victim's sense of autonomy' (*TRAV*, 77). Upon seeing Beauty's affection for the Beast, the Unknown seems to experience a crisis, rationalizing that if the Beast 'wins' Beauty, the human part of the Prince will be forgotten. The Unknown's attitude toward the Beast is troubling as the Prince and the Beast are both victims of the same curse. Perhaps the Unknown craves reassurance that he will not lose his identity to the Beast, as he lost his physical being. Similar to a survivor of trauma who 'needs clear and explicit assurances that she will not be abandoned once again,' the Unknown sees the Beast as the cause, not the cure, of his isolation. Herman writes that survivors of trauma 'fear separation from one another more than they fear death,' but the Unknown does not seem to realize that by advocating for the death of the Beast, he is advocating for his own death (*TRAV*, 62). The Unknown is overly-willing to kill the beast in Beauty's dreams, similar to the rallying cry that the animated version of Gaston uses to inspire the townspeople to attack the castle: 'Kill the Beast.'

Happily Ever After?

Happy endings are expected in Disney films, but Villeneuve's version does not give the empowering ending that the audience might expect. In the text, Beauty is allowed to visit her father, but is warned that if she does not return, the Beast will die. Beauty neglects her obligation, delaying her departure, and is held accountable for the Beast's near-death state. In a dream, the Beast 'reproache[s] her with being the cause of his death and having repaid his affection with the blackest ingratitude' (*SBB*, 43). The text highlights Beauty's inaction as the cause of the Beast's suffering, which allows her subject status, but casts her as more a villain than a heroine. Knowing that Disney cannot have ambiguity in

establishing who is good and bad, Belle is presented as the heroine, the saviour and the love interest, all in one scene.

No sooner has the Beast accepted his identity than he is transformed back into the Prince. Surprisingly, the Prince does not overly seem alarmed or elated to find himself human. There is no confusion or trauma on the part of the Prince. Survivors of trauma assert that, after recovery, they feel as if they are 'refugees' acclimatizing to a new world (TRAV, 196). For the Prince, he is entering a new culture, as he must adjust to life as a royal, after being a beast for more than a decade. However, Disney does not show a readjustment period. Despite the fact that trust is the foundation of recovery work, Disney does not display the Prince establishing true a bond with Belle (BWWRD, 260). In the ending banquet scene, the Prince is surrounded by people, without any sign of trauma or discomfort, though it would be expected after spending years in almost total isolation and with little social interaction (TRAV, 91). Perry and Szalavitz note that recovery from a traumatic experience demands time and establishment of a daily pattern – something that is absent from both films (BWWRD, 275). While Judith Herman decrees that there is 'no single [...] magic bullet' that one can use to recover from trauma, Disney seems to have found it (TRAV, 156). Disney skips the recovery period of a traumatic experience because aftereffects of trauma don't make for immediate resolution. The happy ending in *Beauty and the Beast* is the restoration of the Beast to subjecthood, but that title is only given once he is fully healed.

In terms of disability representation, a happy ending is essential to the film because it creates a *Deus ex machina* of sorts; the happy ending allows the audience to find an easy way out of the film without coming face to face with the reality of a disability. Having found someone who loves him just the way that he is, the Beast is readily transformed into a handsome prince, allowing him to be a hero once more. The happy ending has to come directly after the disabled character has overcome his disability, because the audience does not want to contemplate the fact that the disabled character may not be rewarded for all of his hard work.⁶¹ The audience demands these light, heart-warming and inspiring stories to such an extent that there has become, as Riley interjects, a 'basic "overcoming" recipe of normalcy, injury, and recovery'.⁶² Once the character has proven that he has the ability to be courageous, he deserves a reward that must culminate in a 'happy ending'. In the end, the Beast disappears, and the Disney cannon is rewarded with one more non-disabled prince.

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⁶¹ Riley, 25.

⁶² Riley, 25.

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‘E mare păcat’ Imagini inversate ale dizabilității, traumei și ale puterii în producția Disney *Frumoasa și Bestia*

Acest articol explorează câteva paralele dintre modul în care societatea tratează persoanele cu dizabilități și personajele din cele două versiuni ale producției Disney intitulate *Beauty and the Beast* (Frumoasa și Bestia), respectiv versiunea din 1991 și cea din 2017. Comparând textul lui Gabrielle de Villeneuve cu filmele, evidențiez că unde filmele se abat de la text pentru a se conecta cu stereotipul dizabilității. Accentuând conexiunea percepută dintre caracterul moral al unui personaj și înfățișarea sa fizică, articolul analizează cum personajul Bestia perpetuează ideea că persoanele cu deficiențe morale au căpătat o dizabilitate fizică. Prin intermediul clasificărilor deviației și ale dizabilității ale lui Wolf Wolfensberger, ca de exemplu copilul etern, organismul subuman etc., articolul încearcă să dovedească faptul că Disney continuă să promoveze imagini peiorative ale corpului cu dizabilități. Ilustrez prin teoria traumei cum blestemul asupra Bestiei este sursa traumei. În cele din urmă, articolul analizează principiul subiect/obiect al lui Foucault, concentrându-se asupra modului în care cea mai recentă versiune a filmului *Frumoasa și Bestia* poziționează persoanele fără deficiențe fizice ca subiecți ai persoanelor cu dizabilități.