



# **Anthropomorphism and the Construction of Identity in Beast-themed Folk Tales: A Study of *Lutung Kasarung*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Frog Princess***

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## **Abstract**

This study discusses how anthropomorphism is used in constructing themes of identity, disguise, and transformation through three folk tales: *Lutung Kasarung* (Indonesia), *Beauty and the Beast* (France), and *The Frog Princess* (Russia). All three feature beasts or non-human characters who have human-like traits, behaviours, and the ability to think and speak. Through a qualitative approach with narrative analysis and Stewart Guthrie's (1993) theory of anthropomorphism, this article shows that non-human forms are used as a form of disguise for true identity, as well as a means of conveying inner conflict and moral values. The findings show that the three folk tales analysed in this study have narrative patterns similar to cross-cultural patterns. This pattern consists of a curse, which is the cause of identity change; disguise, which is the process of identity change; and transformation, which is the end of the story and the resolution of the problem.

**Keywords:** *Anthropomorphism; Identity; Disguise; Transformation; Folktale*

## **Introduction**

Folk tales across cultures often use animal figures and transformations to explore the complexities of human culture, identity, and morality (Mahato & Singh, 2024). In beast-themed narratives, particularly, the use of animal as narrative tool often serves as a powerful literary and symbolic device that bridges the boundary between the human and the non-human. By attributing human traits, emotions, and intellect to animals or hybrid beings, these stories reveal the psychological and moral

dimensions of disguise and transformation. This study examines *Lutung Kasarung* (Indonesia), *Beauty and the Beast* (France), and *The Frog Princess* (Russia) to analyze how anthropomorphism functions in constructing themes of identity, disguise, and transformation. Using analysis, this article argues that the portrayal of beastly figures represents more than simple enchantment, it serves as a metaphorical journey through which characters' true identities are concealed, tested, and ultimately transformed across different cultural contexts.

Folk tales featuring human-animal transformations have long been part of many cultural traditions, reflecting how societies understand nature and moral values. These stories often present characters who are cursed or transformed into animals because of moral failings, divine punishment, or a test of virtue. In many folktales and fairy tales, the main character, whether human or animal, often undergoes physical and emotional transformations that reflect how society perceives the relationship between humans and other living beings.

Animals in folklore often play important roles in shaping human behavior and teaching moral lessons (Javlieva, 2025). When a character in folklore or a fairy tale takes a non-human form but is given human characteristics, thoughts, or emotions, this is known as anthropomorphism. The term "anthropomorphism" refers to the attribution of human traits or characteristics to non-human objects, including "other" creatures and attached objects. The term is derived from the Greek words *anthropos* and *morphe*, which mean "human" and "form" respectively (Mdoka, 2022). On the other hand, the term "anthropocentrism" refers to "any view that asserts the centrality, primacy, or superiority of humans in the scheme of things; that claims that the purpose of nature is to serve human needs and desires; or that asserts the greater value of life and the greater relative importance of human life and interests compared to non-human life and interests." (Mdoka, 2022)

This research tried to identify the topic of identity, disguise, and transformation in three different folk tales with anthropomorphism themes from three different cultures, namely: (1) *Lutung Kasarung* or *The Lost Ape* from Indonesia, which reflects Eastern culture. (2) *The Beauty and the Beast* from France, which reflects Western culture. (3) *The Frog Princess*, which originated in Russia, reflecting the meeting point between Western and Eastern cultures. With different cultural backgrounds, this paper focuses on analyzing how anthropomorphism is used to construct identity, disguise, and transformation of characters in *Lutung Kasarung*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Frog Princess*.

The three folk tales examined in this study share similar narrative patterns and expressions of anthropomorphism, particularly in their use of non-human forms to explore identity, disguise, and transformation. In each tale, anthropomorphism serves as a symbolic medium to represent inner conflict, moral trials, and the consequences of curses. The process of disguise functions as a crucial stage in the formation of new identities, allowing characters to undergo moral and emotional tests that reveal their true nature. Transformation, in turn, acts as a sign of

restoration, marking the return to an improved state of being, moral recognition, and the recovery of identity.

