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Amina KHEDER

Title

**The Representation of Arabs and Muslims in American Films : The
Orientalist Discourse in the Technicolor Film *Thousand and One
Nights* (1945) and the Disney Movie *Aladdin* (1992)**

Board of Examiners

- **Zerar Sabrina, MC-A, University of Tizi Ouzou, Chair**
- **Guendouzi Amar, MC-A, University of Tizi Ouzou, Supervisor**
- **Riche Bouteldja, Professor, of Tizi Ouzou, Examiner**

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Abstract

Many critics dealt broadly with orientalism in the Disney adaptation *Aladdin* (1992). However, other adaptations of the tale of *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp* such as *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) were sent into oblivion. Having said that, I humbly attempt to bring up both adaptations together and study profoundly the orientalist discourse in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992). In order to undertake this study, Said's strands concerning orientalism will accompany the bulk of my analysis. Thus, my work is divided into two major components. They respectively revolve around the making of the orientalist discourse and the manifestation of the orientalist discourse in Aladdin's adaptations (*Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992)). The first results of my work demonstrate that the adaptations are the outcome of some cultural and political circumstances. Additionally; they reveal that the orientalist images in the films are produced by virtue of other films such as Arabian Nights' adaptations. The second category of results includes the otherness of the Arab culture and the superiority of the American culture. Finally, it is found out that the obvious celebration of the American culture and the denigration of Arabs and Muslims in *Aladdin* (1992) brought a more *orientalized* image about Arabs and Muslims compared to *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). That is probably owing to the remarkable interference of American politicians in the Middle East during the 1990s. They hired propagandists who used the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992) as a vehicle to facilitate their access to the oil reservoirs in the Gulf region.

General Introduction

Introduction

This dissertation aims at unveiling the ideology behind the Western policies and their disruptive plans. This is why, I opted for two films as a corpus for my dissertation. My purpose is to reveal the orientalist discourse in two adaptations of the story of “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp”, namely the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992) by Ron Clements and John Musker, and the Technicolor film *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) by Alfred E. Green.

Throughout my dissertation, I do not intend to say that the East is perfect and the West is the worst but to show how power and political intentions can distort the representation of a distinctive social group (Arabs and Muslims). It is not reasonable to make the West look flawless and idealist while making the East look Barbaric and fatalist. My intention is to say that the world is not as binary as such but it is rather ambivalent and can stand more diversity.

Misrepresentations about Arabs and Muslims are not new; they were ubiquitous in the profusion of texts produced by European orientalists. Hence, American orientalism, as well as the French and the British orientalism, are closely tinged. As the French and British orientalists recorded the Oriental's life in their travel writings, American propagandists borrowed many paradigms from the earlier orientalists in order to represent the 20th century Arabs. American propagandists vilified Arabs and Muslims by adapting texts such “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp” which were in the hands of the various translations of the earlier European orientalists and adapt them into films.

Many of us have heard about Aladdin and learned that it is an Arab story. Yet this story does not originally spring up from the Oriental heritage. It is tale forged by the French and British orientalists and later adapted by American orientalists into films such as *Thousand and*

One Nights (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992). The latter were utilized as a means by propagandists to celebrate the American culture and demonize Arabs and Muslims. Due to the prominent role that Disney and Hollywood play in the American society and the world at large, the orientalist discourse in these adaptations could have a major effect on the audience rather than the book. American propagandists could silently introduce the image of the bad Arabs and Muslims which had access to every American home. However the degree of orientalism in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) is not similar to *Aladdin* (1992).

Aladdin (1992), which hit the jackpot of the box office sales, rummages in a stream of denigrating stereotypes about Arabs. It is utterly a Disney invention. For instance, it is very easy to distinguish the image of Arab women as victims to Arab men who look for beauty in the blond western women and Arab rulers as despots who hanker after power and accumulating wealth. As a matter of fact, it is true that some Arab Rulers are despots and some Arab women are oppressed by Arab men but what is peculiar is that the film identifies a myriad of Arab and Muslim societies from different spots in the world with a constellation of clichés and stereotypes.

At length, it is perceived that *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) are conspicuously invented by Hollywood. The movie makers did not bother to take details from the original story in the English translation in order to represent Arabs and Muslims; neither did they attempt to give the image about the ordinary Arab. They purposely resorted to orientalist images in the different screen adaptations of the *Thief of Baghdad* and *Sinbad the Sailor*.

Review of the Literature

Most of the critics make it clear that the film is a propagandistic machine which fuels the American imperial projects. They all agree that the film offers stereotypes and racist messages about Arabs and Muslims and embellishes the western American features. Generally speaking, many studies address the issue of binary characterization in *Aladdin* (1992), the Gulf War and the American Foreign Policy.

First, the different physical looks and the representation of the American culture demonstrate that Aladdin and Jasmine in *Aladdin* (1992) wear Western features. The studies focus on the resemblance of Aladdin and Jasmine with white American teenagers and contrast them with the appalling physical features of the Arab-based characters (Cones 2012:25). They reached the fact that Aladdin “*is modeled after*” the famous American actor, Tom Cruise. Besides, his benevolence with the hungry children reflects the hollow behavior of American soldiers with children in hot areas of the world (Wojcik- Andrews 2000: 213).

Concerning the American Foreign policy and *Aladdin* (1992), in his book *The Mouse that Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence* (2010), Henry Giroux associates the despotism of the anti-hero Jafar with the atrocities of Saddam in Iraq and Khomeini in Iran (Giroux 2010:139-140). That is because the images dedicated to the public about the Gulf War already exist in the political context and are transposed to a specific “cultural context”. In other words, the orientalist discourse in *Aladdin* (1992) doesn’t reverse the image of the barbaric Arabs which the American media passed to the Americans via the Gulf war (ibid140).

So as to justify their presence in the Middle East, the American policy makers resorted to the National Security by manufacturing the consent of Americans. They made clear that the

American government share one enemy with the American society which Saddam Hussein which had the destructive Nuclear power. Then, so as to purge their evil, the American policy makers should fight the barbaric Arabs and Muslims.

Through, *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film* (1997), Alan Nadel focalizes his interest on the Nuclear power which was allegedly present in Iraq and the Persian Gulf. He asserts that Jafar's danger in *Aladdin* (1992) lies in his possession of the Nuclear power. In order to illustrate his argument, he manifests a picture from the film in which "*Jafar swells to an apex dark energy surrounded by the halo of an atomic insignia.*" (quoted in Studlar 1997: 193). On the other hand, he also hints at presence of allusions to the American culture in the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992) (quoted in *ibid*: 184 -193)

As regards *Thousand and One Nights* (1945), there is a remarkable scarcity of studies concerning this adaptation. It is neither studied in academic arenas or compared with any work or any other adaptation. The available studies cast light on anachronism in the film, the modern "*twentyish Aladdin*" and the "*bespectacled Abdullah*" who pronounces taboo words and uses a contemporary American slang. These ideas will be useful to reveal modernity and Americanness of the heroes who seem to be more civilized than the other characters.

Issue and Working Hypotheses

It is noticed from the aforementioned in the section above that all the studies are separate political commentaries and they all revolve around one claim. I mean they all converge in the fact that the film reflects the American Foreign Policy and that there are bad Arabs and good Americans in the films. However the comments contrived are purely structuralist and political in

the way that they dealt only with the structure of the film and its relation with the American history in articles which do not exceed a couple of pages.

What was also missing in the studies about *Aladdin* (1992) is that, firstly, it is not noticed how the process of bringing the tale from the written scrip to the screen and how the orientalist images in the films also came into being .I mean critics did not pay heed to the evolution of the orientalist discourse in the films through original, literary texts and other films. One of my hypothesis is that the classification of characters: the bad Arabs and the good Americans is borrowed from some *Arabian Nights*' filmic adaptations and the English translators of *Arabian Nights* .I also assume that film makers produce the misrepresentation of the Orient and Orientals we have in Aladdin's adaptations by distorting facts and intertextuality constructing from the book of *Thousand and One Nights*.

Secondly, the studies did not give major importance to the representation of the American culture, its ideals and its correlation with the American politics .There are many factors rather than the political background that can influence films and shape new meanings. It is only evoked that there are allusions to the American culture without putting these allusions into context. I mean they reinforced the political contexts and disregard the social and cultural contexts. Moreover, it is not shown how the American culture is celebrated through both physical features and the American arts. Furthermore, other orientalist ingredients like the misconception of oriental women are excluded from research arenas. That being said, coupled with the ideas evoked in the review of literature, I will hopefully attempt to bridge the gap concerning the studies of Aladdin's adaptations.

The new thing about this humble thesis is that I will juxtapose the study of the orientalist discourse in *Aladdin* (1992) with another adaptation of the story of “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ” which is *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). So, in order to study the representation of Arabs and Muslims in the films, I will dig into a constellation of texts, circumstances and other film which clustered to forge the orientalist discourse in Technicolor film *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992). Depending on these instruments, I will simultaneously measure the degree of orientalism in both films and prove within each instrument that the former adaptation is more *Orientalized* than the latter one.

Method and Materials

The Method:

Before embarking on the analysis of the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992) and the Technicolor film *Thousand and One Nights* (1945), I need, first of all to set the grounds on which I will build up my arguments and assumptions for the subsequent chapters. My paper is about the Orientalist discourse. Therefore, it is of relevance to bring definitions about orientalism.

Orientalism started as ideas, thoughts and a branch of study which was later practiced by politicians for imperial reasons. It is “*a style of thought, a discipline* ” (Said 1978:2) which divides the world geographically into two binary entities: the East and the West (ibid: 46) Orientalists abide by an ideology based on “a system of myths and lies ” (ibid: 6). Orientalists speak for the Orientals (ibid: 65). They represent them by underlying epistemological and ontological features (ibid: 4); and by this they are “*Orientalizing the Orient*” (ibid: 176) . They exhibit and disseminate biased knowledge about the Orientals in order to exert power over their

lands. In Said's terms, orientalism "*is a western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient*" (ibid:3)

Orientalism is after all a discourse .The last definition dovetails with Foucault's definition of discourse which is,

"A language practice: that is, language as it is used by various constituencies (the law, medicine, the church, for example) for purposes to do with power relationships between people ." (quoted in Wolfreys , Robbins, Womack 2006: 34)

As for American orientalism, it is inherited from the British and French imperialism but it is a trifle different from European orientalism. The difference lies in the fact that, American orientalism is "*based on abstractions*" and it is not as direct as European orientalism (Said 1978:4). American politicians did not encroach upon territories in the Middle East using coercive measures; they rather exerted their hegemony over them by consent (Said 1979:37).

American politicians cling mightily to the paradigms of American orientalism. In order to implement their imperial plans by consent, they have been relentlessly preaching their idealistic tenets underlying freedom and democracy to save the world from a group of others that they themselves design .To attain their goals swiftly and surely, they employed Disney and Hollywood to etch in the minds of the masses a biased knowledge about Arabs and Muslims.

In order to undertake this research, there is an urgent need to resort to two main materials: the Technicolor film *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992).As regards, *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) is a "Technicolor fantasy film ", directed by Alfred E. Green starred Cornel Wilde (Aladdin), Phil Silvers (Abdullah), Evelyn Keyes (The woman genie) and Adele Jergens (Princess Armina). The story of this adaptation is about Aladdin of Cathay, a vagabond singer, who hangs out with his friend Abdullah, the thief, and singing for beauty and beautiful women.

Aladdin challenges the irrational rule in Baghdad which stipulates that if any man attempts to have a gaze upon the princess, he would lose his limbs and limbs. The courageous Aladdin furtively gets into the carriage of the princess and successfully convinces her to unveil for him. He then discovers her breathtaking beauty which captivates his heart and immediately has a crush on her. He sneaks into the palace to see her again, but unluckily he is arrested by the guards and gets thrown into the dungeon. Later in the story, The old magician led Aladdin and Abdullah to the Cave of Wonders and because Aladdin refuses to give him the lamp, he remains stuck with Abdullah in the cave .Suddenly the red stunning genie woman Babs saves him and conjures up Aladdin whatever he warrants.

Thanks to the genie, Aladdin is able to return to the palace but this time he is disguised as the prince of Hindustan. In the meantime, the greedy Sultan's Brother " Haji " plans to overthrow his brother. Haji injures his brother with the help of the grand vizier "Abu Hassan " and gets disguised by wearing the Sultan's outfit. He promises the vizier to marry him the princess but as soon as he encounters a wealthier suitor who is the Prince of Hindustan (Aladdin in disguise), he changes his mind and offers Armina to Aladdin .However, the jealousy of the deeply enamored genie "Babs " leads her to stop Aladdin's wedding with princess Armina. In the midst of the wedding's ceremony, she puts him back into his rugs. But, at last, she hopefully assists Aladdin to get back to princess Armina and saves the Sultan who is trapped in the dungeon.

The second material is the film adaptation *Aladdin* (1992).The latter is Disney movie which reunites many genres like: musical, fantasy, family, adventure, animation and Comedy. The film is directed and produced by Ron Clements and John Musker. The protagonists: the Genie, Aladdin and Jasmine are respectively voiced by Robin William, Scott Wingers and Linda Larkin.

The story of the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992) is constructed around a “street rat ” whose name is Aladdin.

Aladdin in this film is a loafer who wanders with his companion, the troublesome monkey Abu. Aladdin is a thief but he “steals only what he can’t afford ” .He lives in the dangerous “barbaric home ” Agrabah. The rules which govern his country and the insolence of his countrymen sharpen his suffering and make it hard for him to stand life in Agrabah. On the other hand, Princess Jasmine does not cherish her life in the palace where they dictate for her what to do and where to go. The suffocating rules which compel her to take someone she is not in love with lead her to escape from the palace and look for freedom. After she runs out from the palace, Jasmine finds herself in the market where she meets Aladdin. Hence, they both instantly fall for each other.

Simultaneously, the disdainful grand vizier is seeking Aladdin “the diamond of the rough. ” The old magician who is Jafar in disguise takes Aladdin to the Cave of Wonder where he mistakenly rubs the lamp .Then, because he refuses to give him the lamp, Aladdin is left alone in the cave. Luckily, the giant fun -making genie pops up from an old lamp. The genie grants Aladdin three wishes that change Aladdin and Jasmine’s lives and free the genie at last. Thanks to the Genie, Prince Ali Babwa (Aladdin in disguise) enters the palace as a royalty suitor. Jasmine does not approve in the first place but afterwards she discovers that Ali Babwa is the man she loves in the marketplace.

At length, with the help of the Genie and by virtue of Aladdin’s intelligence, Aladdin saves Agrabah and the princess from the grand vizier Jafar , and demolishes his evil magical power

forever. Eventually, Aladdin, marries Princess Jasmine, frees the genie and they all live together happily hereafter.

Research Outline:

So as to undertake my research whose objective is to unravel the orientalist discourse in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992), I suggest the following outline.

This humble dissertation is made up of three chapters. Many theorists maintain that the best approach for studying films based on narratives can be best understood through other determining circumstances. Hence, in the first chapter I will shed light on the contextual background by focusing on some facets such as the geopolitical and socio-cultural contexts. The second chapter will be chiefly premised upon the making of the orientalist images in the films. It will be constructed around the relationship of the Aladdin's adaptations with their prior literary work (the book of *Thousand and One Nights*) and other the filmic adaptations of *The Thief of Baghdad* and *Sinbad the Sailor* tales.

The third chapter is devised into two lengthy sections. In the penultimate section of this work, I will tackle the superiority of the western -based characters and the celebration of the American culture in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992). As for the last section, detailed descriptions are conducted to display the orientalist ingredients in Aladdin's adaptations including the otherness of the Arab-based characters ,exoticism of the setting and eroticization of Oriental women in both the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992) and the Technicolor film *Thousand and One Nights* (1945).

CHAPTER I

The Influence of the Geopolitical and Socio-cultural Contexts on

Thousand and One Nights (1945) and Aladdin (1992)

“Texts have ways of existing that even in their most rarefied form are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place, and society. In short, they are in the world, and hence worldly. Whether a text is preserved or put aside for a period, whether it is on a library shelf or not, whether it is considered dangerous or not.”

From *World, the Text, and the Critic* (1975),

Introduction:

For semioticians, films are considered as types of texts. Said tells us that the text bonds with the context and coexists with the world. We cannot construe the meaning of texts (films) unless we locate them within their contexts. As noted in the epigraph, texts “*are enmeshed in circumstance, time, place, and society.*” They are characterized by worldliness which “*gives more seriousness to the text*” (quoted in Ashcroft 2001:48). It does not treat the text as miscellaneous fragments which have nothing to do with the world. In other words, texts don’t have an arbitrary relationship with the world to which they belong (ibid). Therefore, it is significant to study the context in order to understand the representations of Arabs and Muslims.

Thousand and One Nights (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) are received by different societies, cultures and they come to the world at different times and in different places. Accordingly, different contexts offer different adaptations and produce various meanings. The context influenced the representation of Muslims and Arabs in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) which are forged by dint of geopolitical and socio-cultural backgrounds. These factors led to draw the image of the scary Muslims in *Aladdin* (1992) and the exotic Arabs in the *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). In the first, the film makers maximize the element of scare, fear and fanaticism with the *Orientalized* characters while the latter is marked by different and ambivalent images about Arabs and Muslims.

Within this chapter, we will learn about the general images produced by the context and why these images are produced. In order to do so, I will put the movies in their political and cultural contexts during the 1940s and the 1990s.

SECTION I: The Geopolitical Context

Politics uses texts as a vehicle to fashion out their dominant discourse, to establish their empires and to exert their hegemony on the world. Robert Stam evinces that when he speaks about the European Empires .He claims that “*the various European empires embodied themselves and projected their power through texts, not only through political treatises... but also through novels and, later, films.*” (Stam 2006:36).

Camera and Ideology conspire to make out of the films an orientalist product. In the French journal *Cahiers du Cinema*, films are deemed as an “ideological apparatus ” (Stam 2005:190) .They reflect a dominant ideology because they do not echo reality .For example, in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) film makers do not portray Arabs and Muslims as they really are but how they want them to be represented according to Ideology. The films respond to the impulses of ideology and satisfy the imperialistic needs. In order to justify their interventions in the Middle East, American politicians exhibit knowledge which celebrates the Western culture and demonizes Arab societies and their cultures.

Since empires transmit their ideologies through films and texts, I will examine whether the discourse reflects Aladdin’s adaptations. The purpose of this section is to find out why and how certain images about Arabs are produced by the dominant ideology and how they occur in the films of *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992).

