

# **DONGENG DAN BUDAYA DALAM CERITA *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* DAN *THE FAIRY SERPENT***

## **FOLKTALE AND CULTURE IN *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* AND *THE FAIRY SERPENT***

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### **Abstrak**

Cerita rakyat sangat mudah ditemukan di negara mana saja. *Beauty and the Beast* merupakan salah satu cerita rakyat yang sangat dikenal tidak hanya di negaranya saja tetapi di seluruh dunia. Bahkan di beberapa negara mempunyai cerita rakyat yang serupa dengan alur cerita *Beauty and the Beast*. Artikel ini membahas persamaan atau *archetype* yang ada diantara *Beauty and the Beast* dan salah satu versinya *The Fairy Serpent*, sebuah cerita rakyat dari Cina. Persamaan antara tokoh dan penokohan, alur cerita merupakan hal yang menarik untuk dikaji lebih dalam. Selain itu, penggambaran sosok the Beast yang berbeda antara kedua cerita rakyat tersebut yang sangat erat kaitannya dengan budaya masing-masing juga merupakan isu yang akan digali di dalam artikel ini.

**Kata kunci: cerita rakyat, dongeng, archetype**

### **Abstract**

Folklore can be easily found in any country. There are many kinds of folklore like legends, folktales, fairytales, jokes, etc. *Beauty and the Beast* is one of folktales that not only well-known in the country the story made but also around the world. Furthermore, in some countries have a similar folklore with *Beauty and the Beast* story's plot. This article discusses the similarities or archetypes that exist between *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Fairy Serpent*, a similar folklore from China. Similarities among characters and characterization and plot are interesting to be analyzed more deeply. Besides, the different depictions of the *Beast* that is related to the culture and issues will also be explored in this article.

**Keywords: folklore, folktale, archetype**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Folklore can be found in many kinds of informal communication, whether verbal, customary which include behavior and rituals, or material or physical object. It involves values, traditions and ways of thinking and behaving. According to Dundes in Sims and Stephens (2005:8)

“Folklore includes legends, folktales, fairytales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessing, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, taunts, tongue twister greeting, and leaving taking formulas. It also include folk costume, folk dance, folk drama, folk art, folk believe (superstition), folk instrumental music, folk speech, folk metaphors, folk poetry, etc. Folklore can also be met in the form of festivals and special days or customs such as Halloween and birthday”.

Since the branch of folklore is so wide, this paper will only take the folktales.

Everyone knows and even has ever heard a folktale. Some folktales like *Cinderella story*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Hansel and Gretel* are the examples of well known folktales.

This article discusses the famous folktale *Beauty and the Beast*. *Beauty and the Beast* is a well known folktale around the world. Variants of the tale appear in numerous cultures. The first version of *Beauty and the Beast* appeared in 1740 by Madame Gabrielle de Villeneuve. She wrote a novella length version of the story which appeared in *La jeune americaine, et les contes marins*. Her audience was not children, but her court and salon friends enjoyed sharing stories for entertainment. Scholars suppose that Villeneuve derived her story from traditional oral tales and "*Le Mouton*" a story by another court lady named Madame D'Aulnoy whose home was the site of one of the best known literary salons in that time.

Villeneuve's version contains many little known elements and does not end with the transformation of the prince. She spends too much time discussing warring between the fairies, the parentage of the protagonists, and the reason for the curse on the prince. Also, the transformation from beast to prince does not occur until after the wedding night. Villeneuve's version also contains dream sequences in which Beauty is told by the prince in his true form to look beyond appearances and rescue him. She, of course, does not understand his message and must fall in love with the Beast before she comprehends his full message.

