



## An Analysis of the Moral Transformation and Character Development of the *Beast* in *Beauty and the Beast* Movie (2017) Based on Ethical Theory

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**Abstract** : This study analyzes *Beast's* character development in a modern adaption of a classic tale, focusing on goodness, love, and, redemption from an ethical perspective. Using descriptive qualitative analysis and film text analysis, the research examines narrative, dialogue, and character interactions, particularly in scenes highlighting *Beast's* moral transformation. The analysis is based on Aristotle's virtue ethics and Kant's deontological ethics. The findings reveal that *Beast's* transformation, driven by love and redemption through his relationship with Belle, demonstrates a shift from selfishness to empathy and moral responsibility. This change results from both external influences and internal reflection. The study highlights film as a powerful medium for conveying moral messages and deepening the understanding of character-driven moral transformation in visual narratives.

**Keyword** : Movie, *Beauty and the Beast*, Moral, Character

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Literary work represents human thinking expressed through a medium. It is categorized into two types: informative literature and imaginative literature. According to Goodman in (Nugroho, Bagus S., Nafasya, 2021), literature includes the writing experimented result within language form to produce creative images or ideas that involve the readers` imagination deliberately and creatively.

Film is one of the oldest electronic media that has undergone rapid development since its inception. With the ability to present moving images, film seemingly transport reality onto the big screen, creating a profound experience for its viewers. According to Liliwari in (Kalesaran, 2017) for more than the last 70 years, film has become an integral part of diverse human life, communicating various themes and values through visual narratives. Movie is a medium of communication rich with social implication, created within different social, historical and culture context Afdilah in (Humaira, 2018).

The study of film is closely related to literature and language, where both complement each other in delivering messages and values to the audience. In this regard, According to Effendy in (Hafnan, 2021) states that film is an effective audio-visual communication medium for conveying a message to a group of people gathered in a specific place. According to Campbell and Shafto in (Humaira, 2018), movie has the power to transport your mind from the narrow, impersonal bore of an magnetic resonance imaging (IMR), magnet sound, and language.

Moral values play a crucial role in human life. According to Osaat in (Humaira, 2018) define values as “things considered worthwhile, desirable, right and good and thus craved for and applied on daily basis to enhance existence by the people”. Morality (Moral) can be defined in terms of social behavior according to Purcel in (Wismahardiani & Widiyanto, 2022). Mukino in (Asiva Noor Rachmayani, 2015), state that moral is also related to action and prohibition which tells about wrong and right.

According to Nurgiyantoro (Annisa et al., 2022) states that morality in literary works is a vehicle for delivering a message through a narrative. The morals found in literary works reflect the author’s values and create a realistic representation of good and bad deeds in everyday life. According to Nurgiyantoro (Annisa et al., 2022) emphasizes the literary works should not contain element of falsehood but instead provide a realistic depiction of the human condition. Therefore, film, as a form of visual literature, also serves to convey moral values that are relevant to society.

One film that successfully combines element of entertainment and moral messages is *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), which is an adaptation of the classic fairy tale by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve. In this film, viewers are introduced to a love story between Belle, an intelligent and courageous village girl, and Beast, a cursed prince trapped in terrifying physical appearance. Although the film tells a romantic love story, the core of the narrative lies in the transformation of Beast’s character, who faces significant challenges in improving his moral values and understanding the true meaning of love and sacrifice.

The issues raised in this film revolve around the themes of moral change, redemption, and interpersonal relationships. The strength of the story lies in characters ability to develop and transform, reflecting the reality that every individual has the potential to change for the better. In a broader social context, this theme becomes highly relevant, considering the importance of self-acceptance and the courage to change when facing life’s challenges. Therefore, the focus of this research is to analyze the moral value changes experienced by the character Beast in *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) and how these changes can be understood through the lens of ethical theory.

Ethical theory is an appropriate approach to analyze Beast’s character, particularly in exploring the underlying elements of his moral transformation. Aristotle wrote in (MA et al., 2003), “Since activities differ by being good or bad, and since some should be chosen, other should be avoided...”. In this study, Aristotelian Virtue Ethics, is largely concerned with what type of persons we should, what kind of personalities we should have, and how we should

behave. Aristotle suggests that reasonable people can agree upon the proper balance (moderation) of activities in their lives Aristotle in (MA et al., 2003).

The selection of this research title is based on the belief that Beast's character not only represents a significant moral journey but also reflects the dynamics of emotions and human complexity that can serve as a reflection for the audience. Given the widespread attention this film has received from various circles, an in-depth analysis of Beast's character is expected to provide greater insights into how film functions as a mirror for moral and ethical values in everyday life.