Thousand and One Nights (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) were released concomitantly during turning points in American history. The 1940’s mapped the floor for the inception of the American empire. Later at the beginning of the 1990s , the US government’s interference in Iraq reached its peak and its presence in the Middle East had resonated more than ever. Their

mounting interest in Gulf Oil led to the eruption of the war on terror against Arabs and Muslims and draw different images of Arabs in both films.

American Orientalism is associated with geopolitics since it is involved with foreign policy, economy, and power relations with the geographical distinction (East and West). American empire fuels its economy by depending on the Gulf Oil. The geopolitical context has offered to the adaptation *Aladdin* (1992) two antagonistic images about Arab rulers and American politicians. On the one hand, we perceive the image of the barbaric rulers and the atrocities committed by Saddam during the Gulf War (1990-1991). On the other hand, there are the American politicians and the American based characters who share a common quest which calls for restoring freedom in the Middle East.

1. American Empire and Hollywood

Imperialism is linked to geopolitics since it is to have control directly or indirectly over the economy and the politics of a foreign country in order to acquire high profits and justify their authority over the world:

“the policy of extending the control or authority over foreign entities as a means of acquisition and/or maintenance of empires, either through direct territorial control or through indirect methods of exerting control on the politics and/or economy of other countries. ” (Frick, Janari, Weldon, Proctor, Wray 2006: 235)

Hollywood orientalism is tinged with American imperialism. Hollywood Discourse and the Political Discourse in USA work in *tandem*. Hollywood history correlates with the history of the American foreign policy (Blood and Oil: 2007). It has inexorably misrepresented what the American politics demonizes and embellishes what policy makers advocate. “*They spring from the same DNA* ” (cited in *ibid*: 2007) as the president of “the *Motion Picture Association of America*” announces. Hollywood has always echoed the American interventionist policy. It

espouses its political tenets and disparages: the Nazis, the Japanese, the Soviets, the Arabs and Muslims: *Asians as “sneaky, the Blacks as “Sambo”, Italians as “Mafioso ”, the Irish man as the “drunk, the Jew as “greedy; the Indian as “the savage and the Hispanic as “greasy ”.* (Shaheen 2000:25).

The power of Hollywood manufactures the consent of the masses about the American politicians’ attitude towards their foreign policy. It disseminates biased political, knowledge rather than displaying the real ,objective knowledge: Hollywood influences audiences and directs their opinions and behaviors towards political affairs:

"You find that there are different media which do different things, like the entertainment/Hollywood, soap operas, and so on, or even most of the newspapers in the country .They are directing the mass audience, " (Chomsky 1997:1)

Both Hollywood and American politics intersect in the fact that both of them project the orientalist discourse and promote orientalist caricatures about the Arabs .The orientalist representation of Arabs and Muslims in Hollywood is strikingly denigrating. It obliterates the Arabs and Muslims in films and movies and dodges all people from the Middle East in the same direction. Jack Shaheen, an emeritus professor, says in the documentary film *Reel Bad Arabs* (2006) that Arabs were mostly portrayed and treated as “*a lesser breed*”. He asserts that Arabs and Muslims have been vilified the way the Jews were by the Nazis, “ *Arabs are the most maligned group in the history of Hollywood. They are portrayed, basically, as sub-human untermenschen, a term used by Nazis to vilify Gypsies and Jews. These images have been with us for more than a century.*”

Jack Shaheen also posits in *Reel Bad Arabs* (2006) that the negative images about the Arabs bear political motives: the US support of Israel against Palestinians, the Iranian hostages

and the Oil Embargo .Concerning the US support of Israel, the American government vindicated the legitimacy of the State of Israel (1948). However; the USA continues waging wars and aiding EU and Israel militarily and monetarily so that they would provide assistance and endorse their interference in the world. Between the 1970s and the 1980s the USA tightened its alliance with Israel and it was the best ally (Ron 2003:140) who served to uproot communism and later dictators in the Gulf War.

2 . The Gulf War and the American Interest in Oil

Aladdin (1992) was released along similar lines with the events of the Gulf War (1990-1991). The latter witnessed a clash between the despotic Arab rulers(Saddam Hussein) and the American government who seeks to keep peace in Baghdad .This image of Arab rulers and the American government is transposed to *Aladdin* (1992) in which the American heroes could restore freedom and get rid of the despotism of the Arab ruler (Jafar) in Agrabah. But before talking about these images, I should expand on the relation of the images with the American interest in the Gulf oil.

After dismantling the USSR, the US government fetched other grounds where to lay the foundations of its imperialist enterprise. The destination was the Gulf region where oil, the most precious natural resource, is hidden. American economy depends mostly on the oil. In Clare's documentary *Blood and Oil* (2007), George Bush publicly states that "America is addicted to oil, ". In actual terms, the American interest in the Gulf Oil is not an updated topic. The history of the US control of the Gulf economy and the politics in the Gulf region paralleled with the history of Oil discovery: "oil was first discovered in Iran in 1908 and later in Iraq in 1927...Oil reserves

in the Gulf region represent today about two-thirds of the world proven oil reserves. ” (Rabie 2004:2)

The US policy makers played a paternalistic role in the Middle East. It supposedly defended the economy of the Gulf region while in fact it protected its share of oil. In the first place, Eisenhower and Truman doctrines aimed at protecting the Middle Eastern oil and keep it out of The USSR touch (Blood and Oil, 2007). Later during the Iran-Iraq war (1988), the Iraqi oil was protected from Iran .Afterwards, it was borne out that Saudi Arabia has the biggest reserves; this is why every American president maintained a good relationship with Saudi Arabia. (ibid)

In 1945 Roosevelt met the Saudi king Abdel Aziz Ibn Saud who entitled the US government to preserve the Saudi oil reserves (ibid).The same process was upheld when Nixon Doctrine (1969) or Twine Pillars stipulates that Iran and Saudi Arabia should stand against USSR (Little 2008: 5). Then, in order to guarantee its entrenching hegemony in Saudi Arabia, the American policy makers suggested to Saudi Arabia after the Gulf War that their deterrents should urgently stay in Saudi Arabia (Blood and Oil, 2007). Their warrant was presumably to provide immunity for the Saudi oil and to hamper any possible attacks from Saddam Hussein (ibid). Indeed, one may get the impression that the US policy makers have aspired vehemently to oil and stalked markets where they could possibly have the biggest share of oil.

During the Gulf War (1990-1991), the American policy makers escalated its ongoing interference in the Gulf Region .They took it as their duty to defend Kuwait and Saudi Arabia from Saddam Hussein, “*the mad man* ” and “*the butcher of Baghdad* ”. (Said1993:357). The Operation Desert Storm, comprising 500000 Americans (McAlister 2005:235), was launched as a shield to confront Saddam’s despotism.

America has been playing the role of a policeman, instructing people and nations, guide them where to head on, mending their drawbacks, it is as Edward said puts “*a righter of wrongs*” (Said 1993:3). It imposes the laws of order and if uncivilized nations think to transgress the laws, they will have to face severe sanctions. Once a friend and an ally to the USA, Saddam Hussein turned to be a dictator, a villain and a “*Bad Arab*”. Iraq, once Mesopotamia “the cradle of civilizations”, grew an uncivilized nation where “*Arabs are thought of as camel riding, terroristic*” and are “*damned if we lose them to communism.*” (Said 1978:108). Hence, it is imperative for the Middle East to be controlled and its “*Undeserved Wealth*” (ibid) should be immune and meticulously taken care of under the western eyes.

Bush made Americans and the whole world believe that peoples are in jeopardy and the Gulf war is an attempt to make things in the right order for the sake of peace. Barnett said, “*The goal of US foreign policy is to bring about a world increasingly subject to the rule of law. But it is the United States which must organize the peace.*” (quoted in Said 1993:346). Consequently, they must abide by a New World Order and cleanse the world from Evil dictators like Saddam Hussein. The USA seemed to forget their support for Saddam during the Iranian War despite the despotism practiced (ibid:157). American government alleged they were protecting human rights while, in fact, they were protecting the Saudi and the Kuwaiti oil from Iraq as Iraqi oil was protected from Iran. Nations from the East did not have the right to stand peer to peer with the United States (Lockman 2009:133).

In the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992), the Western-based characters claim superiority over the Arab-based characters. That echoes the American policy makers with the Middle East and other parts of the world. The policy makers in the USA changed their discourse vis-à-vis Saddam and decided to put an end to his atrocities. American media also espoused the cause of the

American politicians. The following extract produced by an American journalist shares the same discourse about Saddam and Iraq:

“No sooner had the Arab/ Muslim World said farewell to the wrath and passion of Ayatollah Khomeini’s crusade than another contender rose in Baghdad...Saddam Hussein...He came from a brittle land, a frontier country between Persia and Arabia with little claim to culture and books and grand ideas .The new contender was a despot, a ruthless skilled warden .” (Quoted in Said 1993:359)

The journalist’s description of Baghdad is utterly *othered* and estranged: Arabia and Persia. It is reminiscent of the despot Jafar and his “faraway and barbaric ” country “ Agrabah ”, the exotic homeland of Arabs in the adaptation of *Aladdin* (1992).The journalist describes Baghdad as if it is somewhere on Earth (an exotic place).Saddam is described as an uneducated despot with “no claim to culture ” as Jafar. He is an outcast coming from nowhere “from a brittle land. ” He says Saddam is not endowed with grand ideas. Here, they are probably hinting at The Human Rights and Democracy which embody the mottos of the western politics.

The grand ideas that the journalist hints at are also present in *Aladdin* (1992) in which Jasmine, Aladdin and the genie manifest humanist behaviors and conspicuously look for freedom in the dangerous Agrabah. These grand ideas also came along in *Aladdin* (1992) with the principle character the Genie. He turns himself into the conservative American politician William Buckley when he recites the rules to Aladdin. The three Rules are issued by the Genie as follows:

GENIE: Ah, rule number one: I can't kill anybody. So don't ask.

Rule two: I can't make anyone fall in love with anyone else

Rule three: I can't bring people back from the dead. It's not a pretty picture.

The rules include three themes: freedom of speech, peace and humanism. This is exactly what the Western politicians ostensibly call for. From what he said, it is discernible that the

American policy makers claim that they are peaceful makers and not terrorist fanatics. They don't use their power to kill as autocratic eastern rulers do .The bearer of the orientalist discourse (Aladdin) eventually frees the Genie. When the lamp is in Jafar' s hands ,he thinks to transform himself into a genie to get rid of Aladdin while he is faced by the intelligence of Aladdin .By using his wit ,the western incarnated character ,Aladdin, overthrows the Arab character, the despotic vizier Jafar .

The Genie is the shadow of the American Foreign policy too. He passes ideals through American icons from different periods of time in the American history and its political attitudes. The Genie represents the powerful America which seems to be the Nanny state with the civilians all over the world. The Genie in the Disney movie embodies the powerful American politics whose power allows them to engender rules of order That is ,it is the western duty to beam out the torch of democracy to the dark arenas of the East .By the same token, the Genie's power symbolizes an orientalist western discourse: "*Teaching the Orient the meaning of liberty, which is an idea that Chateaubriand and everyone after him believed that Orientals, and especially Muslims, knew nothing about .*" (ibid:172)

In the songs of "*Prince Ali Babwa* " and "*Friend like me* ", Aladdin incarnates the image of the western ruler. The genie bestows him also a boundless power which always gives its fruits. He this western hero (Mark 2007:100) who never fails for he fought for a noble cause .He brought down Barbarians and

He faced the galloping hordes
A hundred bad guys with swords
who sent those goons to their lords?

The movie makers give Prince Ali Babwa who is Aladdin in disguise, military power too. They bring up words like ammunition in the camp, loot and sometimes showing bombs with Jafar and Iago too .It is like Aladdin as a prince is given a mission to lead a war against political criminals and change some institutions within a state.

Concerning Jafar who epitomizes the image of Saddam Hussein as a despotic ruler, he reveres power: “I wish to be the most powerful sorcerer in the world. ” He employs it in his misdeeds and misconducts, however, the power of the genie is reinvested by Aladdin in good deeds and in releasing the others from the evil of Jafar. Actually, Aladdin does not solely benefit from the powers of the genie but he relies mostly on his wit and intelligence as well. Aladdin has no material or supernatural powers like Jafar but he could defeat him in the end. He lost everything to his dumbness and ignorance of *savoir-faire*. When Aladdin is about to be stabbed by Jafar, he was able to direct his power to that of the genie when Jafar was the master of the lamp.

Aladdin is not possessed with power. He wants only to win Jasmine’s heart. The lamp and its magic powers cannot really serve him .Jafar uses the magic lamp and the powerful genie but these powers are destructive even to Jafar himself because he is not as brilliant as Aladdin. He takes advantage of Jafar ’s obsession with power and tricks him into wishing to be an all-powerful genie. He is thereby enslaved and imprisoned in the lamp with his parrot Iago.

At the end of the movie, the kingdom needs a brilliant boy like Aladdin; it needs a western – based character ruler not an Arab dictator Jafar “the *butcher of Agrabah* ” who is reminiscent of “the *butcher of Baghdad* ” Saddam Hussein .They both had the same end by the American policy

makers and the western based character Aladdin .The Sultan tells Aladdin, “A person of your unimpeachable moral character is exactly what this kingdom needs. ”

SECTION II: The Socio-Cultural Context

The American politics is entangled with the American society and the American culture. Bush involves Americans in the political affairs and instigates them to back him up in order to secure their national interests by interfering in other countries. On August 8, 1990, prior to Iraqi’s invasion of Kuwait, the American president George Bush addressed the Americans seeking their support .He said, “We should stand up for what is right and condemn what is wrong ”. His discourse was full of attractive words like democracy to gain American’s sympathy for their government. As a consequence, Americans were left out in a constant fear from the others.

What shapes the opinion of a society is the knowledge presented by media which is waged by the powerful states such as the United States .This leads me to point out at the binary distinction of knowledge that Said evokes in his book *Orientalism*: political knowledge and pure knowledge (Said 1978:9) .Having said that, the American policy makers hired propagandists in media .They proliferated misinformation to the public about the Gulf war which made of it “the most covered war in history. ” (Said1993:366).Nevertheless, they diffused a biased political knowledge and disclosed the genuine pure knowledge .They obscured many issues like the human losses amid civilians (Zinn 2005:7) and they veiled the huge profits some nations gained at the cost of natives and civilians (Said1993:358) The reason why such images are ubiquitous in the American media is because American policy makers orient the behavior of American public opinion and manufacture their consent. The American government received significant support from the public as an approval to the American Foreign policy (Zinn 2005: 622).

There is a clear misconception which was brought about the Arab culture and Islam and how this image came into being in the films. In *Aladdin* (1992), there is a disparity between two totally different societies: Muslims and Americans with two antagonistic cultures (the civilized superior and the barbaric inferior cultures. This hierarchical classification of culture is designed by American politicians who celebrate the American way of life and subordinate other groups who coexist with the native Americans in the American society. This collision between two contradictory cultures put the Arab immigrants out of the American cultural scope.

1 .The American Society, Arab Immigrants and the American Culture

As matter of fact, texts in our case films also play a role in shaping the receiver's opinion about the world and "construct our behavior " (Chandler 2001: 209). Our attitude mirrors what we have read and seen in the profusion of texts which are present in media (ibid). Film makers offer texts in which they pass codes and leave it up to the readers to decipher and frame meanings. But the latter can be sometimes manufactured and ready-made so that viewers would conclude only one guided meaning .Thus, our conception of the world as receivers of the text can yield to texts which can also speak on the behalf of ideology (ibid).

The Gulf War prompted biased knowledge about the Arab culture and Islam in *Aladdin* (1992).This knowledge triggered anger and fear from Arabs and Muslims in the American society which is the melting pot of different ethnicities .In fact, nearly no study has skipped the racism of the opening song in *Aladdin* (1992) wherein the barbarism of "the demonic Arab culture " is hideously revealed (Giroux 2010: 110).Critics have brought up *ad nauseam* the racist lines against which the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee of Arab immigrants protested (ibid). Jack Shaheen also vehemently criticizes the racist lyrics in his

documentary film *Reel Bad Arabs* (2006). He wonders how such lines could be released and how can someone with only “a molecule of intelligence ” can place words like “cutting ears ” and “the barbaric home ” to depict Arabs.

Through *Aladdin* (1992) American politics passes racist messages about the danger of Arabs and Muslims .Even before the lyrics were aired to the public, the lyricist suggested substitute lines. That means, they knew the lyrics may raise clamors .This is why, the lyrics were accordingly changed but still present on CD release. The line which goes like: “Where they cut off your ear if they don’t like your face ” is replaced with “Where it’s flat and immense/ And the heat is intense ” but the committee was still unsatisfied because the line: “It’s barbaric but hey it’s home ” is still there (Giroux 2010: 105).

Howard Zinn, an American historian, contends that politicians employ xenophobia against immigrants by inventing or “*exaggerating their dangers* ”. He argues that this axis of fear is fake, imaginary and forged by the US government to camouflage its flaws and turn the attention into Arabs and Muslims. Howard Zinn quotes in his book what a citizen American said about the American policy makers: “*They want us to look at our government as great, powerful and forever right* ”.

During the first Gulf War (1990-1991), rising numbers migrated and the US hosted them as refugees. By 1990s the number of US white immigrants dropped down to 50 percent, while it represented 90 percent of the US immigrants in 1970 (McAlister 2005:247).The United States is a melting pot of immigrants from all over the world. America “the New World ”, has always been a home for the wretched of the earth and a haven for political refugees who sought an outlet for their pathetic plight. As Etienne Balibar professes: “*Immigrants appear as the result of*

colonization and decolonization ” (quoted in *ibid*: 235). People from different spots in world escaped wars and the miserable situation in their countries and headed to America to hopefully flee oppression and mellow their infliction.

Immigrants fled subjugation in their countries albeit they faced other issues in the host country. This has sharpened inexorably their predicament in the US where “*slaves, servants, laborers and poor immigrants played an important yet unacknowledged role* ” as Said notes in his lecture *Clash of Civilizations* (1996) . Immigration is often strikingly split into two distinctive categories: The white Americans and the colored immigrants .Consequently, immigrants were to be pushed to the periphery and the whites in gear controlling the center.

