



## BEAST'S CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN FELIX'S UNFAIR SONG LYRICS BASED ON LACAN'S THEORY OF THE THREE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Amellia Mulya Syifa\*, Muhammad Rayhan Bustam

Universitas Komputer Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

\*correspondence: E-mail: [amellia.63722018@mahasiswa.unikom.ac.id](mailto:amellia.63722018@mahasiswa.unikom.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

This research explores the development of the Beast character through Felix's song "Unfair", utilizing Jacques Lacan's three developmental stages and Sperber & Wilson's relevance theory. By analyzing the song lyrics, the study examines the Beast's transformative journey from a cursed, isolated being to a character capable of love and self-discovery. The research employs a qualitative descriptive methodology, focusing on interpreting the Beast's psychological evolution through pragmatic linguistic analysis and psychoanalytic framework. Through detailed lyrical examination using explicature and implicature, the study reveals how external recognition, particularly through Belle's love, can fundamentally reshape identity and self-perception. The research contributes to understanding character development by integrating psychoanalytic interpretation with pragmatic linguistic analysis.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

"Beauty and the Beast" is a captivating fairy tale that has captivated audiences for generations with its timeless message of love, acceptance, and the transformative power of inner beauty. The story revolves around Beauty, a kindhearted and compassionate young woman, and the fearsome Beast, cursed by an enchantress due to his selfish and arrogant nature. Trapped in an enchanted castle, the Beast can only break the curse by finding true love before the last petal falls from a magical rose (Shabatini *et al.*, 2024). The Tale of Beauty and the Beast has fascinated audiences for decades, not only via its beautiful narrative, but also its profound examination of its character psychological evolution especially for the Beast's side.

While earlier scholarly work has mostly concentrated on Belle's (the Beauty) journey or feminist readings of the story, this research offers a different viewpoint by plotting the Beast's psychological history against Lacan's developmental framework: The Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic. The writer focusing using data from a song lyric that inspired by this tale instead of the actual tale. The song is Unfair, it's the latest song that released in December 13, 2024 by Felix. just like the tittle, the song examines how unfair Beast's life is before he meets Belle. We also bring to Beast's point of view in the song. According to the song, the phase which he hasn't meet Belle yet is represented the Beast's real stage, his first meeting with Belle reflecting the imaginary stage as he can feel love against her, and his huge transformation after he meets Belle also when he finally can release from the curse is identified as the symbolic stage.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent psychoanalytic study (Miller, 2020) argues that these transformative processes mirror broader patterns of identity formation and social integration. Lacan aimed to formalize psychoanalysis through logic and mathematics, creating a framework that encompassed the three registers of mental life. To give a brief explanation, the imaginary (*imaginaire*) is the domain of illusion and imagination that belongs to the sensuous world of perception. The symbolic (*symbolique*) organizes psychic life through language and internalizations, while the real (*re'el*) is hidden from epistemic awareness due to unconscious desires.

The Real is "the register in which the drive manifests itself". It is a condition in which needs are subconsciously prioritized. At this time, there is a high demand for satisfying one's desires (Hadi & Asl, 2022). The Real is typically defined as either materiality or some form of appropriately unstructured infinity that supports the Symbolic structures and patterns. The Real occurs outside of conventional, communicative reality. However, several researchers describe it and its psychoanalytic consequences, it falls short of absolute ineffability.

The term 'imaginary' as a substantive date from 1936. From the start, the term includes implications of illusion, fascination, and seduction, and it refers explicitly to the dual relationship between the ego and the visible picture. The mirror stage is still used to construct the ego, which remains the foundation of the fictional order. The imaginary (*imaginaire*) is defined as perceived or imagined images in conscious and unconscious thought, sensible and intelligible forms; picture thinking (*Vorstellung*), dream imagery or manifest content, and conscious ego in discursive thought (Hendrix, 2019). This imaginary phase is where the mirror stage takes place. Mirror stage theory by referring to the psychological development of the human infant that is, the self-awareness of an eight- to sixteen-month-old baby when he or she looks in a mirror. When the baby looks in a mirror, he or she realizes that he or she is both a self (broken body) and another whole being (Li & Zhou, 2021). During the mirror stage, the self is identified through interaction with an external other who is symbiotically tied to the narcissistic body. This occurs before the demand discourse is formed (Rosa et al., 2021).