The next version of the tale appeared 16 years later in 1756 by Madame Le Prince de Beaumont. Beaumont considerably shortened Villeneuve's novel into a short story

which ends after the prince is transformed. This version is considered by Madame Le Prince as the best well-known and most used as the basis for later interpretations of the tale ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/history\\_beauty\\_and\\_the\\_beast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/history_beauty_and_the_beast)). Furthermore, Aarne-Thompson lists 179 tales from different countries with a similar theme to *Beauty and the Beast* “The Aarne–Thompson classification system is a system for classifying folktales. First developed by Antti Aarne and published in 1910, it was translated and enlarged by Stith Thompson. The story of *Beauty and The Beast* uses motifs to group the tales” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aarne%E2%80%93Thompson\\_classification\\_system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aarne%E2%80%93Thompson_classification_system)).

In literature, the typical character, an action or a situation that seems to represent such universal patterns of human nature called an archetype. That is why a possibility of having a same folklore in different country could be found. It happened on the folklore the *Beauty and the Beast*. These are some of version story of *Beauty and the Beast*:

*The Scarlet Flower* - Russia

*The Enchanted Tsarevitch* - Russia

*The Fairy Serpent* -China

*The Princess and the Pig* - Turkey

*A Bunch of Laurel Blooms for a Present* - Appalachia

*The Small Tooth Dog* - England

*The Lizard Husband* - Indonesia

*The Monkey Son-in Law* – Japan

However, there is interesting thing found in the variants of *Beauty and the Beast*. The Beast in each folktale is presented in different form. The Beast in China is in the form of serpent, while the Beast in Japan is described as a monkey, whereas the Beast in England is portrayed as a dog. In other words, the Beast is described differently in each country. This interesting variants invite a question of why. Hence, it would be interesting to dig out the meaning of each variant. Since there is a limitation of time and sources, this article will investigate the archetype lies on *The Fairy Serpent* from China and the original version of *Beauty and the Beast*.

Folklore is considered as an interdisciplinary academic discipline. The objects of folklore are folks or people in the olden times with their arts, beliefs, creations, and so on. Some studies in folklore, such as mythology, legends, folktales, fairytales, folk-literature, fantasies, and children’s literature, in fact, are not only related to literature, but also belong

to the realm of literary studies. Since our academic discipline is literature, in studying folklore our focus is also literature as one of the academic studies under folklore.

Folklore accommodates various studies, such as myths/mythology, legends, folktales, fairytales, folk-literature, folk-beliefs, folk-music, oral history, fantasies, jokes, proverbs, children's literature, and so on. We can find some folklore in written forms, but, originally, most of them are oral stories told from generation to generation. They belong to certain culture and generation so that the people in certain era own their own folklore that reflects their values. Because of it, folklore can be told in various versions. It means that folklore may face some transformations according to the values respected by people in certain places and times.

Archetypes are figures or patterns recurring in works of the imagination. It can be divided into three categories. Archetypal characters include: the hero, the villain, the outcast, the femme fatale, and the star-crossed lovers. Archetypal situations include: the quest, the journey, death and rebirth, and the task. Archetypal symbols and associations include polarities: light/dark, water/desert, height/depth, spring/winter. It is proposed by Carl Jung. He believed that every human being is shared their unconsciousness. From this perspective, the term "collective unconscious" developed, a term representing the memories of human products and activities. This "collective unconscious" term can be found in myths, symbols, rituals, literatures. They are reproduced as archetypes. (<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/blackmon/eng1360k/critical.html#arch>) Moreover, it is mentioned that "The primordial image, or archetype, is a figure--be it a daemon, a human being, or a process--that constantly recurs in the course of history and appears wherever creative fantasy is freely expressed. Essentially, therefore, it is a mythological figure. In each of these images there is a little piece of human psychology and human fate, a remnant of the joys and sorrows that have been repeated countless times in our ancestral history. . . ." ([http://www.voidspace.org.uk/psychology/jung\\_index.shtml](http://www.voidspace.org.uk/psychology/jung_index.shtml))

Thus, the problems are going to be discussed in this research are how is the archetypal character portrayed in the folktale of *Beauty and the Beast* and *the Fairy Serpent*? And what is the meaning of the animal as the Beast version in China's culture?

## II. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There are archetypal characters found in *Beauty and the Beast*, and *the Fairy Serpent*. They are:

### a. Beauty

Beauty is described as a very beautiful girl and has a kind heart. Beauty is the youngest daughter in the story who becomes the only daughter who is willing to stay with the Beast. She is portrayed as the heroine in the story.