The political discourse in the nineties and before the nineties culminated the growing hostility against Arabs, Muslims or people who look like them. The xenophobic tension heightened during the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979. Between August 1991 and the outbreak of the Persian Gulf war in January 1991, it was reported that forty hate crimes were committed against Arabs (Singh: 11-12):

In Los Angeles, fires destroyed the businesses of a Lebanese-American and an Iranian Jew. In Cincinnati, a store owned by an Arab-American was firebombed. In New York, ten men with a bottle beat a man who looked Arab on the subway. In Baltimore, four or five men yelling "filthy Arab" attacked and broke the car window (*ibid*)

In this respect, it is eminent to bring up the notion of cultural neutrality. Some European immigrants abandon their language and tradition and embrace the American culture .As a result, they were welcome to the American society. However the skin color of the Arab and colored immigrants made it harder for them to assimilate and adapt to the Western culture. They are still considered as the different strangers and *others* even if they were American citizens (Holtzman 2000:23).This assimilation sharpens the dilemma of immigrants ,their cultural crisis and

positions them in a liminal space incapable of belonging to either cultures but stuck in the middle:

"...a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once...It is not the Colonialist Self or the Colonized Other, but the disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness" (Bhabha 1994:117)

The American government did not encourage the dialogue between cultures and the coexistence of civilizations in a multicultural America. It was assumed that there is a clash of civilizations and in order for them to survive, immigrants should follow the mainstream; that is of the western culture which is whiter and superior. They should assimilate, melt, or turn white and disappear (Fanon1986: xxi).

Multiculturalism encourages cultural diversity and tolerates ethnic differences .It gives the right for minorities to express themselves. Opponents of multiculturalism protested that it goes against the American values and their way of life. It also contradicts what the founding fathers called for such as the pursuit of happiness and uniting all Americans under common principles. The founding father insisted that America and Americans should share the same values and one united country because America belongs to people who, "*descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs.*" (quoted in Gordon 2009:40)

Stuart Hall, a sociologist and a scholar in the field of cultural studies, defines culture as set of values shared by a society which agrees on common meanings (Hall 1997:2) .He sees that societies are different yet they are not classified strangely as *others*. They are different in particular ways and the aspects of difference are that they have their specific language, body language and other signs of common meanings (ibid). Hall makes clear that "*Meaning is what*

gives sense of our own identity, of who we are and with whom we belong ” (ibid: 3). American film makers in Aladdin’s adaptations reduced the matrix of meanings that culture may convey and represent the Arabs and Muslim as a single social group who understands nothing but the language of violence as in *Aladdin* (1992).

Raymond Williams, one of the earlier critics in cultural studies, maintains that culture is political and that politics is cultural (quoted in Barker 2000:59). He underscores the fact that culture is ordinary and not superior. He also makes clear that “*every human society has its own shape and its own purposes* ”(quoted in ibid) . Everyone may have access to culture as it is not destined to a certain group of people. Williams defines culture: “*it is a whole way of life, and the arts are part of a social organization which economic change clearly radically affects.* ” (quoted in Highmore 2002:93). Thus, Culture is both “*a whole way of life* ” and group of arts but it can be conditioned by economy as well.

So as to justify their political hegemony, the American orientalist trivialize the culture of different social groups. Whenever the American politicians decide to wage a war, they ascribe it to national security and safeguarding the “*American way of life* ”. They claim that there “*is a hierarchy of races and civilizations, and that we belong to the superior race and civilization ...and it underlines our right to direct the rest of humanity* ” (quoted in Said1993: 17).Despite the latter, scant voices were hardly heard from the American community to protest against their policy makers. An American bitterly questioned:

“Where were you Mr. Bush when Iraq was killing its people in gas? Why until the recent crisis, was it business as usual with Saddam, the man you now call a Hitler? Is the American “way of life that you say my son is risking his life for the continued “right ” of Americans to consume 25 to 30 percent of the world’s oil? (Zinn 2005:585)

Thereby, the minority in the west should protect the majority in the East. Edward Said in his lecture on *the Clash of Civilizations* (1996) describes the dominating culture which imposes its monopoly on the American society saying that: “*There is an official culture, a culture of priests, academics, and the state. It provides definitions of patriotism, loyalty, boundaries and what I’ve called belonging .It is this official culture that speaks in the name of the whole.* In *Aladdin* (1992), the American film makers discriminate “*the set of values* ” that the Orientals enjoy. They did not consider culture as an ordinary or a way of life of specific social groups with distinctive features. They made a biased classification of culture: the superior culture for the civilized western characters (Aladdin, Jasmine and the Genie)and the barbaric Arab-based characters.

Speaking about culture which stands for arts, the characters of Abdullah and the Genie are respectively the voices of the twentieth century men in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) .Each character represents the culture of their period of history. This is because film makers insert in films events, celebrities, cartoons and specific American phrases which characterize the American culture, the American way of life and other specific western-based physical features .The Genie in *Aladdin* (1992) evokes many images which are typically taken from the American culture such as the famous American comedians from different eras and modern cartoons namely snow white, goofy, Sebastian, Mickey Mouse, Pinocchio and other twentieth century words such as: Cadillac, Yahoo and pizza.

Along similar lines, Abdullah in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) utters some modern words such as: television and camera. Nobody among the Arab characters has a clue of what he talks about. He leaves the two Arabs bewildered by his speech and manners. He uses slang words for instance when two Arabs bowed to salute him, he says: “*zut, give me some skin .*”

Noteworthy, the Arabs in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) do not belong to the same historical period as the western-based characters. As a consequence, the movie makers engendered a disparity between modernity and backwardness: the modern western characters who mock the Arab life and the Arab backward characters who look like fools and constantly astonished by modernity .The western- based actors Aladdin, Abdullah and Jasmine sound like the modern orientalists who travelled to the Middle East in the modern times and found out that the Orient has not developed yet .It has just stayed there at the time of the Abbasids Empire, its barbaric rulers and their meek subjects.

Consequently, the western-based characters set them free and brought modernity to the Arab Land. By doing so, the film makers Americanized the film adaptations which are supposed to convey the Oriental culture and claim superiority over the other culture. This issue will be studied in details in the second chapter in the way that protagonists are Americanized and the Arab-based characters are treated as parodies.

2. The American Culture and Islam in *Aladdin* (1992) and *Thousand and One Nights* (1945)

The stereotypes in the films arouse stereotypes linked with Islamic Laws. In order to vilify the Arab culture in *Aladdin* (1992), the film makers like American orientalists demonize Islam .Images of violence and bigotry are omnipresent in the bulk of *Aladdin* (1992). Defamation and hate towards Islam is easily noticed in the discourse of characters. The film makers in the movies debunk Islam and underestimate its ethics. They show a brutal and an evil depiction of Islam and the one billion of Muslims scattered all around the world and reduce Islam to few negative images.

Indeed Islam did not remain untainted by the orientalist discourse. The derogatory discourse about Islam has been perceptibly growing in the span of the centuries. There is an unreasonable hate and phobic feelings against Islam. Western orientalists harbor fathomless grudge against Islam and Muslims .They associate everything evil to Islam and Muslims whenever they discuss subjects related to culture, civilization, and women related issues, oppression, and danger.

Politicians in the West associate Islam with Arabs, Orientals, and Middle East even if the Muslim is not an Arab and the Arab is not a Muslim. This is because their interests dwell in countries where Islam is embraced by the majority of the community. They do not care if they are not Muslims or whether they hold American or European nationalities .The reputation of Prophet Muhammad was tarnished. He was considered as an imposter and a false prophet who professes that Muslim's task is to rule over the world. They claim that Muhammed forged Islam; this is why orientalists came up with the term Mohammedanism:

The Moslem religion, called Islam, began in the seventh century .It was started by a wealthy businessman of Arabia; called Mohammed .He claimed that he was a prophet. He found followers among other Arabs. He told them that they were picked to rule the world. (Quoted in Said1978:287)

Said concedes that the defamation of Islam during the twentieth century is linked to American and Israeli imperialistic plans. He observes that the islamophobic discourse against Middle Eastern societies has dissimilar purposes. Their purpose is “to *obscure what is that Israel and the United States, as Islam's main opponents have been doing.*” (ibid: xxi). Their purpose is also “to *make the world vulnerable to military aggression.*”(Said 1997: 28)

American orientalists such as Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington claim that Islam is the enemy of the Western culture and a threat against civilization .The orientalist Bernard Lewis

expresses his concerns about Islam in his book, “*The Roots of Muslim Rage* ” (1991), which was released in September 1990. He notes,

It should be now be clear that we are facing a mood and movement in Islam...ancient rival against our Judeo -Christian heritage, our secular present and the world-wide expansion of both. It is crucially important that we on our side should not be provoked into an equally historic but also equally irrational reaction against that rival (cited in the Myth of the Clash of Civilizations: 1998)

The extract above denotes that the world no longer leads a war against the East; it is rather a war against Islam. American orientalists tend to impute to Islam all what is violent, barbaric and backward. Their discourse arouses islamophobic feelings and provokes animosity against Muslims. They ushered in a congregation of stereotypes which indict the Islamic culture for the topsy-turvy situation in the world. They ostensibly coined new equivalents like uncivilized, irrational and barbaric for the word Islam. They professed that Islam is a dangerous religion that *we* should steer clear. Besides, *they (the West)* who belong to the superior, civilized Judeo-Christian heritage should not be irrational like *them* and fall in the same trap.

Lewis makes an assortment of two binary and antagonistic cultures. He distinguishes between The Judeo-Christian culture which is civilized and superior and the Islamic culture which is backward and inferior. As a result of this distinction, there is a clash of civilizations. In his lecture entitled *The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations* (1998), Said makes a subtle insight. He notices that there is no such a clash of civilizations but there is a clash of definitions. The latter are made up by propagandists and orientalists who project a spotlight on the West, and thereby darken and eliminate the rest.

Hence, it is not weird to find in Disney movies as *Aladdin* (1992) derogatory discourse about Islam and Muslims who chop off parts of their bodies if they steal or don't like their faces. Similarly in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) people can lose their limbs and limbs if they had a

single gaze upon the princess. As far as Islam is concerned in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945), it shows that people in the story are Muslims. Yet there is no clear bigotry in this film: there are good Muslims (The sultan) as well as bad Muslims (Haji and Abu Hassan). For instance the Grand Vizier Abu Hassan is about to behead Aladdin in the Morning Prayer. Moreover, the Sultan is shown to be a good Muslim. He performs his prayer on time as the Islamic call for prayer (Al Adhan) is heard. Conversely, his brother is a brutal, greedy person. As he wants to overthrow the Sultan, he dreadfully stabs him at the time he is focused on his prayer.

It is clear that the Arab-based characters in *Aladdin* (1992) are Muslims. Their depiction is based on stereotypical images about Islam which are fanaticism and barbarism. They also use Islamic expressions or refer to extremist laws designed by Islam. We never hear the American-based characters pronouncing any Arabic or Islamic expression. Besides, the Islamic rule of cutting hands is exaggerated. Agrabah is a hazardous place because the laws stipulated by Islam are dangerous. They cut hands only because a hungry person steals a loaf of bread.

Unlike the civilized American-based characters in *Aladdin* (1992), Arabs seem to be the violent backward characters and fanatics who react by using force and violence. They abide by the harsh Islamic code. They only understand the language of swords and daggers. For example, Jafar's guards constantly chase Aladdin with their swinging swords. Aladdin, the Genie and Jasmine want to be free and to cast off the shackles of these dangerous laws.

Conclusion

All in all, I conclude that both *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) were influenced by their political and cultural contexts particularly *Aladdin* (1992). In the process of bringing the tale from the translated scripts into the silver screen, the film makers interpreted Aladdin's adaptations into a powerful ideological machine .Hollywood during the 1940s and the issue of the Gulf war in the 1990s added meanings to *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992).

The American foreign policy is influenced by the dependence of American economy on the Gulf oil. It has also influenced the images of Muslims in *Aladdin* (1992).During the 1990s with the Gulf War, American propagandists and politicians transported orientalist images about Arabs and Muslims to the American society at large. This arouses a negative impact on the colored immigrants in the US including Arabs and Muslims. The degree of orientalism in *Aladdin* (1992)is more intense than *Thousand and One Nights*(1945).This is due to the fact that their overwhelming hunger for oil brought a more orientalist image about Arabs and Muslims.

Despite the fact that the American earlier interest in the Gulf oil was remarkable during the 1940s, it was not like the 1990s when there was an entire war for this oil. The US at that time (the 1940s) was preparing to get complete hegemony over the oil by appearing as the *force majeure* which make endeavors to restore peace in the Gulf region. Moreover the State of Israel was still budding ,the Jews during the 1940s sought to embellish their image through Hollywood after being subjected to distorted images by the Nazis .Nevertheless, their presence was so conspicuous during the 1990s where Palestinians among Arabs are demonized.

The context is what makes the adaptations different .There is a focus on the exotic Arabs in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) whereas there is a focus on the scary Muslims and the despotic rulers in *Aladdin* (1992).But the political and cultural contexts did not operate separately to produce orientalist meaning in the films. There is a very intricate network of texts which occurred between the English texts of *Arabian Nights* and its different adaptations that engendered the main theme and the binary representation of characters in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992).

CHAPTER II

Thousand and One Nights (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) as the Products of Orientalist Literary and Filmic Materials

Edward Said maintains,

“Knowledge no longer requires the application to reality; knowledge is what gets on passed silently, without comment, from one text to another.” (Said 1978:116)

Introduction:

So far, I have demonstrated the cultural and political circumstances which contributed in shaping the orientalist discourse in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992). I assume that there are other factors and intertextual references which influenced the adaptations and culminated orientalism such as the book of *Thousand and One Nights* and the filmic adaptations of some Arabian Nights fairy tales namely *Sinbad* and *The Thief of Baghdad* adaptations. This is why I designed the second chapter to learn about these influences .I intend to reveal that the films are an invention which is already made up of other orientalist materials.

Arabian Nights' fairy tales are interwoven from imaginary sketches of anonymous people. They are attributed to real people living in real societies, namely the Orient and the Orientals. The Orient for orientalists was the specimen and the Orientals were the sample for their forged corpses .Orientalists resort to materials which get embroiled in infinite network, they refer to other texts be it in fairy tales, sacred books or real observations from their travel writings. Hence they mix up everything and create a common biased knowledge about the Orient. Said argues that the circulation of the orientalist discourse is based on "*knowledge [which] passes silently from one text to another*".

Orientalist images in the films are based on other orientalist works such as *The Thief of Baghdad* and *Sinbad's* adaptations. New knowledge is introduced silently to the films and other knowledge was cut and tarnished the real representation of Arabs and Muslims. The knowledge in *Thousand and One Nights* adaptations passed from orientalist texts in *Thousand and One Nights* book through filmic adaptations and lastly get to *Aladdin's* adaptations. Accordingly, my purpose in this chapter is to confirm that *Aladdin's* tale and its adaptations have a history with

orientalism and other orientalist texts. In order to see how the discourse is produced in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992), I need to draw two axis of comparison to investigate what has been adopted and what has been abandoned in the process of adapting Aladdin's tale to the screen.

SECTION I: The Films as Products of Literary Texts in the Book of *Thousand and One Nights*

My purpose in this section is to argue that the book which contains the story of "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp" itself is already an orientalist invention. Orientalists were appointed by European imperialists. The Orient was regarded as a case of study. Sociologists, ethnographers and historians flocked to record life in the Oriental societies. They behaved as mere orientalists rather than being objective researchers. Since they were entitled to represent the Orient, they are regarded as orientalists. Said contends,

"Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient and this applies whether the person is anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist either in its specific or its general aspects, is an orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism." (Said 1978:2)

Through Arabian Nights' translations, the translators Edward Lane, Antoine Galland and Richard Burton sounded more like philologists, sociologists and ethnographers. The book of *Thousand and One Nights* was just another orientalist text which vividly marked its presence among other texts which were deployed to represent the Orient and serve European imperialism:

By the late nineteenth century, when the empire had become an unshakable reality, the Arabian Nights came to serve as a colonialist cataloguing, by European and for European audience, of non-European societies dominated by the West (Marzolph 2004:29).

Having said that, it is necessary to see how the book's translators (Galland, Lane and Burton) treat the book of *Thousand and One Nights* as a reliable resource to record the Oriental's life. In

order to achieve this task, I will resort to the premise of some thinkers and analyze extracts from Galland and Burton's translations of *Thousand and One Nights*.

1. The Book of *Thousand and One Nights* as an Orientalist Legacy:

The book of *Thousand and One Nights* is about the famous Persian couple Shahrayar and Shahrazad. In order to save her head from his brutality, at every night Shahrazad is compelled to succumb to the whims of the fastidious king Shahrayar by telling him a different story until she reaches *A Thousand and One Nights* (Irwin1994: 49).Not only had Shahrayar adored Shahrazad's stories whose fascination excuses him from imputing her head but many orientalists along the history of mankind were also subjugated by the magic of these stories.

An influx of Orientalists were bewitched and captured by the fantasy of these stories (Marzolph 2004:665). Their infatuation was so intense that it blurred their vision to see that these tales are fantasized and are related by the imaginary Persian character of Shahrazad. The travel writer Kinglake regards the book of *Arabian Nights* as a unique masterpiece. (Said1978:193) Edward Said informs us: "*We are told for instance that Arabian Nights are too lively and inventive to be created by a mere oriental* " (ibid). Antoine Galland (1646-1715), Edward Lane (1801-1876) and Richard Burton respectively translated *Elf Layla wa Layla* and became the first and the most prominent translators of *Arabian Nights*.