The symbolic is the most crucial one for psychoanalysis; psychoanalysts are essentially 'practitioners of the symbolic function'. In 1953 when several researchers begin to use the term 'symbolic' as a noun, it now becomes one of the three orders that remain central throughout the rest of several research work (Evans, 2006). The symbolic order is a phase where language and social legislation that corresponds to adulthood. The Symbolic Order is a social area where language is used to communicate human loss of absent entities, also

known as Lack/Loss. Recognizing a lack or loss allows individuals to represent the missing object as a necessary prerequisite for integrated selfhood (Hadi & Asl, 2022).

To further analyze the song's lyrics, I additionally apply several researchers relevance theory (implicature and explicature). Relevance theory recognizes that human communication involves encoding, transferring, and decoding messages, as well as referencing and contextualizing them. Relevance theory suggests that deliberate communication establishes expectations that assist audiences in determining the intended message. Another of several researchers arguments—that utterances inherently generate expectations that direct the hearer toward the speaker's meaning—is the foundation of the relevance-theoretic explanation. The need for a Co-operative Principle and maxims, the emphasis on pragmatic processes that lead to implicatures rather than explicit, truth-conditional content, the role of intentional maxim violation in utterance interpretation, and the treatment of figurative utterances as departures from a maxim or convention of truthfulness are some of the other aspects of several researchers account that relevance theorists question, but they agree with his intuition that utterances raise expectations of relevance. Characterization of communication, based by several researchers definition of speaker's meaning, suggests that it lacks the unity and autonomy required for philosophical or scientific definitions or theories (Sperber & Wilson, 2015).

As soon as he is freed from the curse, the Beast undergoes a shift in both his identity development and his physical appearance. In addition, his social integration is changing him from a frightening Beast to a charming prince. His curse, which robs him of his princely identity and sends him into a self-crisis, is the first step in the Beast's metamorphosis. several researchers idea of the Real—a state of undifferentiated existence where identification boundaries blur—is reflected in this abrupt change (Thurston, 2018). Belle plays an important part in the Beast's psychological growth, which is referred to as the "transformative Other." Some researchers idea of symbolic identification—in which the subject's identity is formed by and through the recognition of the other—is best illustrated by their relationship (Giffney & Salisbury, 2020). It is described as a "dialectical space" for transformation because of Belle's capacity to see behind the Beast's terrifying façade while also questioning his actions (Davis, 2021) and several researchers imaginary stage is reflected in the Beast's struggle in dealing with the curse and himself before meeting Belle.

### 3. METODE

This qualitative article will examine how Beast's character development through the song, also will compare some of it to the "Beauty and The Beast" animation movie, but still the primary discussion is the song lyrics. This article will use a descriptive qualitative methodology to examines the datum. As for the data for this article is collected from Unfair song lyrics by Felix.

The first thing I do for this article is choosing a topic by observing some literature works. Since my primary priority is pschoanalysis, I sorting out some literary works that are possible to be explored from the psychoanalytic side and I finally choose "Beauty and The Beast" as my topic. To discussing something new than the earlier scholar, I collecting the data from song lyrics instead of the original novel or movie. Then, after choosing a topic I observing again for the most suitable theory to use (Lacan's three stage of development). Beside using several researchers three stage development theory, I will also use pragmatic interpretation theory to make a stronger explanation about the Beast's character development through the song.

The second thing I do is analysing the whole song lyrics and divided them into three parts according to Lacan's three stage of development theory.

**Figure 1** is the song's full lyrics; it is the whole data I used for this study. This research using a library research methodology. [Bustam \(2020\)](#) said that library research is the most suitable method for this kind of research.