### b. Beast

Beast is portrayed as the ugly creature who seeks for the true love to break down the spell over him. Even though he is an ugly creature, he has a kind heart. At the end of the story, the Beast always transforms into a handsome man or prince.

### c. Father

Father is portrayed as a good father who wants to please his daughters. He is described as a wealthy man, usually a merchant who always takes a journey.

### d. Sisters

Sisters are portrayed as bad sisters. They are jealous seeing Beauty's appearance which more beautiful and wearing jewels in her returning from the Beast's house. They persuade Beauty to leave the Beast. In some folktales, at the end of the story the sisters have the sad ending since they have to accept the punishment, while in other folktale, the sisters are forgiven.

### e. The archetype can be found as well in a plot pattern (situation).

The following table shows the archetype that is found in plot pattern or situation between a story of *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Fairy Serpent* (Chinese Story)

No	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	<i>The Fairy Serpent (Chinese story)</i>
1	<p>✚ Once upon a time there was a rich merchant who had not only three daughters but also three sons. All the girls were good looking, particularly the youngest who becomes known as Little Beauty. The sisters were vain and jealous of Beauty who is by contrast modest and charming and wishes to stay with her father.</p>	<p>✚ Once there was a man who had three daughters, of whom he was devotedly fond.</p>
2	<p>✚ The father took a trip, and the older sisters demanded their father to bring them expensive garments. While Beauty asks simply for a rose.</p> <p>✚ In the morning he wanders into the garden where he sees the perfect rose for Beauty. Upon plucking it, a hideous Beast appears and says that for his thievery he must die.</p>	<p>✚ Every day on his way home from work he gathered some flowers for them to use as patterns.</p> <p>✚ One day when he found no flowers along his route homeward he went into the woods to look for wild blossoms, and he unwittingly invaded the domain of a fairy serpent that coiled around him, held him tightly, and railed at him for having entered his garden.</p>
3	<p>✚ The father begs for his life and, the Beast agrees to let him go if one of his daughters will take his place. If she refuses, then he must return to die himself</p>	<p>✚ The fairy serpent refused to let him go unless he promised one of his daughters in marriage to him</p>
4	<p>✚ Beauty insists on taking her father's place, and so she returns with him to the Beast's palace where he reluctantly leaves her.</p>	<p>✚ The youngest daughter was the one who willing to be the fairy serpent's bride.</p>

5	<p>✚ The Beast treats her well; all her wishes are met by magic. He visits her every evening for supper and gradually Beauty grows to look forwards to these meetings as a break to the monotony of her life.</p> <p>✚ Beauty sees in the magic mirror that her father is desperately missing her and asks that she might return to visit him. The Beast assents on the condition that she returns in seven days, lest he die.</p> <p>✚ The next morning she is at home. Her father is overjoyed to see her but the sisters are once again jealous of Beauty, her newly found happiness and material comfort with the Beast.</p> <p>They persuade Beauty to stay longer, which she does, but on the tenth night she dreams of the Beast who is dying. Wishing herself back with him, she is transported back to the castle where she finds the Beast dying of a broken heart.</p>	<p>✚ Beauty lived with the fairy serpent and she grew to like his companionship and to feel a great lonesomeness whenever he was absent.</p>
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6	<p>✚ Beauty sees in the magic mirror that her father is desperately missing her and asks that she might return to visit him. The Beast assents on the condition that she returns in seven days, lest he die.</p> <p>✚ The next morning she is at home. Her father is overjoyed to see her but the sisters are once again jealous of Beauty, her newly found happiness and material comfort with the Beast. They persuade Beauty to stay longer, which she does, but on the tenth night she dreams of the Beast who is dying. Wishing herself back with him, she is transported back to the castle where she finds the Beast dying of a broken heart.</p>	<p>Having no help in her household work, she was, one day, on finding the well dried up, obliged to go into the forest in search of water, which she finally discovered and toilsomely brought back from a distant spring. On returning she found the snake dying of thirst</p>
7	<p>✚ She realizes that she is desperately in love with the Beast and says that she would gladly marry him. At this the Beast is transformed into a prince</p>	<p>✚ In her eagerness to save his life she grasped and plunged him into the water, from which he rose transformed, a strong and handsome man</p>
8	<p>✚ The Father joins them at the palace and the sisters are turned into statues until they own up to their own faults.</p>	<p>✚ He had been the subject of wicked enchantment, from which her dutiful quest and gracious pity set him free. Thereafter she often with her admirable husband visited her old home and carried gifts to those who were less happy than she</p>
9	<p>✚ They lived happily ever after</p>	<p>✚ They lived happily ever after</p>