To begin with, Galland fostered the first translation of *Thousand Nights and One Night* and offered twelve volumes from 1707 to 1717 (Venuti 2000:35).We may stand aghast at the fact that the tales of : "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ", "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves " and "Sinbad the Sailor" which standardized and iconized *Arabian Nights* are "*orphan stories* "(Marzolph 2004:715).They were purportedly supplemented by Galland who heard the tales from the Syrian Hanna Diaf, a Maronite Christian that he himself met in Paris (Irwin 1994:16-

17) .Since the stories do not appear in any of the original Arabic manuscripts (ibid:17),some translators of *Elf Layla wa Layla* like Hussein Haddawy posits that the stories mentioned are forged:“*The mania for collecting more stories completing the work led some copyists to resort even to forgery .*” (quoted in Goldman 1995:158)

For Galland, *Arabian Nights* is more than a mere collection of fairy tales. It echoes the oriental lifestyles from different religious backgrounds including Indians, Persians, Arabs and Tartars. In the introduction to his *Les Mille Nuits et Nuit (1949)*, Galland writes,

Tous les Orientaux, Persans, Tartares et Indiens, s’y font distinguer, et paraissent tels qu’ils sont, depuis les Souverains jusqu’aux personnes de la plus basse condition. Ainsi, sans avoir essuyé la fatigue d’aller chercher ces Peuples dans leur Pays, le Lecteur aura ici le plaisir de les voir agir, et de les entendre parler. On a pris soin de conserver leurs caractères, de ne pas s’éloigner de leurs expressions et de leurs sentiments (Galland1949 : 34)

Through the extract above, Galland obviates the need for his European readers to make strenuous efforts to go to the far-off Orient. With meticulous care, he will represent the Orientals “*tells qu’ils sont*”. He will also relate to them how they think, speak and behave; which feelings they harbor, what jargon they use, which religious practices they share. Galland speaks as if someone had a dream, recalls the details, make generalizations and associates them with real people. But the reality is that what is chronicled about the Orient is not authentic and does not offer genuine knowledge about the Orientals.

As far as Lane is concerned, Edward Said describes him as “*an orientalist scholar of classical Arabic and classical Islam*”. He advanced three volumes of Arabian Nights translations between 1838 and 1841.Said believes that Lane’s translation is an “*uninspired translation of the Arabian Nights consolidated the system of knowledge inaugurated by Modern Egyptians*” (Said1978:164).Through his translation of *The Nights*, Lane sounds as an

ethnographer and an anthropologist by including lengthy annotations and explanations to his translation. He seeks to project this findings about Egypt and Egyptians (ibid) in his translated texts: "*Lane's objective is to make Egypt and Egyptians totally visible, to keep nothing hidden from his reader, to deliver the Egyptians without depth, in swollen detail.*" (ibid:162)

As regards Burton, he does not treat the book as a collection of fairy tales nor does he consider the characters to be imaginary and fantasized. Burton lumps up all the Orientals together as: Arabs, Muslims, Chinese, Indians .They are all Orientals and have one common religion which is Islam .In his book *A Thousand Nights and Night* ,he passes a biased knowledge of the Arab land when he describes it as a primitive and magical wasteland: "*woolen tents, low and black, of the true Badawin, mere dots in the boundless waste of lion-tawny clays and gazelle-brown gravels,...the homely and rugged features of the scene into a fairy-land.*" (Burton1972:10)

Like Lane, Burton also attached annotations and details about Orientals in his translation of *Arabian Nights* as if the stories are diaries or historical records about real oriental people. Burton arabized and muslimized the narratives by bringing into the tale of "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp" words related to Islam and the Oriental culture such as: "*Bazar, Hamam, pauper family, sherbets, Alhamdulillah*". It is peculiar to see a Chinese story "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp" being used as a window to have a peep over Oriental and Islamic cultures. Therefore, many doubts and assumptions may be raised .For instance, if the events of the narratives are premised upon a Chinese boy who lives in China, why doesn't he give details about the Chinese traditions? If the Chinese are Muslims, why do they have Arabic names and why do words like "*Sherbet*" and "*Hamam*" occur in the story?

According to Venuti, the book of *Thousand and One Nights* includes, “ancient love stories ...which relate cases from the Desert or the cities of Arabia are not obscene, and neither is any production of pre-Islamic literature. They are impassioned and sad, and one of their favorite themes is death for love .” (Venuti 2000: 37) However, Orientalists crammed the book with exoticism and brought misinformation about Islam and Arabs. They distorted the true essence of the Arabian tales .They eroticized them and made them look indecent and “morally ingenuous ” despite the fact that they relate decent melancholic stories as Venuti concedes. Said asserts that the East was a sexual experience for Burton and Lane: “the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe. ” (Said 1978:190)

As a conclusion to the analysis above, Galland invented the tales (Marzolph 2004:26) and imputed it to his *Bibliothèque Orientale* (1692) (Irwin1994:24), Lane used it as a historical record for the manners and customs of Egyptians(ibid), and Burton for Muslims at large. Arabian Nights’ earlier translators distorted the true essence of Arabic stories. The book of *Thousand and One Nights* is an orientalist legacy which served European orientalism firsthand and was later utilized by American orientalists .Film makers reproduced orientalist texts from the English translation of *Thousand and One Nights* and adapted them into films like *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992).In order for them to produce the orientalist discourse in the latter, they adopted some elements and disowned many aspects from the story of “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ”.

2. Comparison between the tale “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ” and the Films [*Aladdin* (1992) and *Thousand and One Nights* (1945)]

When we say an adaptation, there is already a dialogue between two different materials: the adapted film and the source on which it is based. Adaptation theorists like Lynda Hutcheon

asserts that the boundaries between the original and the copy should not be effaced (Hutcheon 2006:6). Accordingly, since the corpus of my study is concerned with adaptations of Arabian Nights' fairy tales, it is necessary to draw a comparison between the tale and Aladdin's filmic adaptations. Simultaneously I will derive the appropriations and the abrogations of the tale by focusing on some characters: Aladdin, the Princess, the Sultan, the Grand vizier and the Genies.

Aladdin

Aladdin is a boy in the English text while he is a teenager in the Disney film and a grown up man in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). According to the English text, Aladdin is an indolent Chinese boy who lives with his mother in one of the cities in China .He is neither a homeless orphan as in *Aladdin* (1992) nor a vagabond singer in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). Though Aladdin lives from hand to mouth, he never attempts to steal. According to the English translation, Aladdin is a good Muslim and a loyal subject to the king. He utters Islamic expressions such as: “*There is no strength or power but in the great and high God.*” But the Islam he practices is paradoxical. When Aladdin is depressed because his palace vanishes and gets dislocated to Africa by the magician, he decides to commit suicide. We are told that since he is a good Muslim, he thinks first of doing the ablutions (Wiggin 1935:87).

Unlike Aladdin in the English translation, the protagonists in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) do not embrace any religion but they care about human beings despite the fact that they are thieves. Furthermore, Aladdin is an obedient subject in the English translation. He does not rebel against the barbarism of the Sultan. He is not like Aladdin in the filmic adaptation where he questions the Islamic laws and rebel against the dictators. When Aladdin in the English translation is about to be executed, he devotionally and meekly addresses

the Sultan: “*Execute your orders I am not conscious that I have committed any offence against the sultan’s person or government* ” (ibid: 86) .When he is about to be arrested, the guards apologize to Aladdin in a courtly manner .Contrary to the barbarian guards in *Aladdin* (1992) and *Thousand and One Nights* (1945), the Guards have high respect for Aladdin even if they are about to execute orders:

Prince, it is with great regret that I declare to you the sultan’s order to arrest you ,and to carry you before him as a criminal: I beg of you not to take it ill that we acquit ourselves of our duty, and to forgive us. Comparison for how Aladdin got arrested (ibid: 85)

Aladdin in the English translation gets everything through the genie. He disguises the fact that he is of “*a mean birth* ” and that is all the fortunes he has is the “ *work of magic* ” (ibid: 85).He is not depicted as witty and honest as he is in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) where he imposes himself through his intelligence not the wealth provided by the genie .Moreover, he did not use to have good manners but with arrival of the Genie he wears them .He is not like Aladdin in *Aladdin* (1992) and *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) who already have manners and sometimes teach them to the other characters.

There are some common appropriations between the English text and Aladdin’s filmic adaptations. For instance, Aladdin is the diamond of the rough in all the translations and adaptations .He is this poor lad by dint of whom the old Magician can get hold of the lamp which bears a lot of magical secrets. His refusal to give the old man the lamp in all the adaptations is a turning point in his life. Aladdin has no idea that this very lamp hides a big fortune and even more extravagant wishes to be fulfilled and they are just waiting for Aladdin’s command.

The Princess and the Sultan

As regards the princesses in the book and the films, the princess in the English translated version has an Arabic name whereas the princesses (Jasmine and Armina) in Aladdin's filmic adaptations have western names. The original name of the princess which is Bedr el Budur in the English text is converted to Jasmine and Armina respectively in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992). As a matter of fact, the princess Bedr El Budur in the English text is objectified. The Sultan and Aladdin are the protectors of the vulnerable princess. She is like a puppet which is played with backward and forward. The Sultan marries her vizier's son and Aladdin takes her bride place to his wretched chamber. Bedr el Budur is submissive and does not fight back. She is reticent, speechless and introspective. She neither opposes her marriage to the vizier's son, nor to Aladdin taking her from one place to another.

The Sultan in the English translation claims the princess is responsible for her sadness because she does not tell him what happened in Aladdin's home. Yet she asks for pardon as if she committed a felony or a sin: "*My dear father and sultan, I ask your majesty's pardon if I have offended you, and hope, that out of your goodness and clemency you will have compassion on me*" (ibid:70) She consents to her marriage to Aladdin and the paradox is that later she confesses that she loved him at first sight. She is made satisfied by her father and falls in love with this satisfaction. Besides, Princess Bedr El Budur is naïve. She believes the Old magician who disguises himself as the pious woman Fatima. She is not like the bold Jasmine and the sensible Armina; "*She was easily persuaded that all the world was like her, especially those who made profession of serving God in solitude.*" (ibid: 74)

The sultan in the English translation is portrayed as a blood spiller, a barbarian who reveres money and rules by decrees. As soon as he faces a displeasing situation, he gets swiftly irritated and he presently executes the orders. Without seeking further explanation, he wants Aladdin's head to be cut off. Moreover, he keeps threatening his subjects with imputing heads: "*A chain that was fastened about Aladdin's neck and body, and laid down a skin stained with the many he had executed.*" (ibid: 86) However, the westernized sultan in the adaptations is under compulsion. We may feel sympathetic because he is either mesmerized in *Aladdin* (1992) or wounded in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945).

The Sultan decides for Princess Bedr el Budur without even asking for her consent; he rather asks his vizier opinion instead of hers. He assumes he chooses her the right husband. He justifies himself: "*I did not marry you to make you miserable; but that you might enjoy all the happiness you deserve and might hope for from a husband who to me seemed agreeable to you*" (ibid:70). There is no communication between the angry, violent father (the sultan) and the frightened, victimized daughter (the princess). The Sultan violently orders his daughter: "*tell me what is the matter, or I will cut off your head immediately; the princess more frightened at the menaces and tone of the enraged sultan than at the sight of the drawn sabre.*" (ibid)

In the English translation, the naïve princess withdraws the magic lamp to the old magician whereas in the adaptation *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) the slave girl Novira offers the lamp to Kofir in exchange for the new one. Noteworthy this is a way to idealize Princess Armina and not make her look silly as Princess Bedr el Budur. The latter is a mere observer. She is neither like Princess Armina nor like the bold, courageous Princess Jasmine in *Aladdin* (1992).

The Grand Vizier

As for The Grand vizier, he is neither the power-thirsty magician grand vizier Jafar as in *Aladdin* (1992) nor does he have the evil persona of the grand vizier Abu Hassan in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). He is shown in the English translation as someone who is jealous and whose son is promised to get married to the princess. Yet the images of the Sultan and Jafar is imported from *Arabian Nights* in which Harun al Rashid, the barbarian ruler, orders to impute heads every now and then. Harun al Rashid in the English translation of *Thousand and One Nights* is so cruel that he decides to take off the head of his most trusted vizier (Jafar). But the film makers reverse the image of the good Jafar in *Arabian Nights* with Jafar in *Aladdin* (1992) who has the most terrible physical features and who incarnates the image of the bad Arab ruler.

There is another evil character besides the greedy Grand Vizier who is found both in the book of *Thousand and One Nights* and the film *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). In both the book and the film, the old magician is depicted as a manipulative black man. In Burton's translation of *Arabian Nights*, it is evoked that he is a Moor by contrast to the other characters who are Chinese. Aladdin describes him as "this fellow is a sorcerer, a Moorman, an accursed, a liar; a traitor, a hypocrite." (Burton 2004:487). In *Aladdin* (1992), the film makers did not bother to look for another role for the Old Magician. They demonized Jafar even more and embedded in him the character of the black magician.

The Genies

As far as the Genies are concerned, the genies in the English text are "*of enormous size and frightful*". They are obedient, speechless creatures; they only repeat few redundant expressions like: "*What wouldst thou have? I am ready to obey thee as thy slave and the slave of all who may*

possess the ring on thy finger .” (ibid: 57) Genies are terrible morbid creatures in the Arab culture but they are beautifully represented in the American media . Their aim is solely to dedicate a well-defined material about the Orient and the Orientals. They seem to vilify all what is sacred and glorify and all that is morbid.

Aladdin’s mother dubs the genie: “perfidious, *traitor, barbarian, assassin, deceiver, magician and destroyer of mankind* ” .They are also bad creatures and devil supporters. Compared to the genies in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992), the Genie in the English translation is never free and does not look for freedom .He continues fulfilling Aladdin’s endless wishes. By contrast to the adaptations, the westernized genies are Aladdin’s good supporters. They are not vilified but they were the vanguards at last. They were able to speak up and postulate some rules to be taken into consideration and even teach their masters good morals.

The Setting and Harem Girls:

The images of the exotic orient, the Harem girls and the libidinous Orientals are not perceived in the story of “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ” .However, these images are remarkably present in many stories in the book of *Arabian Nights* where they deal directly with Arabs .The film makers added other orientalist images about the setting and women in order to *Orientalize* Arabs and Muslims in Aladdin’s filmic versions [*Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992)]. Eroticization and images of Harem girls which are ubiquitous in Aladdin’s adaptations are totally absent in the English translation of Aladdin’s tale. There is no clear evidence in the original story of the belly-dancing costumes or the way women are dressed except Aladdin’s mother who gets veiled when she goes out but she pulls off her veil at home.

Last but not least, the story of “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ” is premised upon an innocent love story of a Chinese couple who have high respect for the Sultan and his laws. It contains no magical elements or any evil superpowers. The events of the story are constructed around characters in China where there are picturesque places .The story does not take place in the desert. There is a single desert scene in front of the Cave of Wonders. However, in Aladdin’s filmic adaptations, the events take place in either desert settings or the Moorish market place where they are supposedly situated in the mythical Arab land “*Agrabah* ” as in *Aladdin* (1992) or Baghdad in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945).

The images existing in both *Thousand and One Nights* and “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ” filmic adaptations are clearly derived from, “*a prodigious cultural repertoire ... and dozens more ;settings, in some cases names only ,half-imagined, half- known ;monsters, devils, heroes ;terrors, pleasures, desires. The European imagination was extensively nourished from this repertoire .*” (Said1978:63).In their adapting the story of “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ”, the imagination of American propagandists was likewise “*nourished* ” from this orientalist “*repertoire* ” where there are “*devils, monsters, pleasures and half-imagined setting and names* ”. There are appropriations and abrogations at work while translating the tale into a film. Orientalist predecessors traced their truck but on their way they abandoned some facts and disowned other elements.

For instance, abrogations are noticed like eroticizing Princess Jasmine who rebels against the laws and vilifying the grand vizier. There are also appropriations like most of the names of characters and the plot of the story .The knowledge borrowed from *Thousand and One Nights* the book was not sufficient to sharpen the orientalist discourse in films. The film makers needed audio-visual knowledge to reinforce their “system of lies ” and make the Orient look literally like

a place of “romance and exotic beings ” in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992). The discourse in these latter has circulated through different orientalist texts to eventually get formulated in the films. The new knowledge dedicated to the films about the Orient is presumably borrowed from other orientalist materials. This is why, I argue that there are ingredients from the *Thief of Baghdad* and *Sinbad the Sailor* films.

SECTION II: Orientalist Ingredients in *The Thief of Baghdad* and *Sinbad’s* Filmic Adaptations:

After examining the relationship of the book with Aladdin’s adaptations [*Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992)], it is clear that there are not really common grounds between the original version and the copy namely *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992). American film producers did not resort solely to the original tale on which the films are based. They didn’t at least preserve the skeleton of the tale which depicts an innocent romantic story. Most importantly, they didn’t even try to be objective in their depiction of Arabs while adapting the story of “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ” to the screen. They effaced the core of the tale .Thereby, in this section, I shall exhibit the knowledge taken by film makers from other adaptations in order to fashion out the orientalist discourse in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992).

Hence, film makers borrowed from the tale of “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ” positive aspects and attribute them to the American –based characters like the good nature of the courageous Aladdin .Moreover, they took the negative aspects like the magical evil power of the old African magician from the original story and associated them with the Arab-based characters and added other stereotypical images produced by earlier orientalists like the harem girls, the magic carpet and desert scenes. Besides, the binary representations of characters in Aladdin’s

filmic adaptations are not obvious in the book of *Thousand and One Nights*. For this; I assume that this knowledge has been “silently ” introduced to the films through interactions with other orientalist materials namely the filmic adaptations of *Sinbad* and *The Thief of Bagdad*.

The knowledge introduced into the film includes two facets: the theme of freedom and the binary classification of characters and the celebration of western features. The theme which prevails in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) do not appear in the original translation of “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp” where there is no such a quest except that the story is about a couple who get married thanks to a magical lamp. As a matter of fact, all the protagonists in the adaptations who epitomize the Western culture lead a battle against the barbaric Laws of the Desert and the Evil Arabs.

In order to design the strands of the subsequent section, new materials should be introduced. Some pictures will be provided within this section to elucidate and illustrate my arguments.

1. The Thief of Baghdad Adaptations:

The events In *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) are quite intermingled and overlapped with the *Thief of Baghdad* and *Sinbad the Sailor* Adaptations. Therefore, it is necessary to reveal how the orientalist images in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) came into being starting from the *Thief of Baghdad* (1924). To begin with, the theme of the righteous and good thief is conspicuously taken from the different adaptations of *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924), *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940) and *The Thief of Baghdad* (1961).

The Thief of Baghdad (1924)

The Thief of Baghdad (1924) is a black and white silent film which depicts a wretched idle thief who is shown hanging out in a mosque. The thief is vivid, climbing, running and vaulting like Aladdin in *Aladdin* (1992). The setting in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924) is not ordinary. It is an exotic bizarre giant place which looks like a mosque. It seems to be the center of all the actors' life. It is there where they practice a magical Islam by praying and performing magic. There are similar scenes and posters with *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924) and *Aladdin* (1992).

As shown in the pictures, the setting of the film with the barrels and the balcony looks like one of the streets in Agrabah in *Aladdin* (1992). The posters are also very much alike with the flying carpets despite the fact that this idea of taking a ride on a flying carpet does not exist in the original story. This orientalist knowledge is clearly taken from *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924) (see snapshots 1, 2, 3, 4).