Ufair		
By: Felix (Stray Kids)		
My life is so unfair Everyone sees me as if I'm the beast out there My dreams become nightmares Please give me a break right now I wanna just be myself No one can truly see The human inside me-e  Ever since you came into my life You taught me all about unconditional love I think about you saving me every night Felt like an angel sent from above All I see is your shining beauty Hope you can see the human in me Will your true love be the one to free me?  My life is so unfair I'm still left in despair Just when I thought that god Had answered my whole prayer After I let you go And saw you out the door	I wanted you to know How much I love you, so, oh  Yeah, my life is unfair (Ay!) The one and only woman I love left me unprepared (Unprepared) I'm staring down at my own petals falling one by one And piece by piece I can't feel any peace in my heart But that tear I can't bear, I can't say I can wait While I take all this pain from Gaston Filled with nothin' but hate (Ay) I guess this is where I'm gonna die in the rain If I saw you one last time, I could change my fate  I won't lie, I wanna be with you every day and night I miss the way you shine on me so bright	I'm warmed up by your light  I didn't know where to go I thought I lost it all During my fight Everything was dark When I lost sight 'Til you came in just callin' Out my name in the rain You saved me from fallin' But before  My life was so unfair Until I met you, Belle When you just rang my heart You woke me from this spell As long as I'm with you now I'm feeling my true self Tale as old as time Song as old as rhyme

**Figure 1.** Unfair full lyrics.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After doing rough research, I got that Beast's character development in this song is just like in the movie, it transforms after he meets Belle (see **Table 1**).

**Table 1.** Division of song lyrics according to Lacan's three stage of development.

Lacan's Stage	Song Lyrics
The Real Stage	My life is so unfair Everyone sees me as if I'm the beast out there My dreams become nightmares Please give me a break right now I wanna just be myself No one can truly see The human inside me My life is so unfair I'm still left in despair Just when I thought that God Had answered my whole prayer Ever since you came into my life

**Table 1 (continue).** Division of song lyrics according to Lacan's three stage of development.

Lacan's Stage	Song Lyrics
Imaginary Stage	<p>You taught me all about unconditional love  I think about you saving me every night  Felt like an angel sent from above  All I see is your shining beauty  Hope you can see the human in me  Will your true love be the one to free me?  After I let you go  And saw you out the door  I wanted you to know  How much I love you, so, oh  Yeah, my life is unfair  The one and only woman I love left me unprepared  I'm staring down at my own petals falling one by one  And piece by piece  I can't feel any peace in my heart  But that tear  I can't bare, I can't say I can wait  While I take all this pain from Gaston  Filled with nothin' but hate  I guess this is where I'm gonna die in the rain  If I saw you one last time, I could change my fate  I won't lie, I wanna be with you every day and night  I miss the way you shine on me so bright  I'm warmed up by your light  I didn't know where to go  I thought I lost it all  During my fight  Everything was dark</p>
Symbolic Stage	<p>When I lost sight  'Til you came in just callin'  'Out my name in the rain  You saved me from fallin'  But before  My life was so unfair  Until I met you, Belle  When you just rang my heart  You woke me from this spell  As long as I'm with you now  I'm feeling my true self  <i>Tale as old as time</i>  <i>Song as old as rhyme</i></p>

#### 4.2. The Real Stage

According to this song, Beast's real stage is when he complaining about his life that he considered unfair just like the title of the song, the lyrics repeat the word "unfair" a lot which can lead to how suffered he is under the curse. The first chorus part is just like a prologue of the song. Based on the **Table 2**, if we analyze the pragmatic interpretation of this stage, Beast's intention is to expressing how desperate he is after he got cursed, he also expressing his insecurity in *Everyone sees me as if I'm the beast out there* part. He wants to show his

truly self but he cannot because of the curse that turned his appearance to a monster and make everyone hate him.

**Table 2.** The real stage short explanation.

Explanation	Song Lyrics
Beast's insecurity after he got cursed	Everyone sees me as if I'm the beast out there I wanna just be myself No one can truly see the human inside me
Beast expressing his desperation because of the curse	My life is so unfair My dreams become nightmares Please give me a break right now My life is so unfair I'm still left in despair Just when I thought that God Had answered my whole prayer My life is so unfair I'm still left in despair

Here is some further explanation about the meaning of the song based on several researcher relevance theory (explicature & implicature):

- (i) My life is so unfair
  - Explicature: Beast feels that his life is unfair.
  - Implicature: He got cursed.
- (ii) Everyone sees me as if I'm the beast out there
  - Explicature: People consider him as a frightening creature.
  - Implicature: There is a huge transformation in his appearance and people scared to him.
- (iii) I wanna just be myself
  - Explicature: He wants to expressing himself freely
  - Implicature: The curse prevents him from expressing himself freely, he doesn't feel like himself since he got cursed, and there is a huge transformation in him, both appearance and personality.