The comparison of the plot between “*The Beauty and the Beast*” and “*The Fairy Serpent*” shows that both of the folktales have the same plot. Start from the beginning of the story, the conflict until the end of the story, both of them have the same plot.

- a. The meaning of the animals
- b. Serpent in *The Fairy Serpent* from China.

Serpent which is well known as a dragon has a very special meaning for Chinese people. Chinese dragons are legendary creatures in Chinese mythology and folklore. In Chinese art, dragons are typically portrayed as long, scaled, serpentine creatures with four legs. In yin and yang terminology, a dragon is *yang* and complements a *yin fenghuang* ("Chinese phoenix").

In contrast to European dragons, which are considered evil, Chinese dragons traditionally symbolize potent and auspicious powers, particularly control over water, rainfall, hurricane, and floods. The dragon is also a symbol of power, strength, and good luck. With this, the Emperor of China usually uses the dragon as a symbol of his imperial power.

In Chinese daily language, excellent and outstanding people are compared to the dragon while incapable people with no achievements are compared with other, disesteemed creatures, such as the worm. A number of Chinese proverbs and idioms feature references to the dragon, for example: "Hoping one's son will become a dragon" (望子成龍, i.e. be as a dragon).

Historically, the dragon was the symbol of the emperor of China. In the Zhou Dynasty, the 5-clawed dragon was assigned to the son of heaven, the 4-clawed dragon to the nobles (*zhuhou*, seigneur), and the 3-clawed dragon to the ministers (*dai fu*). In the Qin Dynasty, the 5-clawed dragon was assigned to represent the emperor while the 4-clawed and 3-clawed dragons were assigned to the commoners. The dragon in the Qin Dynasty appeared on national flags.

Many Chinese people often use the term "Descendants of the Dragon" as a sign of ethnic identity, as part of a trend started in the 1970s when different Asian nationalities were looking for animal symbols for representations.

In Chinese culture today, the dragon is mostly used for decorative purposes. It is a taboo to disfigure a depiction of a dragon. Chinese dragons were considered to be physically concise of the 117 scales, 81 are of the yang essence (positive) while 36 are of

the yin essence (negative). Initially, the dragon was benevolent but the Buddhists introduced the concept of malevolent influence among some dragons. Just as water destroys, they said, so can some dragons destroy via floods, tidal waves and storms? They suggested that some of the worst floods were believed to have been the result of a mortal upsetting a dragon.

This description accords with the artistic depictions of the dragon down to the present day. The dragon has also acquired an almost unlimited range of supernatural powers. It is said to be able to disguise itself as a silkworm, or become as large as our entire universe. It can fly among the clouds or hide in water (according to the *Guanzi*). It can form clouds, can turn into water, can change color as an ability to blend in with their surroundings, as an effective form of camouflage or glow in the dark (according to the *Shuowen Jiezi*). ([http://Wikipedia.org/animal\\_dragon](http://Wikipedia.org/animal_dragon))

### III. CONCLUSION

There were universal patterns in all stories or in this case is the folktale regardless its culture or historical period which is called archetype. The archetypal characters can be found in those folktales. The character and characterization of Beauty, the Beast, father and sisters are similar to each other in both folktales. However, the variants of the Beast emerge in every folktale. The Beast in China is portrayed in the form of serpent or a dragon. It seems that even though all of the folktales have the same story and have the archetypal characters, they are different in the part of the performance of the Beast itself. Every folktale has its own characteristic. The variants of the Beast are adjusted with its own culture in each country. It can be said that folktale as human's creation, is a part of culture which contains many social values. Hence the culture will influence the development of folktale itself.