Snapshot 1: The poster of *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924)



Snapshot 2 :The poster of *Aladdin*(1992)



Snapshot 3: The thief in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924)



Snapshot 4: Aladdin in *Aladdin* (1992)

Both the thief of Baghdad and Aladdin have good morals despite the fact that they are thieves. Like Aladdin who confesses to Jasmine that he is not prince Ali Babwa, the thief of Baghdad gives the ring to the princess and tells her that he is not a prince. The thief of Baghdad is portrayed as humanist as he appears in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992).

The main hero in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924) is a bold courageous thief who questions the extremist Islamic laws like cutting limbs and limbs for beholding the princess in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). He gets startled when a thief is about to be flogged. He is not afraid, notwithstanding he mocks the rules and steals a jewel unnoticed. The introduction of *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924) evokes a misquotation from the translation of *Arabian nights*. We are told that it is extracted from Quran: “I take what I want my reward is here. Paradise is a fool’s dream and Allah is a myth ”. This is reminiscent of *Aladdin* (1992) when he justifies himself saying when he is about to lose his hands: “I steal what I can’t afford ”.

There are other ingredients in *Aladdin* (1992) which are ostensibly brought from the *Thief of Baghdad* (1924). There is a rule which is perceived in both *Aladdin* (1992) and the *Thief of Baghdad* (1924). It stipulates that the princess in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924) has to pick one of the royal suitors. As Jasmine is obliged to choose a suitor in *Aladdin* (1992), the father of the princess in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924) obliges her to choose a suitor, he thunders: “Choose I command you! ” He raises his hands and prepares himself to slap her; he adds: “I myself will make a choice ”. Besides, the prince of Mongol is scary and frightful as Jafar in *Aladdin* (1992). The princess says: “he chills my blood with fear. ” He wants to win the princess Jasmine in order to overthrow her father and win Baghdad: “to possess Baghdad I know have a two-fold reason

***The Thief of Baghdad* (1940)**

The Thief of Baghdad (1940) is constructed around Abu the thief of Baghdad and Prince Ahmed. When Prince Ahmed goes out in disguise to watch his fellowmen; in the meantime, he is overthrown by Jafar and thrown to the jail where he finds Abu the thief of Baghdad. *Aladdin* (1992) brought many ingredients from *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940). To begin with, the setting in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) resembles to higher extent the setting in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940) with the buildings which look like mosques (see snapshots 5, 6).



Snapshot 5: the Setting in which The Sultan is on his magical horse and in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940)



Snapshot 6: the Setting and Calling for prayer and in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945)

The pictures above convey the same stereotypical image of the Orient in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940). The settings look nearly the same. There are affinities between the shape of Masjids (the sacred place where Muslims perform their prayers) and the buildings where Arabs dwell; this clearly shows that Arabs do not disentangle Islam from their lives and daily activities. The latter include two elements which seem inseparable: Mosques and magic. The same idea is implemented in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924).

The companionship of Abu and Prince Ahmed resembles the one of Aladdin with Abu in *Aladdin* (1992) and Aladdin with Abdullah in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). The adaptations give Aladdin companions who would fight together to eradicate barbarism in their Arabian lands. In *Aladdin* (1992), the protagonist Aladdin steals from the market with his companion the

naughty monkey (Abu). Similarly, in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940), the little boy whose name is Abu, is dubbed “The little thief of Baghdad ”. As Aladdin and his companion Abu the monkey steal apples and bread from the market in *Aladdin* (1992), Prince Ahmed and his friend the little thief steal honey and pancakes in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940). The Thief of Baghdad pretends that he tests the quality of honey but he runs away without paying for it. In the same fashion, Abdullah in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) tricks common people when he pickpockets in the market.

All the actors in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940) have the same British accent except Abu, with a heavy accent, has the look of a dark primitive man. Abu is borrowed from *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940), he is the darkest character in the film but his image is degraded into a monkey in *Aladdin* (1992). After he was the darkest person in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940), he is now scaled down according to Darwinism to the earliest image of man in Agrabah. Abu is *othered* in both films but there is tolerance with these others. Abu gets along with Aladdin, they easily communicate and understand each other. Aladdin confesses to Abu the monkey, “You’re my only friend, Abu! ” .

Although Aladdin in *Aladdin* (1992) and Abu (the little thief of Baghdad) are thieves, the film producers of both films show their virtuous nature and justify their misdemeanor. They also make it conspicuous that they practice theft for noble purposes. Unlike the protagonists in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) who have nothing to do with Islam but rebels against the Islamic laws, Islam in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940) seems a good religion but a magical one. Abu in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940) is honest and has a confidence in Allah. He met the Father of the Beard, a wise man with a whiter beard, who claims that he and his followers are the remnants of the Golden Age. Abu gets influenced by this man .Then he prays

and asks God to make the carpet on which he is praying fly to the place of Prince Ahmed .As soon as he is done with the prayer, his wish gets instantly fulfilled.

The Genie also marks his presence with the Harem Girls and the flying carpets in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940).The film makers chose Rex Ingram, the same actor who also appears in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945), as the giant genie with the same awful persona and frightful physical features. There is a scene in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) which is clearly borrowed from *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940) when the princess is depressed in the garden with the Harem Girls singing for her; the whole scene is suddenly interrupted by the entrance of Aladdin or Prince Ahmed. *Aladdin* (1992) borrowed another scene from *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940) when the princess disguises herself as she knew she will get married to Jafar.

As regards the grand viziers in *The Thief of Baghdad* filmic adaptations, they are both the archetypes of the stereotypical greedy Arab dictators who hanker after wealth and power. Jafar in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940) is very much like the grand vizier in *Aladdin* (1992): identical names, evil conduct and terrible countenance .They all practice witchcraft and have evil superpowers .They are darker, greedy and their sole goal is to satisfy his hunger for power by marrying the princess. Abu, the thief of Baghdad describes Jafar as someone who, “understands three things: that the man only respects three things: the whip that stings, the yoke that suppresses and the sword that kills. ”

As for the Sultan, he is displayed in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940) as a retard and a childish ruler. He substitutes his daughter for a huge horse toy offered by Jafar .In one of the scenes we behold the Sultan and his overwhelming silly love for playing cherishing the view of a mountain of toys .This very view of the toys piled up arouses the feeling of watching *Aladdin* (1992) when

the mesmerized Sultan is asked by Jafar: “Now run along and play with your little toys. ” The Sultans in both stories are the objects for Jafar’s manipulation. This image of the mesmerized Sultan and his love for toys is probably imported from *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940) but the Sultan is darker than the Sultan who appears in a whiter complexion in *Aladdin* (1992) (see snapshots 9, 11).

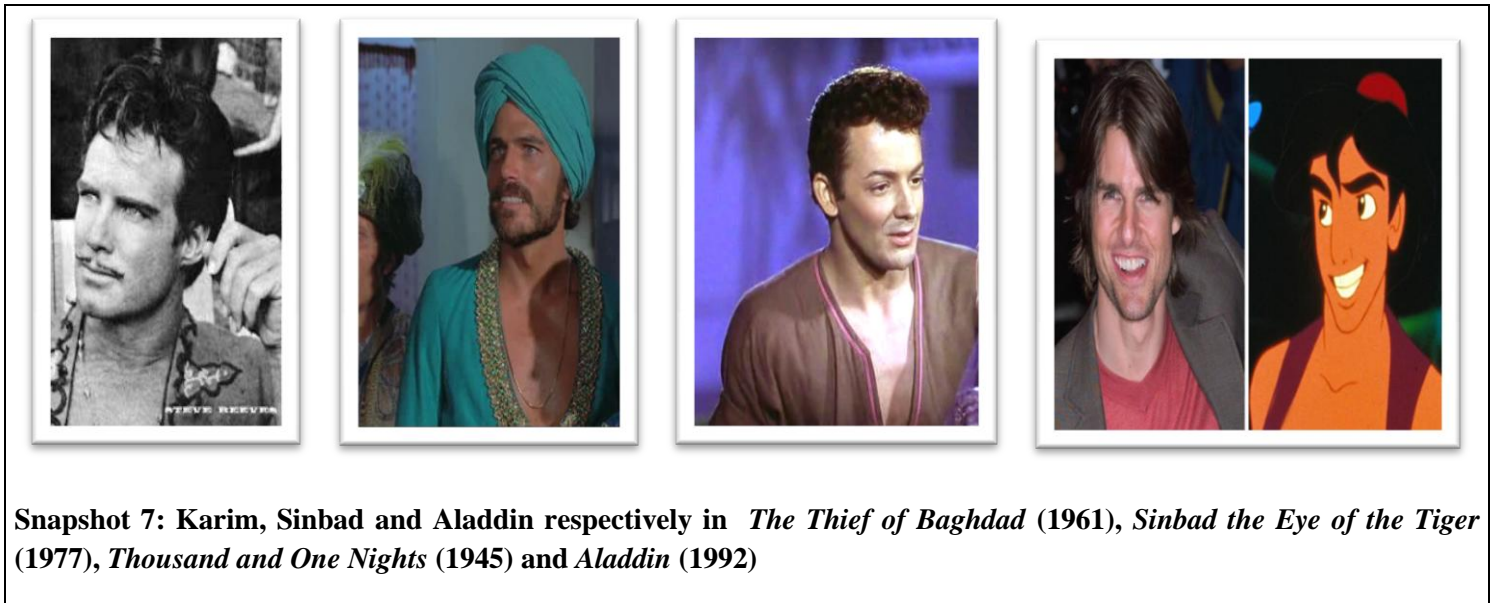
***The Thief of Baghdad* (1961)**

Aladdin (1992) borrowed many scenes, themes and images from *The Thief of Baghdad* (1961). For instance, Aladdin in the Disney movie looks very much like Karim in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1961) in the way he dresses and his benevolence with common people. Like *Thousand and One Nights* (1945), he is physically fit, good looking and has high respect for women. He is also the one who has “intelligence, courage and love ”. Karim is a thief, “stealing is the only trade I know ”, he says. But Karim does not steal for himself; he steals golden coins and distributes them to common people .The virtuous magician tells Karim, “You are the only one in Baghdad who helps miserable people ”. Similarly, Aladdin in *Aladdin* (1992) steals to feed hungry children. Aladdin in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) also takes money for his singing and distributes it to common people.

2 .Sinbad Adaptations

Characterization and thematic knowledge also passed through Sinbad adaptations to see its way to *Aladdin* (1992).The celebration of American accent, the focus on whiteness and inferiority of the Arabic language also came along with Sinbad’s adaptations [*Sinbad and the Eye of Tiger* (1977) , *Sinbad the Sailor* (1989)].

Like Jasmine and Aladdin in *Aladdin* (1992), the protagonists Farah and Sinbad in *Sinbad the Eye of the Tiger* (1977) do not resemble Arabs. The couples in both films wear the same beautiful western features with neat English accent. Princess Farah and her brother do not resemble each other. They appear as if they do not have any kinship bonds. Farah has an astonishing white complexion (see figure 8) whereas her brother looks very much like black Africans but the actor who plays this role is probably tainted because he is not originally dark. Like *Aladdin* (1992), Sinbad cares for the poor despite the dangers surrounding him. Sinbad shares with the protagonists in the pictures below the same beautiful western-based physical appearance coupled with the same benevolent attitude (see snapshot 7).



Snapshot 7: Karim, Sinbad and Aladdin respectively in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1961), *Sinbad the Eye of the Tiger* (1977), *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992)

Like *Aladdin* (1992), witchcraft is predominant in *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* (1977). Zenobia, the step mother of Prince Kassim and Princess Farah, is the principal evil character in the tale. By using her spells, she prevents Prince Kassim from reaching the throne as the Caliph by switching him into an ape. Fortunately, the prince of Baghdad (Sinbad) dissipates

the spell and marries Farah .By the same token, Aladdin (Prince Alibabwa) in *Aladdin* (1992) dissolves the witchcraft of Jafar and marries princess Jasmine. Like the evil Jafar and the other Arab-based characters in *Aladdin* (1992), Zenobia has the most terrible English with an Arabic accent. This implies that how evil the characters are how terrible their English accent is.

The discourse of whiteness and the American accent circulated in mostly every Arabian Nights' adaptation. In *Sinbad the Sailor* (1989), Keera's father Nadir, who is supposedly an Arab, does not resemble his blond daughter at all. His look is conspicuously based on someone from Maghreb. The scene of preparing a fish cuscus to his daughter and Sinbad suggests watching an Arab man preparing an oriental meal to American tourists. If the English of the oriental characters in *Aladdin* (1992) suffers from an Arabic accent, the language of Nadir has dramatically lost its linguistic identity. Sinbad makes a parody of him when he imitates his gibberish and his fathomless manners. Unlike his daughter who speaks very good English, Nadir speaks a language that only his daughter understands and which is neither Arabic nor lousy English.

Keera, Sinbad's lover, is a blond pretty girl dressed more or less like a belly dancer. She incarnates both the stereotyped image about Arab women in *Aladdin* (1992) with their belly dancing outfits and flirtatious manners. She is portrayed as Princess Jasmine (see snapshot 8), the western -incarnated character; the strong girl who doesn't care about the dangers of the Island. Although they are Arabs, Elina, Keera and Jasmine speak American English; they are endowed with Western features which make them different from their Arab encounters. There is notoriously a celebration of whiteness and blondness through the characters of Keera, Jasmine, Armina, Farah who are blonder or whiter than the other characters with neat English accents (see snapshot 8).



Snapshot 8: Princess Farah ,Princess Armina and Keera respectively in *Sinbad the Eye of the Tiger* (1977),*Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Sinbad the Sailor* (1989) are stunningly whiter than commoners . They appear to be more civilized with good English accents

As *Aladdin* (1992), the white sultan in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1989) with his white beard and the best European physical features, is not happy with Jafar whose eyes dance with malice. The image of the western Santa and the White Sultan in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1989) is incarnated in the character of the Sultan in *Aladdin* (1992): “*The Sultan of Agrabah, in contrast, is round, with a white, fuzzy beard, jovial features, a bumbling gait, and short—the representational personification of benevolence—Santa Claus without the red suit.*” (Artz2002:1). As displayed in the pictures, the Sultans in *Aladdin* (1992) and *Sinbad and the Sailor* (1989) have the same western-based physical appearance, with whiter beards, the same physiognomy, and innocent facial features (see snapshots 9, 10). The image of the Sultans in both adaptations is embellished and westernized. They are not shown as the darker puppet ruler in the *Thief of Baghdad* adaptation (1940) (see snapshot 11).



Snapshot 9: The Sultan in *Aladdin* (1992)



Snapshot 10: The Sultan in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1989)



Snapshot 11 : The Sultan in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940)

In both *Aladdin* (1992) and *Sinbad and the Sailor* (1989), the sultans do seek the consent of their daughters; they understand them but they are just helpless because they are subjects to their grand viziers' spells. It is true in the beginning, they unconsciously forced their daughters to choose a suitor but when they are not mesmerized, they speak wisely. Like the Sultan in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1989), the Sultan tells Jafar in *Aladdin* (1992), "You are to discuss sentencing of prisoners with me, before they are beheaded. "

The evil grand vizier Jafar appears in both *Aladdin* (1992) and *Sinbad the Sailor* (1989) with similar names, physical features and scary witchcraft. Like Jafar who reveres both power and the body of Jasmine in *Aladdin* (1992), Jafar in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1989) wants "to master the mind and body " of Princess Elina. The story teller in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1989) informs us

that the hateful wizard Jafar “subjugated common people to tyranny and torture ” in the city of Basra .In this Sinbad’s adaptation, we observe the same scene which occurs in the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992) when Jafar the wizard with his British accent standing beside the white Sultan mesmerizing him and behaving according to his whims .He asks Sinbad to kneel to him and so does Jafar with Jasmine and her father in *Aladdin* (1992).

All the Anti-heroes including Jafar in *Aladdin* (1992), Jafar in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1989), Zenobia in *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* (1977), Jafar in *the Thief of Bagdad* (1940) have the same morbid look or darker pigmentation .They all share identical facial expression with exorbitant eyes and a mischievous gaze (see snapshots 9,10,11,12).The evil Arabs usually appear filthy with longer fingers and moustache or beards and wearing turbans on their heads. By contrast, the western-based characters are clean and neatly shaved and not wearing anything on their heads.

This knowledge about the anti-heroes in Aladdin’s filmic adaptations do not coincide with the profile of the anti-heroes in “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ”. However, the evil characters in *The Thief of Baghdad* and *Sinbad adaptations* share common characteristics in terms of their obnoxious physical appearances, their awful misdeeds and their different accents. It is conspicuous that the film makers in their adapting the tale into the screen, they borrowed both from the European orientalist legacy and Hollywood’s orientalism in films to sharpen the orientalist discourse and make their representations about the Orient and Orientals more convincing.



SNAPSHOT 12: Jafar in *Aladdin* (1992)



SNAPSHOT 13: Jafar in *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940)



SNAPSHOT 14 :Jafar in *Sinbad the Sailor* (1989)



SNAPSHOT 15 : Zenobia in *Sinbad the Eye of Tiger* (1977)

Conclusion

Indeed there is a profusion of details which appear in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) and are quasi absent in the English translation of “ Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ”. For example, there are no magic carpets in the translation; in addition, the genies are not simply obedient masters and do not have this substantial role as they have in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992). It is discernible that the content of Aladdin’s tale is more *Orientalized* and the magic elements get maximized as the story is transferred from one text to another and from one medium to another: from the English translation into the filmed text of *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and eventually to the Disneyficated text *Aladdin* (1992).

Above all, a very intricate network of texts and intertextual dialogues occurred between the English texts of *Arabian Nights* and its different adaptations which led to the birth of Aladdin’s adaptations. The orientalist discourse in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) is produced due to the fact that there are literary texts such as the book of *Thousand and One Nights* and other filmic texts namely *The Thief of Baghdad* and *Sinbad* filmic adaptations whereby the representation of Arabs and Muslims in films is influenced. The texts ' influences shape the binary characterization, the setting and the theme in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992).

For the binary characterization, the film makers relied on the audio-visual tools that cannot be present in the written tales in order to either demonize or embellish some characters. The tools I am talking about include the physical and linguistic features which are imported from *Arabian Nights’* adaptations like *The Thief of Baghdad* and *Sinbad* adaptations. Both *Thousand*

and One Nights (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) borrowed the relation of the supremacy of physical features and linguistic faculties with moral tenets. These features underscore the superiority of the American or western culture and the otherness of the Arab culture. The first is linked with whiteness and American English while the latter is epitomized through barbarism, darkness, lousy English and gibberish.