In the context of literature, anthropomorphism functions not only as an aesthetic ornament, but also as a narrative device to construct symbols, metaphors, and characterization (Rahmawati et al., 2024). By presenting animals or magical creatures with human characteristics, literary texts can discuss moral ideas, social criticism, and even power relations in the Age of Anthropocene in a more symbolic form (You, 2021). Anthropomorphism is not merely a form of imagination, but also reflects the human need to create meaning, emotional closeness, and a sense of control over an unpredictable environment (Yue et al., 2021). It emerges from human experiences of uncertainty, imagination, and illusion in interactions with non-human beings (Servais, 2018).

Anthropomorphism provides a symbolic framework through which performative identities are constructed and negotiated within the narrative, allowing characters to reveal their inner conflicts and social roles through non-human forms. When narratives attribute human qualities to non-human beings, the conventional boundary between nature and culture dissolves, opening up new ways for humans to understand and relate to other beings and forms of matter (Kautz, 2024). Through this phenomenon, disguise occurs as a narrative tool that enables characters to conceal their true identities for specific purposes, while transformation signifies a change in status, morals, or the spiritual status. Thus, anthropomorphism, disguise, and transformation are closely intertwined as central elements of fairytale or folktale structure.

According to Vladimir Propp in *Morphology of the Folktale*, disguise is part of the narrative function that supports the transformation of characters. Through disguise, characters can test sincerity, play with social perceptions, or protect their true identities. This motif often appears in stories where animals or magical creatures behave like humans, or vice versa, where humans disguise themselves as other creatures (Propp in Hammond & Pain, 2008). Therefore, disguise can be a bridge between one's original identity and a new identity that is presented symbolically. Goffman (1959) in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, explain that human identity as a performative construct is flexible and shaped through social interaction. Identity can change depending on the social context, role, and specific purpose (Goffman in Galea, 2019). Collectively, these ideas provide a multidisciplinary framework for understanding anthropomorphism as a cognitive and cultural self-representation mechanism.

Building on these theoretical perspective, this study employs Propp's narrative structure, Goffman's theory of performative identity, and Guthrie's cognitive framework of anthropomorphism to examine how anthropomorphic figures. Thus, this study employs Guthrie's cognitive framework of anthropomorphism in conjunction with Propp's narrative structure and Goffman's performative identity theory to examine how anthropomorphic characters employ disguise and

transformation to represent moral and cultural values.

Several studies have analyzed anthropomorphism from various perspective. For example, the study by (Lalrodingi, 2021), discusses criticism of anthropocentrism in fairy tales, and explores the relationship between humans and non-humans, and questions the moral consequences of anthropomorphism, while study (Chang, 2024) , examines the representation of non-humans in European fairy tales from an ecological perspective and the relationship between humans and non-humans. Meanwhile, the study (Yu, 2024) examines the motif of transformation in Grimm's fairy tales between humans and animals, including modes of transformation, growth orientation, and moral concepts (punishment and redemption). Therefore, the study (Liu, 2025) exploring how the use of animal characters in Chinese and European fairy tales has different psychological functions, including reflecting psychological projections, cultural symbolism, and emotional transformation.

While previous studies have explored anthropomorphism in relation to moral symbolism or ecological representation, little attention has been given to how anthropomorphism simultaneously shapes identity through the disguises and the transformations across cultural traditions. This research gap reveals that most prior studies have examined these elements separately rather than as interconnected narrative mechanism. In addition, most existing studies tend to focus on Western narratives or a single cultural tradition, leaving less attention to how non-Western tales engage with similar themes.

This study aims to examine in depth the role of anthropomorphism, according to the theory proposed by Stewart Guthrie (1993) in his work *Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion*, anthropomorphism is seen as a human cognitive strategy for dealing with and understanding a complex and uncertain world. Through this process, humans attempt to explain the phenomena around them in a familiar and easily understandable way, namely by projecting human characteristics, emotions, intentions, and behaviors onto non-human entities such as animals, inanimate objects, or natural forces (Guthrie, 2012).