### **Methods and Procedures of the Analysis**

This research employs a qualitative method with a textual analysis approach, allowing the researcher to understand and interpret the meanings contained in film *Beauty and the Beast* (2017). This method is chosen because film, as a visual text, has layers of meaning that can be analyzed from various perspectives, including moral and ethical aspects.

#### **a) Theoretical Approach**

The approach used in this research is ethical theory, focusing on two main streams: Aristotelian ethics and Immanuel Kant's deontological ethics.

- 1) Aristotelian Ethics: This approach will be used to explore how the character Beast develops virtue and achieves balance in his behavior as he undergoes his moral journey.
- 2) Immanuel Kant's Deontology: This approach will examine the moral obligations and right actions taken by Beast in various situations, as well as how these decisions influence his character transformation.

#### **b) Research Procedures**

##### **Data Collection**

The primary data for this research will be obtained through the analysis of the film *Beauty and the Beast* (2017). The researcher will watch the film thoroughly multiple times to understand the plot, characters, and the moral context within it. Notes will be made to document key moments that illustrate the changes in moral values of the character Beast.

##### **a. Textual Analysis**

The researcher will perform a textual analysis by examining the dialogues, actions, and interactions between Beast and other characters, particularly Belle. The analysis will focus on how these interactions signify Beast's moral development and the underlying factors that facilitate his transformation.

### **b. Data Interpretation**

Following the identification of key scenes and significant elements, the researcher will employ the previously established ethical frameworks to interpret the implications of Beast's moral changes. A comparative analysis will be conducted to correlate Beast's character transformation with the principles of Aristotelian and Kantian ethics, offering a deeper insight into the narrative's moral messages.

### **c. Presentation of Results**

The findings from the analysis will be organized and presented in a clear and systematic narrative format. The researcher will articulate the process of Beast's moral transformation and highlight the factors that influence this change. Additionally, the discussion will encompass the relevance of Beast's moral journey within the broader context of real-life ethical dilemmas and the values that can be derived by the audience.

## **2. RESULT**

This chapter delves into the result of the analysis on Beast's character development and the role of moral values in his transformation in *Beauty and the Beast*. The primary goal is to examine how the story's embedded moral values such as love, empathy, and personal transformation are essential in driving the changes in Beast's character and conveying meaningful messages to the audience.

The analysis reveals that these moral values not only shape Beast's character but also illustrate a powerful journey of behavioral change and personal growth. Initially, Beast is portrayed as a hostile and self-centered figure, burdened by his curse and isolated due to his behavior and appearance. However, through his interactions with Belle and the moral values she embodies, Beast undergoes a profound change, evolving into a wiser, kinder, and more compassionate individual. This transformation underscores how morality and empathy can serve as catalysts for identity change and growth.

This section explores the practical application of these moral values in Beast's character journey and how they align with broader themes of character development. In particular, Beast's transformation symbolizes a shift from selfishness to selflessness, guided by the influence of love and kindness, which are central moral values in the story. The discussion also considers how *Beauty and the Beast* serves as a medium for moral education, imparting lessons on the importance of inner beauty, redemption, and the potential for positive character change through meaningful relationships. Through these insights, the film emphasizes the impact of

values on personal growth and promotes the development of positive character traits as universal ideals.

### 3. DISCUSSION

#### Data 1

After Belle's decision to replace her father was punished, now Belle lives locked up forever in the Beast's castle. All the workers who have turned into tools ask the Beast to be kind by inviting Belle to have dinner together. Although he refused, the Beast finally agreed to the request. But after a while interacting with Belle, trying to be more friendly and invite her to dinner and trying to show a more friendly and polite side, in the hope that Belle will accept his invitation. But Belle refused which made Beast very angry and aggressive.



**Figure 1. The screenshot when Beast's tries to ask Belle to diner**

Beast : Will you join me for dinner?

Belle : You've taken me as your prisoner and now you want to have dinner with me? Are you insane?

Beast : I told you to join me for dinner!!.

Beast struggles with effective communication. When Belle refuse, he does not try to understand her reasons ; instead, he reacts with anger and frustration. This highlights his lack of social skills and inability to build healthy relationship. Beast feels that his status and power grant him the right demand obedience and respect from Belle. When he invites her for dinner, he assumes he deserves her acceptance without considering her filling. Beast treats Belle as if she is his possession, as if he has the right to control her actions and decisions. When he feels rejected, he perceives it as a violation of his rights, emphasizing his possessive nature. When

Belle declines his invitation, Beast displays intense anger. He loses his patience and reacts aggressively, reflecting his ability to control his emotions.

### **Data 2**

After Belle runs away from the castle in fear and distress, she encounters the pack of wolves. Beast arrive just in time to save her but end up getting injured in the process.



**Figure 2. The screenshot When Belle was trying to apply medicine to the Beast's wound.**

Beast : That hurts!