For instance, the Arab –based characters in *Aladdin* (1992) do not even speak Arabic their native language but they speak lousy English to show that they are different from the American-based characters. Moreover, Princess Jasmine and Princess Armina are not objectified as the princess is in “*Aladdin and the Magic Lamp*” but they are endowed with western physical and linguistic features which make them different from Bedr el Budur. Furthermore, the Sultans in both movies are not depicted as evil characters but as helpless victims. The Sultan is either hypnotized by the spell of Jafar’s staff in *Aladdin* (1992) or wounded in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). The Sultans in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) are unconscious of what is going on so as to suggest that things happen against their wills. So it is impossible for them to react and stop the misdeeds of their most trusted viziers.

In short, the film makers modified *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp*” and revealed the fact that westernized characters survived and reached a higher rank by the end of the story; on the other hand, the uncivilized *Orientalized* Arab characters vanish and their evil get uprooted. However; compared to *Thousand and One Nights* (1945), the adaptation of *Aladdin* (1992) engaged in many more dialogues with some filmic and literary materials. Many images are transported from the European orientalist repertoire in the book of *Thousand and One Nights* and the filmic adaptations of *The Thief of Baghdad* and *Sinbad the Sailor*. This premise maximizes the degree

of orientalism in *Aladdin* (1992) as westernization and the theme of freedom from Islamic laws are exaggerated in the film.

CHAPTER III

Superiority, Otherness, Exoticism and Oriental Women in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992)

“All the bad guys have beards and large bulbous noses, sinister eyes and heavy accents, and they are wielding swords constantly .Aladdin doesn’t have a big nose; he has a small nose. He doesn’t have a beard or a turban .He doesn’t have an accent .What makes him nice is they’ve given him this American character. ” (Quoted in Giroux 2010:109)

Introduction

It is seen in the first chapter the impact of the contextual background which shaped the orientalist discourse in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992). The contexts brought different images and meanings which created a disparity between two distinctive societies (East and West), cultures and rulers. Additionally, many factors clustered to *Orientalize* Arabs and Muslims such as The English translated texts of “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp ” as well as other orientalist materials like *Arabian Nights* adaptations.

As a result of the aforementioned, new themes such as despotism and freedom emerge in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992). However, there is a link between these themes and the binary classification of characters. It is perceived that the Arab-based characters are *Orientalized* and the protagonists are Americanized. The characters who epitomize the Western culture manifest high morals whereas the darker characters have low manners. That being said, this chapter elucidates the premise that linguistic features (American accent) and physical appearance (Whiteness) may bequeath superiority to the Western based characters.

It is discernible that the American physical and linguistic features entitle some characters to teach lessons of freedom, manners and morals. By vilifying Islam and its ethos, they make the American culture look superior and the Arab culture sound inferior. The American –based characters propagate the tenets of western civilization. They rebel against the Islamic laws in their quest for freedom. They are like the earlier orientalists who profess that “*Oriental, Arabs whose civilization religion and manners were so low, barbaric and anti-ethical as to merit reconquest* ” (Said 1978:172). In order to sustain my arguments, I may need in the forthcoming

sections to illustrate my assumptions by hinting at some theories concerning linguistics, Darwinism and orientalism.

SECTION I: Whiteness and Accents in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992)

There is a discourse of whiteness and superiority of the American accent which dominate *Aladdin* (1992). It is commonplace that the Arabs would have an Arabic accent in the movie; they cannot be natives since Aladdin is not typically an Arab in the original story. But, it is peculiar to see that some characters have different accents as they are all Arabs. It is again peculiar to see that Arabs in the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992) have darker complexion because Arabs can be darker and they can be whiter as well. Besides, the characters who speak American accent are whiter than the darker characters who are ostensibly Arabs.

In *Aladdin* (1992), the evil characters usually have fierce physiognomy and morbid demeanor with an Arabic accent whereas the good ones who speak American accent are endowed with beautiful physical features and high morals. In order to comprehend this distinction, I see the need to resort to the ideas of Edward Said for the superiority of Whiteness and the linguist Lippi Green for the superiority of American accent.

As for whiteness, the colonial enterprise in the Middle East called the world to adapt to the higher standards of the western civilization by alienating the language of the natives. Their white pigmentation gives them the right to rule over a world where Darwinian laws govern. The orientalist discourse is likewise prone to such laws which made the Arab “racially inferior” (Said 1978:312). Arabs should be whiter in order to become a real human being to the superior

culture .Only developed species who are white enough can wield supremacy on the less developed ones (ibid).

The western white is so smart that he could develop himself and locate himself within a civilized society. Thus, Whiteness of the superior society can define their identity and could draw “*epistemological and ontological boundaries* ” .They not only monopolize thoughts and ideas so as to ensure their everlasting dominance, they go so far as to claim legitimacy for controlling reality :

Being a white man, in short, was a very concrete manner, of being in the world, a way of taking hold of reality, language and thought... Reality is divided into various collectives: languages, races, types, colors, mentalities (ibid: 227)

Both in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) whiteness and darkness are used as tools to discriminate the Arab culture and celebrate the western culture. The film makers choose white characters for the role of the evil characters .For instance, the actor who plays the role of the grand vizier in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) is originally white but he is turned into a darker person to play the role of the evil character. In *Aladdin* (1992) the white characters are portrayed as being civilized and morally and physically apt because as Said notices about the superiority of the western features: “*the color of their skins gave them superior ontological status plus great power over much of the inhabited world* ” (ibid: 226-227).On the other hand, the darker characters are depicted as foolish, barbarians and psychopath. The color of their skin did not offer them any sort of refinement or sophistication.

As for the superiority of accents, groups in authority resort to impose English as a global language .In order for them to dominate; they employed “the standard language ideology ” by disregarding other social groups. (Green 1997: 59) They disseminate misinformation about them by disparaging their languages, effacing their identity and disintegrating their values. (ibid).They

exclude variations and impose unanimity. They undermine the accent of the other ethnic groups for whatever good they can bring. Based on The standard language ideology, American society is divided into two clear-cut groups: The normal dominant group with no accents and the different subordinate group with accent-less English (ibid).

Linguistic imperialists do not tolerate foreign languages (Timothy 2002: 506); or foreign accents within their English except for the American accent: Standard Us English is the language of the educated (Green 1997: 54) They set forth a model which needs to be strictly followed otherwise they will be conceived as others despite their contributions in the American society “*But there is nothing objective about this practice. It is the ordering of social groups in terms of who has authority to determine how language is used.*” (ibid: 55)

Lippi Green argues that it is needless ask people to get rid of their accents or ask them to whiten themselves or embrace a specific religion .Language is flexible and our accents single out who we are. These variations are necessary to build us as authentic and original social beings (ibid: 63). As we cannot change the color of our skin, we cannot get rid of our accents. For ethnic groups in America, to adopt a model is not a matter of choice .It is embedded within their nature; they speak with accents because they inherited intrinsic features of their identity .They define who they are.

In *Aladdin* (1992), the characters who speak accent-less English descend from superior culture and the protagonists who have an American English accent belong to an inferior culture. The villainous Arab actors are all fanatics, barbaric, backwards, hostile, dauntless, dogmatic and primitive with a thick Arabic accent. Conversely, the good western descent actors are secular, sympathetic, open -minded, intrepid and civilized. Some characters in *Thousand and One Nights*

(1945) produce gibberish when they refer to the Arabic language. Having done so, the film makers subordinate the Arabs and their language which seems to share some features with the animal sounds. They did not only marginalize them as social beings but they dreadfully suppress them as human beings.

1. Ethnic Superiority in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945):

Superiority in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) came along with the characters of Aladdin, Armina and The Genie Babs .The protagonists (Aladdin and Armina) have comparatively distinctive Western features: The handsome “*Renaissance man* ” Cornel Wilde who plays the role of Aladdin plus the “*Blond bombshell* ” Jürgen Keynes who takes the part of Princess Armina. Princess Armina does not resemble her father the Sultan as if they do not belong to the same ethnic group .She looks like American women with their typically American haircut and fashion of the 1940s. Aladdin also does not seem to descend from the same ethnic stock of common people in Baghdad even when he pretends to be the prince of Hindustan.

The sole purpose of Aladdin in life is singing for beauty and only “ *for the joy of it.* ” Aladdin is the Casanova with the baritone voice who does not care about money .He steals the hearts of women in the market place who unthoughtfully unveil to him but the stunning beauty of Armina ’s face soon captivates his heart .Armina refuses the laws made by the Arab tradition which deprives her from choosing her own husband. It is only Aladdin, the only one she loves .Princess Armina complains, “I won’t marry without love ”. Armina has cold shoulder to the wealth her chosen husband has; all she cares about is love and casting off the shackles of barbarian laws.

The discourse practiced by the protagonists Aladdin and the princess echoes the imperial Western discourse. They epitomize freedom, civilization, good manners and beauty. Armina is deprived from marrying the man she loves because of the oppressive Arabian laws. Both Aladdin and Armina enjoy western physical features and espouse the Western orientalist discourse. They both ask for ample democracy and freedom like the western policy makers whose role is propagate peace without paying any heed to the wealth of other countries.

Princess Armina looks superior by contrast to the other people in the palace. When beholding the blond princess Armina surrounded by the harem girls who are very much like Indian girls; one can get a sketch of an imperialist empire where the princess and Aladdin teach the principles of civilization and liberty. The British accent of Princess Armina has the pride and the manners of a princess. Jonathan Bernstein, an entertainment writer posits, “*There is an old cliché that a British accent represents intelligence, breeding and refinement.*” (quoted in Wenke 1998:1). She asks Novira to dismiss the Harem girls in one of the scenes. Princess Armina does not deal directly with the Harem girls. She only speaks with the principal Harem girl Novira who always makes sure she is happy and grants whatever she needs.

Besides his celebration of freedom and beauty, Aladdin promotes for good morals even if sometimes he has to lie to win the heart of the princess. He is cheerful and develops good habits and high moral values. He always reminds Abdullah not to steal and to watch his manners. He also asks Babs not to eavesdrop while he handles a conversation with the princess. Aladdin in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) comes to teach freedom and challenge the laws designed by Arabs. His American look allows him to be superior and dedicate lessons about freedom and manners.

Aladdin questions the laws in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). He is so courageous that he risks his life for having a single gaze upon the beautiful princess. The idea of losing his limbs and limbs for having a gaze at the princess seems appealing to him. He mocks this cruel and irrational law; he wonders: “A beautiful face that no man has ever seen.” When caught by the guards in the garden, he smiles and with a high composure says that he comes to see the beauty which is not logical that people are devoid from. It seems that Princess Armina learns a lesson of freedom from him. After the scene of the carriage, she bitterly complains, “the least of my slaves enjoys more freedom than a princess can ever know.”

Aladdin makes Princess Armina have a second thought about her life. This vagabond comes to her life and changes many obsolete ideas that seemed for a long time reasonable for her. She wishes that she is anyone but a sultan’s daughter. She wants to be “a normal, brazen woman”. She is a deadly –living princess and how miserable her life is. He induces her to live her own. He encourages her, “You are afraid that you may live for a while”. She could then see how she is deemed as a fragile object to be carefully hidden and looked after makes her think that being trapped in the palace and this veiling thing is not making her free. Aladdin frees other characters. Lastly, he frees the Genie Babs, the Sultan and princess Armina and dismantles the despotic rulers of Baghdad.

Aladdin has high respect for women whom he addresses as ladies. Besides, he is not like the Arab men who do not give women the right to choose their own husband. When he comes to propose to Princess Armina as Prince Anlushan, he open-heartedly looks for the reasons why she declines his proposal. He asks her “Why do you object to me as a husband?”. He tries to impress her as a man not as a wealthy suitor. Aladdin grants Armina’s freedom without forcing her to marry him, he says, “I shall marry no woman against her will... You should marry only no one

but this wonderful man ” .Aladdin also dramatizes the theme that American men are not effeminate. When he asks Babs to have him access to the Harem, she suggests for him that she can turn him into a woman since men are not allowed in the Harem. But he instantly refuses; he had rather be turned into a dog.

Concerning the genie in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945), she is the genie woman who wears westerns physical features with her American name Babs and her American 1940's haircut. She is funny, smart and insightful. She immediately discovers that the Sultan's brother and Jafar are malign people and warns Aladdin not to trust them. Although she has magical powers, she cannot force anyone to love or to be loved .She says, “the lamp does not let me control human hearts I can give you the material things ”. This very ideal is espoused by the Genie in *Aladdin* (1992).A hint at the fact that Arabs claim to have an authority over human hearts because they force women into loving them.

Both genies in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) restore their freedom and cherish a happy end. The beautiful redheaded genie Babs wins the twin of Aladdin after being released by Aladdin .In the Disney adaptation, the Genie eventually becomes free by Aladdin's third wish. Babs, the blond American woman is not as idealist as the Genie in *Aladdin* (1992).It is true she is smart and funny but she is not flawless .She is presented as the besotted lovelorn who is desperately in love with Aladdin .As she does not want to lose him to his lover Armina, she works harder to cancel Aladdin's wedding.

2. American-based Characters in an Arabian Tale: Jasmine and Aladdin

My aim in this section is to analyze the characters of Aladdin and Jasmine who have an American conduct and countenance. The latter carries the idea that American culture is superior

because the heroes have good ethics and good manners opposed to the other characters who are the dangerous, hideous Arabs. I intend to show what qualities the Americanized physical features bestow to Aladdin and Jasmine and in which way do they make them different from the other characters. The profile of Aladdin and Jasmine's personalities transmits three assets: having high morals, rebelling against the irrational dangerous laws and seeking freedom and independence.

The orientalist discourse rests mainly upon the western incarnated characters. Aladdin and Jasmine have western physical and linguistic features which make them different from the other characters (Giroux 2010:109). These physical features embellish the western culture and demonize the Arab culture .Jasmine has a lighter complexion and Aladdin's features are overtly based on the American actor "Tom Cruise" with his teenager western haircut (ibid: 105) (see snapshot 7):

The men are short and stocky with thick lips, missing teeth, heavy, menacing brows, and hooked noses, while the hero Aladdin and heroine Jasmine look like suburban, white, U.S. teenagers (quoted in Blauvelt, Review of Contemporary Media).

In *Aladdin* (1992) Jasmine and Aladdin contrast the orientalist images of the libidinous, deceitful Arab men who hanker after wealth and the victimized Arab women who are subjected to Arab men. Both of them fell for each other even before Jasmine knows that Aladdin is a vagabond and before Aladdin discovers that Jasmine is a princess. They are both smart and share good qualities. Jasmine loves Aladdin as an ordinary man although he is a thief. Aladdin is not like Arab men. He loves her because she is smart, funny and beautiful regardless of her money or her sexual body. The love he has for her is not erotic. Besides, he does not force Jasmine to love as the Orientals do with Arab women.

As for morals and manners, Aladdin is humanist and benevolent. Although he is hungry, he gives his loaf of bread for two wretched children. He also teaches Abu how to speak and have good manners. When he steals a loaf of bread, the guards chase Aladdin with their swinging swords simply because he innocently wants to feed two homeless starving children. He says, "I steal only what I can't afford." Aladdin does not have this bad temper or puckered brows like the common people in Agrabah. He never gets angry, he responds in a high composure to the insults and people lynching him. He takes things easy and in a funny way. On the contrary, he does not have the furious temper that Arab-based characters have. Indeed, Aladdin is a thief but he does it for a good purpose.

What makes Aladdin different is that opposed to the others he is kind to animals and has good manners by contrast to Arabs who lack manners with both animals and human beings. Although he is desperately in love with Jasmine, Aladdin does not want to deceive her. He unveils the truth and discloses his real identity. He confesses that he lies to Jasmine and that he is not a prince Ali Babwa but a mere street rat. Because he wants Jasmine to love him for who he is. He tells her, "I do love you, but I've got to stop pretending to be something I am not". But the smart Jasmine already knows that he is Aladdin the man she first loves in the market place. She only has a problem with only this stupid law which forces her to marry someone she is not in love with.

Both Aladdin and Jasmine bear witness to the danger of the Arab man and stand up for the Muslim laws which render Agrabah a dangerous place; henceforth, they have the same quest for freedom. Princess Jasmine rebels against the irrational laws by refusing the suitors proposing to her. Jasmine is the liberal modern woman who questions the traditional values. Her physical features give her superior assets. She can express her own views and refuses to yield to laws that

the undemocratic state impose on her. She seeks her autonomy amid the cruel Desert Laws .She is not like Budir El Budur who is a mere observer to the oppressive laws.

Jasmine stands up for the male dominance in the palace. She does not reflect the stereotyped image of Arab women who are victimized by the Arab man. She defends herself. When Jafar snobbishly tells the Sultan, “your highness I must intercede on Jasmine’s behalf”, Jasmine angrily thunders, “How dare you? All of you, standing around deciding my future? I am not a prize to be won! ” . She does not even think to surrender if she does not take the man she loves .She decides to overthrow Jafar even in case she is forced to marry. She says, “At least some good will come of my being forced to marry him .When I am a queen, I will have the power to get rid of you ” .In the following conversation with her father, Princess Jasmine rebels against the irrational law which compels her to choose a suitor on her birthday. She fiercely objects the idea that she is a pathetic creature which needs to be protected and taken care of.

I'm not going to be around forever, and I just want

To make sure you're taken care of, provided for.

Sultan: By your next birthday.

Jasmine: The law is wrong.

Sultan: You've only got three more days!

Jasmine: Father, I hate being forced into this.

(She takes a dove out of the cage and pets it.)

If I do marry, I want it to be for love.

(She hands him the dove, and he puts it back in the cage.).

Through the conversation above, I construe that Jasmine is enshrined in the palace which sounds like a giant luxurious jail. She wants to be independent; she clamors: “I can’t stay here and have my life lived for. ” The dove in the cage illustrates her imprisonment .Her father getting

the dove back to the cage reflects the pressure of the law has on her. As a result, she runs away from the castle and cast off the shackles of “the primitive laws ” seeking for freedom and looking for her autonomy. Jasmine does not want to bear the image of the victimized Arab girls who are powerless and need to be nurtured and taken care of. Her image is not similar to the orientalist image of the oriental women who shall never speak for themselves. Instead they objectify themselves and meekly obey the patriarchal laws.