By analyzing these stories through Guthrie's theoretical framework, this research aims to uncover the shared narrative pattern among the three tales: the curse that changes identity, the disguise that conceals identity, and the transformation that restores identity. In doing so, this study highlights how different cultures employ anthropomorphism to deliver moral lessons and to explore the relationship between identity, disguise, and transformation, as well as the tension between outward appearance and inner truth.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, which focuses on describing and interpreting the phenomenon under investigation in detail. Through this approach, the researcher seeks to present a clear and systematic description of the issues or social situations represented in the selected folk tales. The qualitative

descriptive method is suitable for this research because it relies on verbal data rather than numerical data, allowing the analysis to emphasize meanings, narratives, and interpretations expressed through language (Moleong, 2005).

The data for this study consist of textual narratives taken from the three selected folk tales, which serve as the primary sources: *The Lost Apes (Lutung Kasarung)* from Indonesia (Dhinny el Fazila, 2011), *Beauty and the Beast* from France (Beauty And The Beast From "The Fairy Book" by Miss Mulock Illustrations by Walter Crane, n.d.), and *The Frog Princess* from Russia (The Frog Princess (The Tsarevna Frog), n.d.). Meanwhile, the secondary data was collected by reading journals, e-books, or other references related to research on anthropomorphism. The researcher identifies narrative elements related to anthropomorphism, such as the depiction of non-human characters with human traits, emotions, or intelligence, as well as the representation of identity, disguise, and transformation within the storyline.

The analysis is conducted focusing on the structure and meaning of each story to uncover the role of anthropomorphism in shaping the main characters' development and moral messages. Stewart Guthrie's (1993) theory of anthropomorphism serves as the main analytical framework to interpret how non-human forms are used as metaphors for human experiences and moral lessons. By combining qualitative description with narrative analysis, this study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how different cultures use anthropomorphic figures to reflect universal themes of humanity, morality, and transformation.

## **Results**

### ***Anthropomorphism in Identity Formation***

In *Lutung Kasarung*, anthropomorphism appears through the character of the *Lutung* who can speak and think like a human. This can be seen in the scene where *Purba Sari*, who was banished to the forest, is visited by a royal guard who brings a message from her brother that he is sending a *Lutung* to accompany *Purba Sari*. From that moment on, *Lutung Kasarung* lived in the hut where *Purba Sari* was meditating. *Lutung Kasarung*, who could speak, was considered a companion for *Purba Sari*. At first, *Purba Sari* was surprised that a monkey could talk and behave like a human being.

Similiary, in *Beauty and the Beast*, anthropomorphism appears through the character of the *Beast* who can also speak and think like a human. This can be seen in the dialogue between the *Beast* and *Belle's* father, which shows anthropomorphism because the *Beast* resembles a wild animal but can speak, think, and demand a response.

"Ungrateful man!" said the beast, in a terrible voice, "I have saved your life by letting you into my palace, and in return you steal my roses... But you shall make amends for your fault with your life."

Meanwhile, the representation of anthropomorphism in *The Frog Princess* can be identified through several scenes in which the frog demonstrates human characteristics, particularly in dialogue and ability. There is the dialogue when the Prince (Ivan) meets a frog that was accidentally hit by an arrow shot by his father, but surprisingly, the frog responds to the prince's words.

The frog... had deposited a shirt wrapped in a fine cloth.

"Frog, little frog, please give me my arrow."

"Yes, of course, I will give it to you," replied the frog, "since from now on I will be your fiancée."

### ***Disguise in the Folk Tales***

The idea of disguise first appears in the tale of *Lutung Kasarung* when the prince Guruminda is cursed to take on the form of an animal. This is seen in the opening scene of this fairy tale, as Sunan Ambu punishes Guru Minda by sending him to earth and cursing him to become an ape. His curse will only be erased if a princess genuinely loves him and accepts him as a ape. Guru Minda accepted this punishment because he realized the weight of his mistakes, so he resigned himself to being sent down to earth in the form of an ugly, large ape known as *Lutung Kasarung*.

In *Beauty and the Beast*, disguise also emerges through a curse when the prince's arrogance causes him to be cursed and turned into a terrible beast. This disguise creates a tension between his terrifying exterior and his moral character. In his dialogue with Belle, the theme of disguise appears as Beast attempts to highlight his monster appearance while also showing that he is a good-hearted person.

"You are a good girl, and I think myself very much obliged to you." ... "But tell me, Beauty, do you not think me very ugly?" ... "Yes, yes, I hope I am good-tempered," said he, "but still I am a monster."