#### 4.2. Imaginary Stage

Based on the song, Beast's imaginary stage is the first time when he finally meets Belle. He starts to feel love and having hope that Belle will help him to break the curse. According to the **Table 3**, in his imaginary stage, Beast's intention is to expressing his love to Belle, he also explaining that Belle's presence in his life is really means to him, but in the other hand Beast also expressing how desperate he is when Belle leaves him again.

Here is some further explanation about the meaning of the song based on several researchers relevance theory (explicature & implicature)

- (i) You taught me all about unconditional love
  - Explicature: Beast learnt about unconditional love from Belle.
  - Implicature: Belle loves him even when everyone hates him and Belle loves him no matter how he is.
- (ii) I think about you saving me every night Felt like an angel sent from above
  - Explicature: Beast think that Belle is his savior.

- Implicature: Belle’s presence is really meant to him and He hopes Belle is the one who will free him from the curse.
- (iii) I guess this is where I’m gonna die in the rain
- Explicature: Beast is going to die if no one will help him to break it
  - Implicature: When Belle leaves him again, he starts to give up to the curse and Beast surrendered himself to the curse and start to think the worst scenario.

**Table 3.** Imaginary stage short explanation.

Explanation	Song Lyrics
Beast expressing how much Belle means to him.	Ever since you came into my life You taught me all about unconditional love After I let you go And saw you out the door I wanted you to know How much I love you, so, oh I won’t lie, I wanna be with you every day and night I miss the way you shine on me so bright I’m warmed up by your light
Beast hoping that Belle is the one who can help him break the curse.	I think about you saving me every night Felt like an angel sent from above Hope you can see the human in me Will your true love be the one to free me? If I saw you one last time, I could change my fate
Beast’s desperation when Belle leaves him	Yeah, my life is unfair The one and only woman I love left me unprepared I can’t feel any peace in my heart But that tear I can’t bare, I can’t say I can wait While I take all this pain from Gaston Filled with nothing but hate I guess this is where I’m gonna die in the rain I didn’t know where to go I thought I lost it all During my fight Everything was dark

### 4.3. Symbolic Stage

According to the song, Beast’s symbolic stage is when he finally manages to make Belle feel the same thing as him (Belle fell in love to the Beast as well). Based on the **Table 4**, Beast’s intentions are to show his gratitude and happiness after he finally free from the curse and having Belle on his side.

Here is some further explanation about the meaning of the song based on several researchers’ relevance theory (explicature & implicature);

- (i) When you just rang my heart, you woke me from this spell
  - Explicature: The curse finally broke as long as Beast fell in love with Belle.
  - Implicature: Belle helps him unleash the curse and Beast in love with Belle.
- (ii) As long as I’m with you now, I’m feeling my true self
  - Explicature: Beast can express himself freely when Belle with him.

- Implicature: Belle helps him expressing his feeling and everything and when he with Belle, he can express himself freely without afraid to be judged.

**Table 4.** Symbolic Stage Short Explanation.

Explanation	Song Lyrics
Beast explaining the way Belle finally saves him.	When I lost sight 'Til you came in just calling Out my name in the rain You saved me from falling When you just rang my heart You woke me from this spell
Beast's life transformation after he meets Belle.	My life was so unfair Until I met you, Belle As long as I'm with you now I'm feeling my true self

#### 4.4. Comparison between Beast's Real Stage and Symbolic Stage

According to **Table 5**, the lyrics of the song is told about the Beast's journey, start from when he got cursed until he finally meets Belle that shifts his life drastically. Here are some differences on the lyrics.

**Table 5.** Real and Symbolic stage comparison through the lyrics.

The Real Stage (Before he meets Belle)	Symbolic Stage (After he meets Belle)
My life <i>is</i> so unfair	My life <i>was</i> so unfair
Everyone sees me as if I'm the beast out there	Until I met you, Belle
<i>I wanna just be myself</i>	As long as I'm with you now
No one can truly see	<i>I'm feeling my true self</i>
The human inside me	
My dreams become nightmares	When you just rang my heart
Please give me a break right now	You woke me from this spell