Belle : If you held still, it wouldn't hurt as much

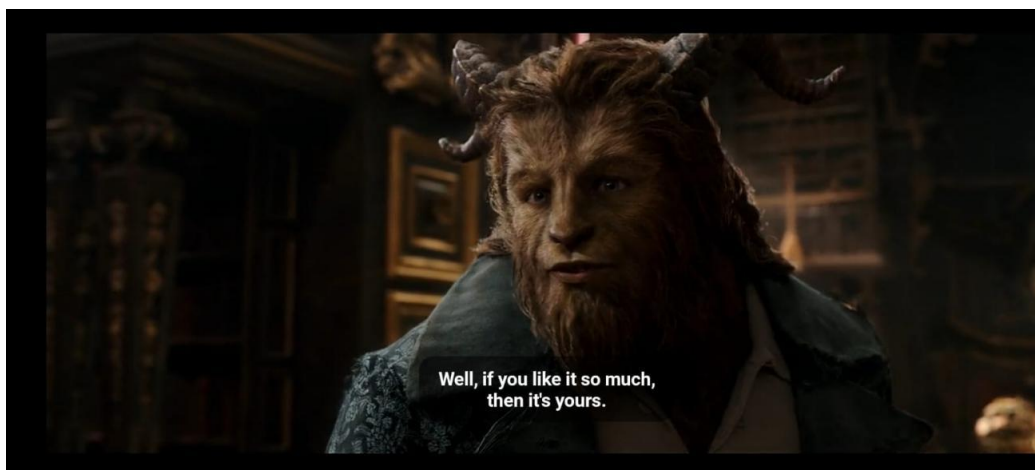
Beast : Well, if you hadn't run away, none of this would have happened

Belle : Well. If you hadn't frightened me, I wouldn't have run away

Based on the dialogue, Beast begins to show deeper emotions, including anger, frustration, and pain. Although he blames Belle, this indicates that he is starting to feel the impact of their relationship and understand that their actions affect each other. This dialogue also signifies a call for change within Beast. This becomes the starting point for a deeper transformation, where he learns to be more open and accepting love.

### **Data 3**

Beast begins to notice what Belle enjoys. Although he initially appears rough and withdrawn, he slowly learns to see the world from Belle's perspective.



**Figure 3. The screenshot when the Beast showed her his library.**

Belle : It's wonderful

Beast : Yes. I suppose it is. Well, if you like it so much, then it's yours

His act of revealing the library to Belle shows that he understands and appreciates her love for books. Beast's gesture of offering the library is not just a physical gift, it is also an expression of his sincerity. He start to learn to give without expecting anything in return, a crucial quality that reflects his character growth. This dialogue showcases Beast's process of change, as he strives to become gentler and more considerate. He, who was once selfish and isolated, begins to express a desire to change for the sake of others. Beast learn that love and happiness come from being attentive and kind to others.

#### **Data 4**

After the confrontation with the wolves, where Belle has just helped Beast after he saved her. The atmosphere is tense but begins to soften as they reflect on the events that have transpired.



**Figure 4. The screenshot when they were sitting in the garden.**

Belle : I never thanked you for saving my life.

Beast : Well, I never thanked you... for not leaving me to be eaten by wolves.

Beast show a newfound ability to acknowledge his vulnerability and express gratitude. Previously, he often acted harshly and closed off. By thanking Belle, he shows that he is beginning to accept that he doesn't always have to be strong and can rely on other for support. This moment marks the beginning of a deeper emotional bond with Belle. He begins to appreciate her bravery and selflessness, which changes his perception of their relationship.

#### **Data 5**

After a magical dance in the castle ballroom, the Beast's sees Belle's longing for her father and takes her to the west wing. Using her magic mirror, Belle sees Maurice in danger, chased by an angry mob in the village. Desperate to help but not knowing how, Belle is stunned when Beast tells her to find her father and bring the mirror so they can stay connected.



**Figure 5. The screenshot when the Beast told Belle to visit her father.**

Belle : I'd like to see my father.

Belle : Papa! What are they doing to him?!

Beast : You must go to him.

By seeing Belle's fear and concern for her father, the Beast begin to empathize with her. For perhaps the first time, he recognizes and respect her emotional pain, prioritizing her needs over his own desire. By allowing Belle to leave, the Beast exposes himself to vulnerability. He being risks left alone forever, but he accepts this possibility because he knows it is the right thing to do. The Beast begins to understand that love is not about possession or control, but about freedom and sacrifice.



#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) offers more than just a romantic fantasy; it provides a compelling exploration of ethical themes, illustrating how personal growth and moral redemption can lead to genuine love and fulfillment. Through the lens of ethical theory, the Beast's transformation serves as a timeless reminder of the potential for goodness in everyone, emphasizing that true beauty lies in character and virtue.

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