Through this contrast, the story highlights disguise as a moral test of perception and compassion.

In *The Frog Princess*, the disguise serves as a forced curse that tests the prince's bravery, sincerity, and trust while also hiding the princess's actual identity. The motif of disguise can be seen in the Prince Ivan's dialogue:

"Little frog, little frog, my father has ordered me to go with you to the feast. Tell me, can I—should I show you to the people?"

The little frog replied: "Your words offend me, Prince Ivan, after all I have done for you. I suffer much more for not being able to win your affection."

### ***Transformation in the Folk Tales***

In the story of *Lutung Kasarung*, the transformation occurs at the end of the story because it signifies the restoration of true identity. This can be seen at the end of the story, when Purbasari returns to the kingdom to compete against her brother for the throne. When the judging begins, Purbasari should have been chosen as the

winner. However, she is deemed ineligible because she does not have a suitable fiancé. Purbasari is confused, because during her time in the forest she never met any men. Seeing this, Lutung Kasarung looked at her sadly, while Purbasari smiled at him.

She did not care if she had to lose or even die, as long as she could show all the people of Pasir Batang that she truly loved Lutung Kasarung, who had accompanied her during her time in the forest. In front of all the palace residents and Purbararang, Purbasari admitted that Lutung Kasarung was her fiancé. Immediately, thunder roared, and Lutung Kasarung, who had been in the form of a monkey, turned into a handsome and powerful young man, far more handsome and capable than Indrajaya.

Similarly to it, the concept of transformation appears at the conclusion of the *Beauty and the Beast*, when the prince transforms back into a human. When Belle reveals her actual feelings, the motif of transformation starts showing up in the dialogue. Belle tells Beast not to die and that she wants Beast to live and become her husband.

"No, dear beast," replied Beauty, "you shall not die; you shall live to be my husband: from this moment I offer to marry you, and will be only yours. Oh! I thought I felt only friendship for you; but the pain I now feel, shows me that I could not live without seeing you."

"You see him at your feet, Beauty," answered the prince, "for I am he. A wicked fairy had condemned me to keep the form of a beast till a beautiful young lady should agree to marry me, and ordered me, on pain of death, not to show that I had any sense. You, alone, dearest Beauty, have kindly judged of me by the goodness of my heart; and in return I offer you my hand and my crown, though I know the reward is much less than what I owe you."

In the story of *The Frog Princess*, the motif of transformation appears at the end of the story when the prince finally gets the guts and sincerity to love and wait for the princess, and the prince's acceptance of the princess's situation also reveals this theme of metamorphosis. This can be seen in the scene:

Then the frog threw off her frogskin and turned into a beautiful, sweet girl, Vasilissa by name.

## **Discussion**

Based on the results of a narrative analysis of three folk tales: *Lutung Kasarung*, *The Beauty and The Beast*, and *The Frog Princess*, it was found that there are elements of anthropomorphism that play a dominant role in building character identity, presenting the motif of disguise, and facilitating social and moral status transformation. All three share a common pattern; using animal forms as symbols, the presence of a curse or disguise, and a transformation of form that resolves the conflict.

***Anthropomorphism in the formation of the identities of Guru Minda, Beast, and Vassillia***

Several authors subscribe to a definition of anthropomorphism similar to Stewart Guthrie (1993), that anthropomorphism is a human cognitive strategy used to interpret and manage a complex, uncertain world by attributing human traits, emotions, and intentions to non-human entities. In line with this view, (Cortall (2007) in (Airenti, 2018) explained that anthropomorphism refers to other animals as subjects and agents that have feelings, intentions, needs, etc. This relates to research (Junaid & Andini, 2025) which explains that the anthropomorphism of animal characters in the Peter Rabbit stories provides us with a different way of looking at complex human behavior, social norms, and moral lessons. Therefore, anthropomorphism in fairy tales might be utilized to comprehend how social values and human behavior shape the identities of Guruminda, Beast, and Vassillia.

Based on this theoretical framework, the application of anthropomorphism can be clearly seen in the story of *Lutung Kasarung*. *Lutung Kasarung* tells the story of Guruminda, who was transformed into a Lutung (monkey) as a form of punishment, redemption, and moral test for the mistakes he had made. This is in line with Goffman's concept of Shaping Identity, which explains that human identity is flexible and that social interactions can be "performed." In the tale, identity is formed within Sundanese culture, where the lutung is not merely an animal, but also a symbol of supernatural knowledge and a spiritual guide.