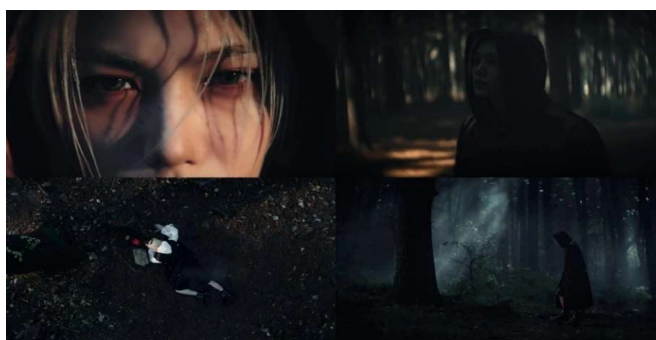
According to **Table 4**, there are some of the lyrics that opposite in the beginning of the song (The real stage) and the ending of the song (Symbolic stage). In the first case, there is a difference in the use of linking verbs, in the real stage, Felix as the lyricist use the linking verb *is*, that could mean he want to expressing Beast's desperation in real time unlike in the symbolic stage. In the symbolic stage, Felix preferring to use *was* as the linking verb to show that Beast already through his hard times. While for the second case, there is a contrasting difference. In the real stage, Beast feels restrained because of the curse, it means he cannot do whatever he wants to expressing himself. While, in symbolic stage when he finally meets Belle, he can express whatever he wants, he also feels safe around Belle since Belle is the one who managed to unleash his curse.

Beside on the song lyrics, the official music video also shows a big transformation of Beast's appearance and personality. In the music video, Felix (the singer) is taking a role as The Beast along the official music video. Here are some examples of a massive differences between The Beast's Real and Symbolic in the official music video. Beside his appearance and personality, there is also a contrasting mood and tone of the video.

**Figure 2** explains about how the music video's tone when Felix (the beast) is still in the real stage. We can see the tone of the video that showed in the figure looks dark and depressed. Also, Felix wears a cape and cover his head with the hood. In this scene, Felix

gives a mysterious vibe to himself, but I imply that Felix wears the cape is to hide himself (because in this phase, he still in his beast appearance). Besides that, Felix's gaze and how he furrowed his brows (in upper left picture) and his act (in lower left picture) shows how desperate he is in his real stage.

In contrast to **Figure 2**, **Figure 3** explains about how the music video's tone when Felix (the beast) is already in symbolic stage. As we can see from the figure, the mood of the music video is not as dark and depressed as in **Figure 2** but it brighter and shows more hope for him. In the lower right picture, it shows how Felix already can live a life just like a human not a terrifying creature anymore. The way Felix smiles in the upper right and lower left picture is also shows that his character is already developed, he not depressed by the curse anymore.



**Figure 2.** Beast's appearance in his Real Stage (Before he meets Belle). Source: Unfair Official Music Video from Stray Kids YouTube Channel



**Figure 3.** Beast's appearance in his symbolic stage (after he meets Belle). Source: Unfair Official Music Video from Stray Kids YouTube Channel

## 5. CONCLUSION

The examination of Felix's song "Unfair" using Lacan's three stages of development uncovers a profound psychological journey of the Beast's character transformation. In the Real stage, the Beast suffers from intense misery and insecurity, feeling trapped by his curse and misunderstood by others. The Imaginary stage commemorates his first encounter with Belle, introducing optimism and the possibility of love. The Symbolic stage reflects his ultimate transformation, in which he breaks the curse and discovers his true self through Belle's unconditional love. The study shows how the song lyrics reflect the traditional "Beauty and the Beast" story, emphasizing the Beast's psychological transformation from a cursed, lonely creature to one capable of genuine emotional connection. Using Lacan's

developmental theory, the study offers a nuanced understanding of character formation, demonstrating how external appreciation and affection may significantly impact one's identity and self-perception.

Through explicature and implicature analysis, the research reveals multiple layers of meaning in the Beast's journey. For instance, lines like "My life is so unfair" move beyond their literal meaning to imply the deeper psychological impact of the curse. The implicatures uncover the Beast's internal struggles, such as feeling trapped, misunderstood, and longing for authentic self-expression. Relevance theory adds depth by exploring the pragmatic nuances of his emotional journey. The study demonstrates how linguistic interpretation can reveal complex psychological processes, showing how external recognition and love fundamentally reshape identity and self-perception.

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