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## Appendix:

### *The Fairy Serpent* (A Chinese Tale)

Once there was a man who had three daughters, of whom he was devotedly fond. They were skillful in embroidery, and every day on his way home from work he gathered some flowers for them to use as patterns. One day when he found no flowers along his route homeward he went into the woods to look for wild blossoms, and he unwittingly invaded the domain of a fairy serpent that coiled around him, held him tightly, and railed at him for having entered his garden. The man excused himself, saying that he came merely to get a few flowers for his daughters, who would be sorely disappointed were he to go home without his usual gift to them. The snake asked him the number, the names, and the ages of his daughters and then refused to let him go unless he promised one of them in marriage to him. The poor man tried every argument he could think of to induce the snake to release him upon easier terms, but the reptile would accept no other ransom. At last the father, dreading greater evil for his daughters should they be deprived of his protection, gave the required promise and went home. He could eat no supper, however, for he knew the power of fairies to afflict those who offend them, and he was full of anxiety concerning the misfortunes that would overwhelm his whole family should the contract be disregarded.

Some days passed; his daughters carefully prepared his meals and affectionately besought him to eat, but he would not come to the table. He was always plunged in sorrowful meditation. They conferred among themselves as to the cause of his uncommon behavior, and, having decided that one of them must have displeased him, they agreed to try to find out which one it might be by going separately to urge him to eat. The eldest went, expressed her distress at his loss of appetite, and urged him to partake of food. He replied that he would do so if she would for his sake marry the snake to whom he had promised a wife. She bluntly refused to carry out her father's contract and left him in deeper trouble than before.

The second daughter then went to beg him to take food, received the same reply, and likewise declined to fulfill the engagement he had made. The youngest daughter then went and entreated him to eat, heard his story, and at once declared that if he would care for his own health properly, she would become the bride of the serpent. The father therefore took his meals again, the days sped without bringing calamity, and the welfare of the family for a time seemed secure.

But one morning as the girls were sitting at their embroidery, a wasp flew into the room and sang:

Buzz! I buzz and come the faster;  
Who will wed the snake, my master?

Whenever the wasp alighted the girls prodded him with their needles and followed him up so closely that he had to flee for his life. The next morning two wasps came, singing the same refrain; the third morning three wasps came; and the number of wasps increased day by day, until the girls could no longer put them to rout, nor endure their stings.

Then the youngest said that in order to relieve the family of the buzzing plague, she would go to her uncanny bridegroom. The wasps accompanied her on the road and guided her into the woods where the fairy serpent awaited her in a palace that he had built for her reception. There were spacious rooms with carved furniture inlaid with precious stones, chests full of silken fabrics, caskets of jade, and jewels of gold. The snake had beautiful eyes and a musical voice, but his skin was warty and the girl shuddered at the thought of daily seeing him about.

After the wedding supper, at which the two sat alone, the girl told her spouse that she appreciated the excellence of all that he had provided for her and that she should perform all her domestic duties exactly. For many days she kept the house neat, cooked the food, and made all things pleasant for her repulsive bridegroom. He doted upon her and pined whenever she was out of his sight. So heedful was he of her wishes and her welfare that she grew to like his companionship and to feel a great lonesomeness whenever he was absent.

Having no help in her household work, she was, one day, on finding the well dried up, obliged to go into the forest in search of water, which she finally discovered and tiresomely brought back from a distant spring. On returning she found the snake dying of thirst, and in her eagerness to save his life she grasped and plunged him into the water, from which he rose transformed, a strong and handsome man. He had been the subject of wicked enchantment, from which her dutiful quest and gracious pity set him free. Thereafter she often with her admirable husband visited her old home and carried gifts to those who were less happy than she.