The form of the lutung can be said to have elements of anthropomorphism because it is able to speak, think, and interact like a human being. Anthropomorphism in *Lutung Kasarung* creates a dual identity: an animal creature and a character with morals, responsibilities, and ultimately a hidden noble identity (Guruminda). Through the duality, the story emphasizes the conflict between external appearance and internal virtue, implying that true identity is determined not by physical form, but by moral integrity and spiritual depth.

In line with the construction of Guruminda's identity, the character Beast in *Beauty and the Beast* exhibits a similar form of duality. In *Beauty and the Beast* tells the story of a prince who is cursed to become a beastly and ugly creature (Beast) because of his arrogance, and to expose the hypocrisy of social norms as told in the fairy tale. The Beast can be said to have elements of anthropomorphism because it has human-like behavior, thoughts, emotions, and speech. Anthropomorphism in the formation of the Beast's identity is not only physical, but also symbolic of an inner contradiction with his identity. As Guthrie (1993) said, the projection of human traits onto non-humans is used to project human inner conflicts.

Anthropomorphically, the Beast has two identities: physically, he is an animal, but internally, he remains human. His identity is formed as a frightening monster but one who still has logic and moral rules. The beast's identity also evolves from a "monster feared by many" into a creature with sensitivity, loyalty, and love. This process shows that the human traits instilled in animals become a means of forming



the character's true identity.

*The Frog Princess* tells the story of a beautiful princess (Vassillia) who is cursed by an evil witch to become a frog. In *The Frog Princess*, the element of anthropomorphism is seen in a frog that was originally a princess who can talk, weave, and even interpret palace duties wisely like humans in general. This is demonstrated in the discussion when Prince Ivan finds a frog that his father accidentally hit with an arrow. Surprisingly, the frog reacts to what the prince says. This moment clearly illustrates the frog's human-like communication and agency, showing that she is capable of understanding, reasoning, and engaging in dialogue just as a human would. Another example can be seen in a scene where the frog is able to weave or sew cloth. Its identity is that of a frog, but it can speak and perform tasks like a human being.

Although the tree tales all use anthropomorphism to examine identity, disguise, and transformation, each does so within distinct cultural and symbolic frameworks. In *Lutung Kasarung*, the Ape form reflects Sundanese spiritual values: Guruminda's transformation is a sacred test meant to cultivate inner virtue. In *Beauty and the Beast*, the Beast's animal appearance serves as a moral cover that critiques superficial judgement and represents an internal struggle between humanity and monstrosity, with transformation functioning as a moral restoration. Meanwhile, *The Frog Princess* used the frog form to undermine royal authority, showing that Vasiillia's intellect and nobility are concealed behind an understated appearance; she only transforms back into a human after proving her goodness via action. As a result, anthropomorphism in all three stories reflects the unique moral and cultural ideals of their respective cultures and stands for spiritual refinement, moral masking, and hidden greatness.

### ***Disguise represents a journey from bad character to self-improvement***

According to social psychologists, it is explained that due to cognitive and social motivations, humans tend to anthropomorphize non-human beings. (Waytz et al., 2010 in Yang, 2024). Therefore, Epley states that anthropomorphism is a phenomenon in which non-human beings are given human-like characteristics. (Epley et al., 2007 in (Yang, 2024)). The cognitive tendency to humanize non-human entities can be the reason for disguise in folklore, where shape-shifting not only serves as a concealment, but also as a reflection of inner and social conflicts. Applying this framework to folklore suggests that disguise and shape-shifting are not merely narrative devices, but psychological mechanisms through which societies externalize inner conflict, moral ambiguity, and social anxieties. Anthropomorphic disguises allow animal figures to become symbolic containers of human traits, enabling narratives to explore identity transformation and moral testing in ways that human characters alone cannot.