Both Aladdin and Jasmine share the same quest for freedom .They want to free themselves from the danger of the oriental place “Agrabah ”. Everyone seems to condemn them, the common men or the rulers of Agrabah. Their only fault is that they both care for the poor and look for freedom and safety. Aladdin’s life is in jeopardy as he suffers from the dangerous Agrabah. Similarly, Jasmine suffers from imprisonment in a palace “where people tell her where to go and how to dress”. She is not free to make her own choices ”. She is fed up with the royal conventions as Aladdin is worn out with life in Agrabah. Aladdin informs Jasmine, “you don’t seem to know how dangerous Agrabah can be.....always scraping for food and ducking the guards. ”

The journey of the American -based character (Aladdin and Jasmine) for freedom comes to an end when Aladdin gets rid of Jafar and makes Agrabah “a whole new world. As a consequence, he is announced the prince of Agrabah because he proves his worth by saving the princess. The Sultan and Aladdin eventually change the rule which gives the princess the right to marry a common man: “the princess shall marry whomever she deems worthy.”

3. The American-based Culture in *Aladdin* (1992): The Genie

The genie, with his American accent, is voiced by the American comedian Robin Williams. The Genie is funny, fun-making and cheerful .He is never shown angry or frowning or developing a bad behavior. Every time he shows up, he brings happiness and joy to the world .Unlike the hideous Arab-based characters, the Genie is smart and eloquent, effervescent. His image is embellished. He is not like the Genie of the original story who is obedient and barely talks and keeps only repeating redundant sentences. The Genie in the Disney adaptation plays an active role. He is compassionate unlike the cruel and cannibal Genie in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) who tries to grab Abdullah and Aladdin by all means. This gives him superiority that allows him to reign.

The Genie is associated with the American culture including American arts and the American way of life. He transmits the idea that the western culture conveys superior ideals like savoir vivre, humanism and good morals. The film makers make him nebulous and with no determinate and specific shape. This quality enables him to celebrate the American culture and transform himself into different shapes which represent the American arts and the American way of life (the script of *Aladdin* (1992)). He is the spokesman of the western culture. He transforms himself into a series of different American comedians, TV faces and programs, singers. American actors and Disney figures like Pinocchio, Figment from EPCOT center, Sebastian (see



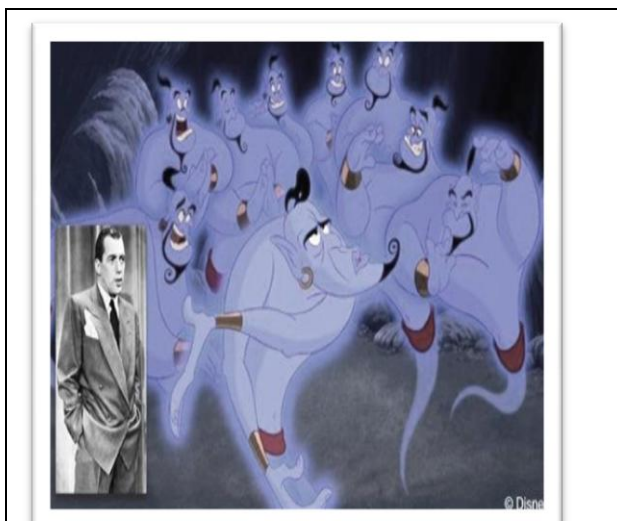
Snapshot 16: The Genie personification of Pinocchio



Snapshot 17: The Genie and the Disney figure Sebastian

snapshots 16, 17)

The Genie also celebrates western languages, traditions and American policy makers. He speaks several languages: French, Spanish, and German. As an example, the French cuisine is also included: “Genie produces a table and chairs, and then writes down things on a notepad, like a waiter ”(Aladdin’s script) .Every time he teaches Aladdin a lesson or states a rule, he incarnates a western figure .The genie turns into the American icon actor and politician Arnold Schwarzenegger (ibid)saying, “what would you wish of me ?” And into ED Sullivan (see snapshot 18) and then into Groucho Marx saying: “No substitutions, exchanges or refunds ” (see snapshot 19). The Genie, the savior, also turns himself into the American joker Jack Nicholson when warranted by Aladdin to help him: “All right, sparky, here's the deal. ” (see snapshot 20)



Snapshot 18 :The Genie personification of the American ED Sullivan



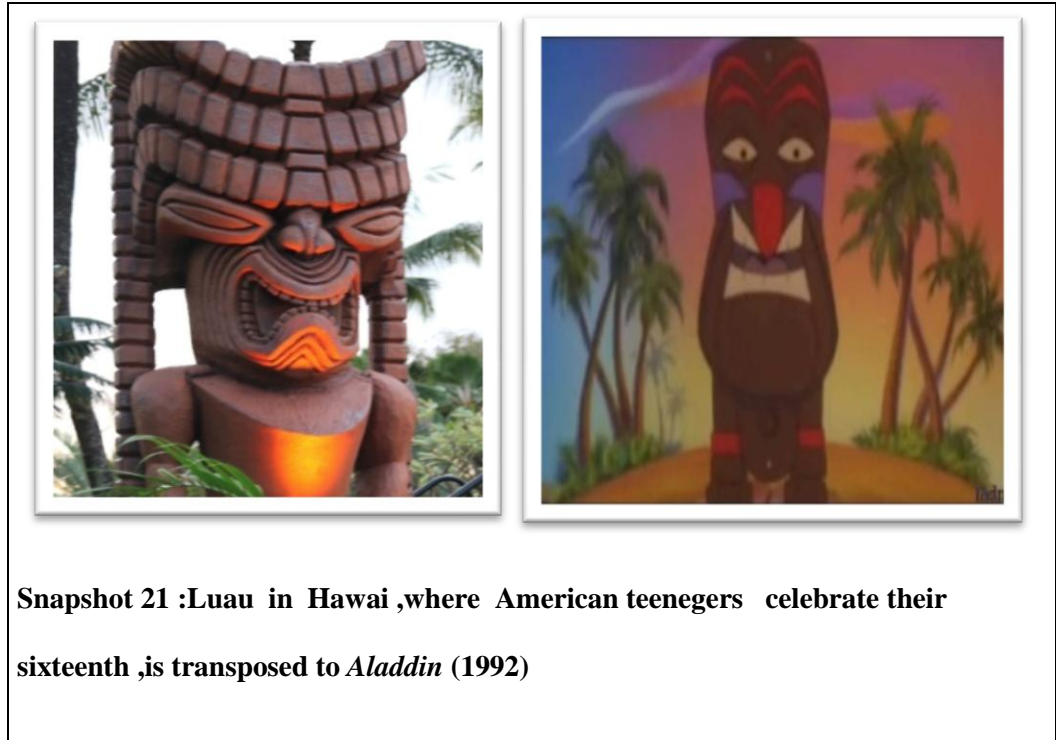
Snapshot 19 :The Genie personification of the American Groucho Marx



Snapshot 20 : The Genie personification of the American actor Jack Nicholson

The Genie also represents “*the American way of life* ” and other things related to western teenagers. The movie producers gave him an attractive image which keeps him close to their lives and the things they love. He refers to typically American parties destined for teenagers such as: *Bar Mitzvah* and *luau sweet sixteen* (see snapshot 21 and the script of *Aladdin* 1992).The former stands for a party organized by Jewish families when their children attain puberty whereas the latter is an American ritual celebrated by Americans when they turn sixteen. This instance of American’s celebrations is found in one of the songs in which the Genie says:

You've heard of your Safari Bar Mitzvahs
 You've all been to a luau sweet sixteen



By celebrating the western culture and languages, the Genie disparages the Arab culture and the orientalist laws. He never transforms himself into an Arabic personality or brings up the Arabic language. He boasts of the Western cultures but belittles and undermines the Arab culture and Arab rulers who are psychopaths like Jafar. There is only one scene where some Arabic letters appear. When he sings “*Friend Like me*”, the Genie pulls a list of meaningless Arabic letters combined together and rubs his back with it. He also criticizes Arabian Laws. He claims that he cannot force anyone to love. This includes people’s right to choose not to abide by oppressive laws. He implicitly suggests that Arab women who marry coercively should be granted more freedom. In addition, Arab men should deal with women as human beings who have the right to choose whether to marry, to love or to object.

The American personality of the Genie which echoes the personality of an American comedian makes of him the archetype of the west which is “*the actor, the spectator, the judge*

and the jury of every facet of Oriental Behavior. ” The Genie criticizes Aladdin’s old-fashioned Arabian clothes .He turns to the American humorist Arsenio Hall then becomes a fashion designer; he says, “first, that fez and vest combo is much too third century. The Genie changes Aladdin’s obsolete Oriental look and performs a complete makeover for him Aladdin is an Arabic name which gets Americanized by the Genie. The latter suggests many Americanized names for Aladdin like: Al, Deen, and Laddy .He shortens Aladdin’s name à *l’ Americaine*. Henceforth, only the western-based characters, Jasmine and the Genie, call him AL.

In *Friend Like Me*, a song which underlines American Jazz music, the Genie also calls Aladdin for modernity and embracing the Western culture. Unlike the Arabs who have only endless tales and thieves. Thanks to the Genie, Aladdin now has power, “*some heavy ammunition* ” and other modern kit which includes yahoo and pizza:

Well Ali Baba had them forty thieves
 Scheherezad-ie had a thousand tales
 You got a brand of magic never fails
 You got some power in your corner now
 Some heavy ammunition in your camp
 You got some punch, pizazz, yahoo and how.....

The American and western features which are embraced by the Genie allows him to teach Aladdin everything from the way to dress up until the way to behave. He shows him how to dress, to talk to love and to behave. The Genie also watches Aladdin’s behavior, judges him and teaches him *savoir-faire* .He is also the friend, the teacher and the father .He exhibits a paternalistic behavior when he asks Aladdin to consider him as a father who will teach him whatever he needs to start family .He nurtures his self-confidence by telling him: “ No matter what anyone says, you will always be a prince to me, ” He does not curse Aladdin name or

belittle him as his countrymen do in Agrabah .He teaches Aladdin how to love and choose his diction with Princess Jasmine. He says to Aladdin: “If you wanna court the little lady, ya gotta be a straight shooter. ”

The Genie represents the idealism and the superiority of the American culture .He is not only the father, the teacher and the savior .He is just everything: *history, mythology*...One can just imagine the life in Agrabah with all the violence and atrocities before his arrival. The advent of his ethics and rules prompted change into Agrabah which is turned into “a whole new world shimmering, shining and splendid.” When he is done with “ his mission civilatrice ” , he could cherish his own freedom. Clad with a western baseball outfit, he flies off bursting with joy and screams: “I am free....I am free ” (see snapshot 22). Noteworthy, American policy makers adore using this glittering motto (Freedom) whenever they interfere in the Middle East.



Snapshot 22: The Genie in his baseball outfit is eventually set free by Aladdin

SECTION II: Otherness, Exoticism and Oriental Women in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992)

So far it has been shown that both physical and linguistic features bestow superiority to the western-based characters who managed to rule at the end of the story. If there is a superiority discourse, it means that there is a juxtaposition of another contradicting discourse. The latter has to do with the otherness of the Arab-based characters. The collision between both discourses gives rise to some orientalist ingredients such as: the objectification of Oriental women, exotic setting and otherness of the common people. The Orient in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) is linked to exoticism, violence and barbarism. It is also portrayed as a haven for male dominance, “*the despotic rulers and the sensual women*”. All these themes are dramatized through the Arab-based characters both in *Aladdin* (1992) and to lesser degree in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945).

1 .Otherness of the Arab-based characters in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992)

There is a binary representation of characters in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) even if the classification is not as clear-cut as *Aladdin* (1992). Thus, this section is an attempt to show how Orientals are *orientalized* in *Aladdin* (1992) and *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). I need , first of all, to put this chapter in context and provide general understanding of others and strangers by Edward Said and the imperialist writer Kipling.

According to Said, European orientalism classifies races into two binary categories: The European is rational, virtuous, mature and normal whereas the Oriental is irrational, childlike, fallen, and different (Said1978:40).The American orientalism did not introduce new ideas about

the Orient and the Orientals; they inherited them from European orientalism. In *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992), every detail about the Arabs is *Othered* and *Orientalized*: “Orientals, Arabs whose civilization religion and manners were so low, barbaric and anti-ethical as to merit reconquest.” (ibid: 172)

Thousand and One Nights (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) are rife with orientalist and exotic images. According to the film makers, the tale of *Aladdin* is supposed to portray Arabs. However the characterization of the movie is clear-cut into two binary categories: The good, virtuous western descent characters and the evil, malicious Arab characters. On the other hand, these characters are *Othered* by the Western-based character. They are different from them: the dark, evil obtuse, mindless, characters and the White, smart, good and rational characters.

In his poem *The Stranger* (1958), Kipling claims that the stranger is subject to his instincts and slave to his untaming bad temper “*possessed his blood*” (Appendix I). It is discernible that Kipling uses pronouns like “*We*” and “*Our*” when he refers to men from the same stock and uses the “stranger” word when he refers to *Others*. Whether they are true or kind, the strangers are always non grata and have no place in the western societies. For whatever they do and whoever they are (true or kind) (Appendix I), they are always deemed as different foreigners, strangers and others.

Kipling also pledges that the West cannot understand the strangers because they do not have the same language as theirs. Besides, they do not have any moral restraints or cultural values that define them. They are empowered by their “*Gods*” from “*far off lands*”. They are also controlled by supernatural things that *we* (the West) cannot fathom out. The Western-based character like Aladdin in *Aladdin* (1992) cannot understand common people except the other Western-based characters: Jasmine and the Genie. That is because common people have bad-

temper and low manners. Besides, the lawmen are subjects to their instincts and the irrational Islamic laws.

In *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992), Orientals are different from the American incarnated characters in a strange way. It is ostensible that there are two categories of others in both films: the Lawmen, the Male Genie and Common people in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and Jafar, the Guards and Common People in *Aladdin* (1992).

A. Otherness of the Arab -based Characters in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945)

The Arab-based characters are classified in to two categories: the lawmen and common men. To begin with; the Arab rulers (Abu Hassan, Haji and the Guards) in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) are shown as, greedy despots and irrational lawmen. They stipulate the rules at the instance of their overmastering impulses. For the sake of money, they can abandon anyone on their way even if they have the same blood and flesh or they are their closest friends.

Both the treacherous grand vizier “Abu Hassan ” and the Sultan’s brother “ Haji ” orchestrate plans to overthrow the Sultan. They treat Armina as a bargain and a jackpot to be won. Haji promises Abu Hassan to marry him princess Armina but he declines his proposal as soon as the wealthier Prince Anlushan (the disguised Aladdin) proposes to the princess. Aladdin and Abdullah are about to be beheaded simply because Haji has found out that they are mere vagabonds. Haji then accepts Abu Hassan to marry her because and until then it was the grand vizier Abu Hassan who possesses more. This denotes that the Sultan’s brother deprives the princess from the right of choosing her own future husband. He prefers bags of money to the princess’s happiness.

As for the barbaric guards, they embody the ferocity and violence of the Arab lawmen. They are displayed like a horde of Romans riding horses with whips and lion symbols on their costumes .They vehemently thrash the innocent people in the marketplace; curse, call them dogs and threaten them to cut off their limbs and limbs if anyone dares to have a gaze upon the princess. The guards are also shown as mindless and unable to control their desires. By seducing the guard, the harem girl Novira cunningly releases Aladdin and Abdullah .She exploits the guard's inclination for her and furtively takes the key and hands it to Aladdin. The guards do not even notice that Abdullah is distracting them. They are absorbed playing cards and do not pay any heed that Abdullah and Aladdin fooled them and run away from prison.

Whiteness in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) rests mainly upon the characters which exhibit superior ideals. Conversely , it is noticed that there is a xenophobic discourse against the blacks who are shown dumb and treated as people who can do things only with their bodies not their minds (see snapshot 23) .



Snapshot 23 :the black slaves lifting the carriage of the princess

The black slaves hold the carriage of the princess with their bare hands. Aladdin throws a barrel and all the black slaves who are supposed to watch the princess left her alone and ran

away either because they are afraid or to see what was going on .Aladdin sounds as if he is sure he is going to scare them away. This shows them as not to enjoy a scant of intelligence because some of them could go to see what happened and the others could have stayed with the princess. Besides, the male genie in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) is not that petite, stunning, white woman with an American coiffure (see snapshot 24). He is nevertheless speechless, obnoxious and barely marks his presence in the movie. He is a giant black, morbid disgusting man. Abdullah and Aladdin could easily run away from him when he tries to grab them. His enormous corpse does not serve him. It is worthless compared to the flexibility and intelligence of Aladdin and Abdullah.

In *Thousand and One Nights* (1945), the black genie does not fulfill wishes but the Genie Babs has the power to be helpful and change things. The film producers opted for the redheaded woman with a western name to play the role of the clever and funny genie. They westernized the features of the Genie and reversed his misconduct (see snapshots 24, 25). Babs reinforces the American character who is depicted as being funny, friendly and loveable. On the contrary, the black genie conveys the stereotypical image of dark people as being giant and scary cannibals.



Snapshot 24: Babs, the woman genie, in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945)



Snapshot 25: The Dark genie in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945)

The Arab men in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) are predominantly either skinny or overweight and most of them wear moustache or beard. Common men in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) are very fond of money either because they are impoverished by their government or they are naturally greedy. Aladdin refuses to take the coin offered to him for his singing in the sale of slave girls. He taps the belly of the man responsible for the sale and asserts that he sings only “*for the joy of it*”. As soon as he throws the coin to the crowd, a stampede advances to get hold of it.

The common men also appear to be foolish with low manners or subjects to beautiful women. In many cases, we see Abdullah deriding them in the market square, with the guards, the tailor and the peddler. Ali, the tailor, looks like a foolish man when Abdullah and Aladdin come

to fetch the lamp. Ali immediately starts relating his story to a stranger with the magic lamp and the charms offered to him. Abdullah pretends listening while he cunningly takes the lamp which is unpreserved and dangling on Ali clothes. Before Ali could finish his story, Abdullah goes away with the lamp .Ali turns around to see all the spell has vanished, he gets astonished as if he has just sadly woken up from a very nice dream with Genie Babs and the red -headed women.

Throughout the film, we learn that Arab men are infatuated with the western beauty “*which intoxicate their souls* ”, and are never satisfied with one woman .Babs tells Ali the tailor that she is able to make all his dreams come true. He finds nothing to wish for except that he summons: “I have something he long desired. The first thing that strikes his mind be “*is to have several red head women* ” who must be physically attractive.