In the story of *Lutung Kasarung*, the motif of disguise aligns with Epley's theory of intentionality attribution that despite his animal form, his moral agency and emotional depth invite the audience to perceive him as a fully human subject. The disguise thus functions not only as a concealment but as a culturally specific spiritual test rooted in Sundanese cosmology. The animal form becomes a symbolic mediator that allows the narrative to explore moral purification, social rejection, and sincerity in human relationships. This indicates that the disguise is not merely an aesthetic choice but a structural tool for moral pedagogy.

The disguise is a way for Guru Minda to make atonement for his mistakes. The purpose of this disguise is to test Guru Minda's ability to deal with his suffering on earth, where he frequently faces societal rejection, and to weaken the negative aspects of himself that caused him to be sent down to earth. Guru Minda's disguise as a langur also serves as a test for Purba Sari to always accept and build relationships with creatures that are considered "lowly" in appearance but pure in character. As a result, the disguise in this case serves as both a "concealment of true identity" and a narrative device that challenges moral principles (patience, loyalty) and acceptance of identities that defy conventional standards of appearance.

Likewise, the motif of disguise becomes a way for the Beast to reflect reflects what Epley identifies as the tension between physical appearance and perceived mind. Therefore, anthropomorphism shows that the Beast is psychologically and aesthetically "trapped" in his animal form. In the story of *Beauty and the Beast*, disguise appears when the prince is cursed and transformed into a terrifying beast because of his arrogant nature. This curse serves as a mask to test Belle's (Beast's partner) sincerity in interpreting a feeling of love beyond physical appearance.

The motif of disguise can be seen in the dialogue between Beast and Belle, where Beast tries to emphasize his physical form as a monster, but also explains that he is a human being with a kind heart. This disguise, which is a punishment for his past arrogance, represents a journey from bad character to self-improvement. This disguise places Beast in two different worlds: the world of animal physical traits, yet human inner qualities. This serves as a moral lesson that a person's true identity cannot be judged solely by their appearance. Additionally, the use of anthropomorphism makes this disguise more than just a curse; it serves as a narrative tool to test Belle's loyalty and love.

Also, in the story of *The Frog Princess*, the motif of disguise operates through what Propp would classify as a "lack" and "test" function. In this story, evident in the curse is imposed as a forced disguise, preventing people from knowing the princess's true status, and also as a test for the prince to demonstrate his courage, sincerity, and trust in the princess. The motif of disguise can be seen in the dialogue when Prince Ivan says that his father told him to bring the frog princess to a party, but the prince asks if he has to show the frog princess to everyone. Then, the frog princess feels offended and saddened by the prince's words. In this case, anthropomorphism plays a role in deepening the disguise, because animals do not usually have such feelings

(offended, sad, expressing inner pain), which indicates that she is a human trapped in the form of a frog.

***Transformation emphasizes the function of disguise as a moral test***

Anthropomorphism, according to Epley, Waytz, and Cacioppo (2007), is the attribution of human characteristics, such as emotions and the ability to speak, to non-human entities, such as gods, animals, plants, sounds, or weather phenomena. Anthropomorphism, which comes from the Greek words *anthropos* (meaning “human”) and *morphe* (meaning ‘form’ or “shape”), involves more than just attributing life to inanimate objects. (Epley, Waytz & Cacioppo (2007) in (Kollias, 2015) ). In the study (Sazyek, 2024), explained transformation sometimes occurs in unexpected ways.

The main story depends on transformation, which sometimes saves the hero from danger during a terrifying journey and ensures his survival. Therefore, transformation in fairy tales serves as a moral, symbolic, and existential signifier that describes the transition from one state to another. Thus, it can be interpreted as a form of narrative exploration of moral growth, identity shifts, and spiritual evolution. The transformation can also highlight the function of disguise as a moral test for Guru Minda, Beast, and Vassillia.

In the story of *Lutung Kasarung*, the motif of transformation occurs at the end of the story when Prabu Guruminda transforms back from his *Lutung* form to his original form. This transformation occurs at the end of the story because it signifies the restoration of true identity. In this story, Purbasari is the catalyst for the transformation, where the sincerity and trust that Purbasari provides prove that the authenticity of identity lies in morality, not form or appearance. The motif of transformation conveys the message that identity can be renewed or redeemed through values such as loyalty, sincerity, and moral virtue. In the context of the story, the change from animal to human form not only represents physical restoration, but also symbolizes a process of self-purification and rediscovery of one's true identity. Through this transformation, the main character shows that true humanity is not determined by appearance, but by actions based on love, morality, and sacrifice.

In the same way, in the story of *The Beauty and The Beast*, the motif of transformation also occurs at the conclusion of the narrative, reinforcing disguise as a moral test. The prince's return to human form illustrates that beauty, power, and status are meaningless without kindness and humility. The motif of transformation begins to appear in the dialogue when Beauty expresses her true feelings. Beauty tells Beast not to die and that she wants Beast to live and become her husband. This shows a sincerity that can make Beast transform back into a fully human being, and anthropomorphism confirms that Beast's human nature (love, kindness) during his disguise is the key to transformation. Additionally, this motif of transformation can also be seen in the dialogue where Beast reveals his true identity after he has fully transformed back into a human. Anthropomorphism is used to convey a moral

message, as Beauty judges Beast based on his heart, not his outward appearance, showing that human nature and feelings are more important than physical appearance.

Similarly, in the story of *The Frog Princess*, the motif of transformation appears at the end of the story marking the completion of the princess's journey and the prince's moral test. Vassillia's return to human form occurs only after Prince Ivan demonstrates sincerity, patience, and trust qualities necessary to see beyond her frog-like appearance. The transformation highlights the central message that genuine love and loyalty can reveal one's true identity. This motif is reinforced by anthropomorphism, in which the frog's emotional expressions, such as feelings of offense or hurt, reveal its humanity behind the disguise. Therefore, the transformation depicted in this story symbolizes the revelation of hidden nobility and the recognition of true inner value.

In comparison, the three stories, namely *Lutung Kasarung*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Frog Princess*, show that the motif of transformation not only functions as a narrative element, but also reflects the cultural values of each society. In Indonesian culture, which is the setting for the story of *Lutung Kasarung*, physical changes are often associated with the balance of nature and the consequences of moral actions. Therefore, disguise serves as a process of self-purification before the character is worthy of returning to their original form. Guruminda's transformation into a monkey has strong spiritual and moral significance.

Meanwhile, in European culture, which is the setting for *Beauty and the Beast*, transformation more often contains a universal moral message—that true love sees beyond physical appearance. Disguise here is both psychological and social, highlighting how physical appearance often masks a person's true character. In Russian culture, which is the setting for *The Frog Princess*, this transformation emphasizes the values of patience, courage, and the ability to see hidden goodness. Here, disguise serves not only a moralistic but also a ritualistic purpose, where the hero must prove his worthiness before receiving a reward.

## Conclusion

Anthropomorphism plays an important role in constructing the narratives of these three-fairy tales about identity, disguise, and transformation, as demonstrated by three folk tales: *Lutung Kasarung*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Frog Princess*. All three stories feature main or central characters that are not human. These characters possess human traits, such as speaking, thinking, feeling emotions, and making logical decisions. The non-human forms used in the stories are not merely symbolic devices, but also means of concealing the true identity of the main character, testing moral values in social relationships, and creating a narrative space for character transformation.

In *Lutung Kasarung*, disguise as an animal becomes a way to test love and sincerity. In *Beauty and the Beast*, the terrifying physical form serves as a visual barrier to a noble identity. In *The Frog Princess*, the transformation from animal to human reveals hidden potential that is not immediately apparent. Therefore, anthropomorphism serves as a narrative tool to explore the complexity of human identity, dismantle stereotypes about appearance, and emphasize that a person's true value is not always apparent from their outward appearance. All three show how animal forms or non-human creatures can represent inner conflict, the search for identity, and the journey toward recovery or self-enlightenment.

This study has several limitations. First, the research objects are limited to only three cross-cultural fairy tales, namely *Lutung Kasarung* (Indonesia), *Beauty and the Beast* (France), and *The Frog Princess* (Russia). This means that the results of the analysis do not fully represent the variety of anthropomorphism usage in the wider world of folklore. This study emphasizes the function of anthropomorphism in identity, disguise, and transformation, without examining the aspects of reader reception or the performative context of fairy tales in oral culture. Therefore, further research could expand the scope by adding texts from other cultural traditions, using interdisciplinary methods, or exploring reader responses to understand the extent to which the moral messages and symbols of anthropomorphism are accepted in society.

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