Concerning the dark peddler, he has the stamp of the uncivilized Arab man with low manners. When they find him, Abdullah and Aladdin do not tell him that the lamp is magical as Ali did. They claim that it is a family legacy. The dark man could not see that Aladdin and Abdullah are hasty waiting for him to show them the place of the lamp. When Abdullah and Aladdin ask about the lamp, he swiftly starts recalling his endless stories about his grandmother (see snapshot 26). He is not able to formulate a single coherent answer to their direct questions. He resembles Orientals whose

“reasoning is of the most slipshod description ...His explanation will generally be lengthy, and wanting in lucidity .He will probably contradict himself half-a dozen times before he has finished his story”. (Quoted in Said 1978:38)



Snapshot 26 :Abadullah and Aladdin asking about the lost lamp

The peddler pretends that he is a sentimental man and keeps reminding Aladdin and Abdullah about this fact albeit he spits on his camel when he gets prepared to sing his grandmother ' favorite song. He assumes that the camel spits on him because he gets annoyed of the way he sings. As Aladdin and Abdullah leave, he starts singing “ gibberish ” and gets completely out of tone. The film makers did not seek a song with Arabic music and Arabic text; they had rather make it sound that Arabs have a strange and a barbaric language “ gibberish ” and no sophisticated musical repertoire. The peddler does not have the voice of the baritone as Aladdin who correctly sings beautiful English songs with western rhythm and music. We also see Abdullah mocking the Arabic language which has something to do with magic. When he makes endeavors in the cave to speak Arabic, he finds no Arabic word to say except names of Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia. He gets stuck and starts uttering gibberish which stands for the Arabic language.

As regards the Old Magician Kofir , he is shown with a darker complexion ,a white beard and a fierce look .He waited many years for *l' homme ad hoc* to get him the magical lamp.

Because Abdullah convinces Aladdin not to enter the cave, Kofir then dodges him with all his might into the cave. When Aladdin refuses to give him the lamp unless he is out, he insolently responds that they can rot in the cave if they want. Although he is a very old man shivering and unable to hold himself together, the sorcerer is still greedy and says that he could wait longer for the treasure in the cave.

B .The Otherness of the Arab-based Characters in *Aladdin* (1992)

There is another category of others which stand for ferocity of Arabs in *Aladdin* (1992): common people and the lawmen .Concerning the common people of Agrabah, they are weird, disgusting and have barbarian manners. Aladdin and Jasmine are always displayed as being shocked and disgusted by the otherness of common people in the market. “*Jasmine is startled by a fish thrust into her face.* ” (Aladdin’s script) .There are even weird and unpleasant rituals that Jasmine encounters when she is in the market: “*She bumps into a fire eater...he gulps then belches fire from his stomach...he is pleased and taps his stomach* ” (ibid).

The common people believe in the laws of the desert and get furious if they are not respected. The thoughtful and sympathetic Jasmine is strikingly amazed by the irrational laws of Agrabah. She perceives a homeless, hungry child and offers her fruit without paying for it. Surprisingly, the proprietor thunders at her: “you’d better be able to pay for that ” . He calls her thief and threatens to chop off her hand: “do you know what is the penalty for stealing? Jasmine gets frightened (see snapshot 27) because she ignores this law and does not know what to do since she is always enshrined in the palace ”. Luckily for Jasmine, Aladdin shows up and instantly saves her with his wit by claiming that Jasmine is his crazy sister.



Snapshot 27 :A common man executing the penalty of stealing on Jasmine

Aladdin is also undermined by laws in Agrabah. Nobody seems to understand Aladdin except Jasmine and the Genie. People in Agrabah blame Aladdin by launching withering curses to him all at once as if he commits a big awful crime: “Stop, thief! Vandal! Outrage! Scandal! Riffraff! Street rat! Scoundrel! Aladdin thinks, “If only, they’d look closer, would they see a poor boy? They’d find out, there’s so much more to me ”. Common people in Agrabah also lack manners towards animals. The proprietor violently angrily curses the monkey “Abu ”:“You filthy ape! ” (see snapshot 28).



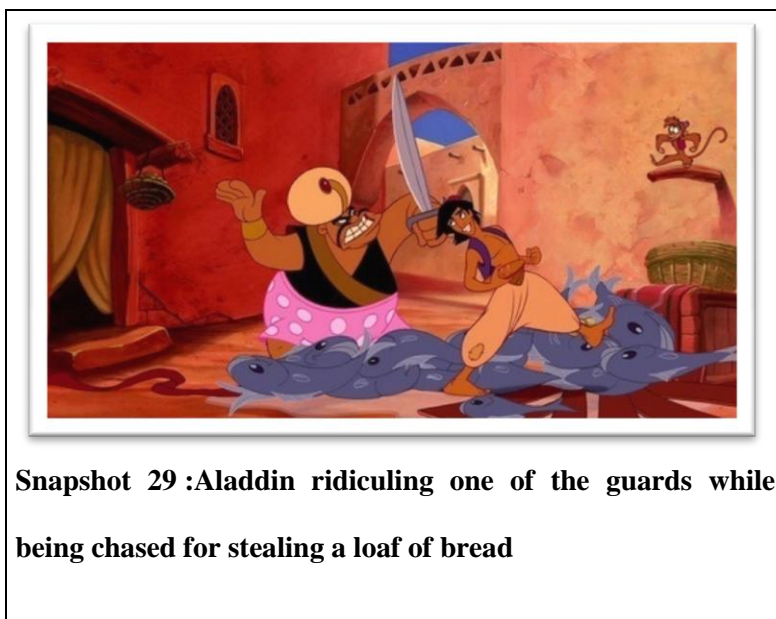
Snapshot 28: Aladdin saving Abu from the wrathful proprietor

Another example of the immoral Arabs is found in the character of Prince Ahmed .The latter is one of Jasmine’s suitors. She describes him as “the overdressed, self-absorbed prince” .Even Rajah, Jasmine’s pet, could figure out that he is not a decent person. Although he is very rich, he lacks manners .Unlike Aladdin who is kind and sympathetic to children, Prince Ahmed is haughty, merciless and cruel towards them: “*the prince brings up his whip to attack the children but Aladdin jumps in front of them and catches the whip* ”. He dubs one of the children “a filthy brat ” only because they come to watch the horse he rides. Aladdin tells him: “If I were as rich as you,I would afford some manners .” Like his fellow men who are insolent towards Aladdin and disrespect him, the angry prince Ahmed also treats Aladdin in a snobbish and demeaning way .Ahmed tells him: “you are a worthless street rat, you were born a street rat and only your fleas will mourn you. ”

As regards the lawmen in Agrabah, Jafar and the Guards have nonchalance towards poor people and impose severe retributions in case they steal to satisfy their basic needs. This makes Agrabah a perilous and hazardous place to live in. The guards are constantly chasing Aladdin

with their swords because he steals a loaf of bread to feed himself and the starved children. ; One of the guards threatens him, “I will have your hand for a trophy street rat! ”

Jafar’ s guards yield to his imperious whims and succumb to his thirst for violence. They behead, kill and imprison innocent subjects and citizens to satisfy his endless greed. This echoes Said ’s conception of Arabs by orientalists: “*Arabs are murderous and that violence and deceit are carried in their genes .*” (Said 1978 : 287).Yet the guards are like the Orientals who are effeminate and timorous .They shrink in fear when they behold the helpless animal “ Abu ” holding a sword. They instantly point out their swords all at once at the monkey: Guard 1:“He’s got a sword! ”. Guard 2:“You idiot, we all got swords ” .The monkey and Aladdin scorn the lawmen (the guards): “*The guard’s turban is pulled....Aladdin dodges a couple of swings, then pulls down the guard’s pants.* ” (see snapshot 29)



Jafar, the vile betrayer, is dishonest to the Sultan who considers him as his most trusted vizier. When he finds Jasmine hanging out with Aladdin, he immediately decides his head to be

cut off. Jasmine gets shocked: “by beheading .No...How could you? ”. Jafar pretends that he keeps peace in Agrabah while he proves to be the most overmastering totalitarian. He is presented as the psychopath with “*disordered mind* ” who undermines animals. It is perceived that the evil parrot Iago, who sticks to Jafar and nails on his shoulders, repeats all what Jafar says and mirrors his misdeeds. They both orchestrate plans to get rid of Jasmine, Aladdin and the Sultan. Jafar and the guards reflect the orientalist idea that “*Arabs are unkind to animals* ” (ibid: 38-39).He is not as kind to his pet as Aladdin and Jasmine are to their animal companions. Despite his help and advice, Jafar calls Iago “ a dumb animal ”.

Jafar has dominating intentions .His sick love for power led him to wish for a rank higher than the Sultan. He asks the genie, “Genie, grant me my first wish, I wish to rule on high as sultan!!”! He is the freak who strives for power. When turned into a powerful genie, he cried hysterically: “Yes! Yes! The Power! The absolute power! The universe is mine to command, to control! ” Jafar has power but he misuses it. He adores power and finds power only in money and mass destruction. He claims that whoever “has gold makes rules ”. He changes whatever displeases him. He thinks that power is having accumulating money and being able to destroy whoever he wants.

As a conclusion, the way of life imposed on Jasmine and Aladdin by the common people and lawmen hamper them from having their own freedom .Therefore, they find solace with animals. Jasmine has the tiger Rajah who is her balm of consolation. We learn that he is her only friend .Jasmine to the tiger Raja: “I’ve never had real friends except you Rajah. I’ve never been outside the palace walls ”. The monkey Abu is also the only friend of Aladdin and accompanies him in every move he makes. This harmony with animals is probably intentional to criticize

people in Agrabah who are so unbearable to live with that Jasmine and Aladdin find harmony with animals who seem to be more civilized than them.

2. The Exotic Setting in *Aladdin* (1992)

Indeed, the events in *Aladdin* (1992) revolve around Agrabah, a desert place, where barbarism and exoticism prevail. After criticizing life in Agrabah and how the Orientals are *orientalized* in the section above, it is necessary to see how Agrabah conveys the image of the Orient which is misrepresented by orientalist. In order to support my arguments, I need to analyze two songs which come at the beginning and the end of *Aladdin* (1992). For later discussion in this section, I will resort to other exotic images about Agrabah which do not appear in the songs. I aim at showing the binary classification of the world. My aim is also to prove that by contrast to the New World (the West) which is epitomized in the closing song (Appendix III), the East seems to be barren, exotic and barbaric through the opening song (Appendix II).

To begin with, there is a wide disparity between the East and the West in two songs in the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992): the opening song performed by the dark Arab-based character (the peddler) and the closing song which is performed by the American-based characters (Aladdin and Jasmine). Throughout the opening song, I construe that Agrabah or the Arab land is a wasteland which is associated with barbarism, exoticism, and nothingness. Concerning the closing song which speaks for the Western World, it outlines three themes can be highlighted: freedom, regeneration and beauty.

Every word of the lyrics is breathing orientalism in the opening song. The song represents the Arab culture since it is aired by the peddler who is an Arab-based character with his Arabic accent and dark pigmentation. He introduces the movie with a song which includes the use of the flute and *orientalized* music: “snake-charming/belly-dancing sensual melody ” (Al-Tae 2010:

256) .The description of the East does not correlate with the image of the West in the closing song (the Whole New World). Agrabah is like Arabia and Hijaz where the bareness of the land seems to echo the bareness of the mind. The peddler describes his home as a barren, exotic and barbaric land .There is an illustration of this land in Said's *Orientalism* (1978):

Arabia has been an especially privileged place for the orientalist, not only because Muslims treat Islam as Arabia's genius loci, but also because the Hijaz appears historically as barren and retarded as it is geographically (Said 1978:235)

Agrabah is a desert place with blazing heat: "*hotter than hot* " where nobody has a purpose even the roaming camels. Agrabah is exotic and primitive because strangely the "*sun's from the west* " not the East and "*the sand is always right* ". Sand can tell them about time and make predictions about the future. Agrabah is also a place where Arabs are harsh and irrational. They can get rid of one your body parts simply if they do not like the way you look like. Arabs are resistible to change their barbaric home. They are fatalist: "*It is barbaric but hey it's home* "; they just accept their home as it is.

The Opening Song: "Arabian Nights " (APPENDIX II)

Oh I come from a land
 From a faraway place
 Where the caravan camels roam
 Where they cut off your ear /Where it's flat and immense
 If they don't like your face /And the heat is intense
 It's barbaric, but hey--it's home!
 When the wind's at your back
 And the sun's from the west
 And the sand in the glass is right
 Come on down,
 Stop on by
 Hop a carpet and fly
 To another Arabian night!

Arabian nights
 Like Arabian days
 More often than not

are hotter than hot
In a lot of good ways

The closing song *A Whole New World* is an American-based song with western music. It does not include typically oriental instruments like the flute nor does it entail an oriental rhythm or an Arabic accent. The song has become a world hit and won Grammy in 1993 (Al-Tae 2010: 256) performed by many American singers to celebrate love stories. It describes a whole new world away from the exotic, barren, pointless Orient. This new world is different from the barbaric place (the desert) described by the peddler. Unlike Agrabah where Darkness prevails (moons, nights), a new westernized world emerges at the end of the movie with the closing song. This world is described by Jasmine and Aladdin as “*shining, shimmering and splendid.*” Aladdin leads Jasmine to this world during a carpet ride. He opens Jasmine’s eyes and shows her the real life she deserves through this new world away from the dangerous Agrabah.

In the description of the peddler, there is monotony and no change: “*Arabian Nights like Arabian days*”. Conversely the world of Jasmine and Aladdin is a magnificent place where: “*every turn a surprise with new horizons to pursue*”. Both Jasmine and Aladdin are flying and cherishing their freedom since no one can control them: “*No one to tell us no or where to go*”. She has never seen such dazzling place. “*It is crystal clear*” there is a great disparity between Agrabah and this wondrous place:

The dichotomy between “*Arabian Nights*” and “*A Whole New World*” in Disney’s *Aladdin* is built along these lines. “*Arabian Nights*” denotes the timeless stagnant Orient, reflecting a culture, that unlike, that of the West, counters change and resists it...“*A Whole New World,*” which dramatizes the difference along binary oppositions between us and them, here and there, and right and wrong. (ibid)

Jasmine feels renewed with Aladdin in this carpet ride. She is like “*a shooting star*”, she does not want to go back to the harsh living of Agrabah. To flee the pressure that the laws hold

on her, Princess Jasmine is looking for the opposite image of the desert .She wants to set herself free from the images of the sandy oppression of the harsh desert laws.

The Closing Song: “A Whole New World ” (APPENDIX III)

Aladdin: I can show you the world
 Shining, shimmering, splendid
 Tell me, princess, now when did
 You last let your heart decide?
 I can open your eyes
 Take you wonder by wonder
 Over, sideways and under
 On a magic carpet ride

A whole new world
 A new fantastic point of view
 No one to tell us no
 Or where to go
 Or say we're only dreaming

Jasmine: A whole new world
 A dazzling place I never knew
 But when I'm way up here
 It's crystal clear
 That now I'm in a whole new world with you

Aladdin: Now I'm in a whole new world with you

Jasmine: Unbelievable sights
 Indescribable feeling
 Soaring, tumbling, freewheeling
 Through an endless diamond sky

A whole new world

Aladdin: Don't you dare close your eyes
 Jasmine: A hundred thousand things to see
 Aladdin: Hold your breath - it gets better
 Jasmine: I'm like a shooting star
 I've come so far
 I can't go back to where I used to be

The presentation of the setting in the Disney movie *Aladdin* (1992) is quite strange and exotic. The Orient in the film is considered as the sole place which gathers all the Orientals under one roof. This place is called Agrabah where the boundaries of the Orient are effaced. Agrabah is a cosmopolitan place which reunites all the Orientals from the old colonies of the French and British colonizers. There is a combination of Indian, Arab, North African, Iranian and Egyptian elements. For instance, I can mention the North African market, the Egyptian hookah, the Iranian bazaar, Indian and Chinese rituals. Moreover; there are common features between the design of the Sultan's castle and the Indian *Taj Mahal* in Agra (India) which is very close to the name of the setting (Agrabah) in *Aladdin* (1992).

The song analysis above suggests that both Arabs and their land are primitive and backwards. *Aladdin* (1992) shows that not only people in Agrabah are evil even Sand in Agrabah is wicked, magical and oppressive. Sand is the evil ally of Jafar. To practice sorcery and witchcraft, he addresses sands in one of the scenes, "Ah sands of time-reveal to me the one who can enter the cave." Jafar also resorts to sand in order to kill Jasmine and drown her in the hourglass but Aladdin hopefully comes and save her from the evil sands which are about to strangle her.

Agrabah bears the stereotyped image of the Orient which is associated with a constellation of miscellaneous and incongruent images: belly dancers, flying carpets, magicians, Genies, camels, flying carpets ...etc. All these latter images make out of Agrabah "a place of romance, exotic beings". Agrabah sounds like a big circus: flames, costumes and outfits, tigers and monkeys. All the animals of the world are present in Agrabah. But, there is a substantial focus on circus animals such as: tigers, elephants and snakes. Abu and Aladdin are acting like acrobats jumping, climbing and running. Iago for instance, calls Aladdin the clown.

Moreover, people in Agrabah do not do any ordinary or daily activities. We only see common men doing weird things in open air like sleeping on bed of nails, performing muscles shows in the midst of crowds or chopping off hands.

3 .The Objectification and Eroticization of Oriental Women in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992)

Orientalists have perceptibly associated Arab women with the Harem, belly dancing and the veil .There are two images that have always objectified oriental women: the harem girls with their erotic belly dancing outfits and the oppressed veiled women .The images transmit two themes :objectification and submission. In order to learn about these images in both *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992), I will proceed for each sub-section by presenting the true knowledge about these two symbols (harem and the veil) and how they are distorted and *Orientalized* by orientalists.

The Harem

The Harem during the Turkish Empire was the place where it is forbidden for strange men to have access to because the Sultan's wives, handmaids, his family and concubines live there .The Harem is an Arabic word used by Arabs and mostly by Muslims. It may stand for: sacred, forbidden, wife, protection and decency. What is sacred and decent for Muslims turns out to be a lustful haven by the orientalist's descriptions of the Harem Life. What is forbidden itches their curiosity and drove them to unleash their imagination by launching erotic speculations which make the harem a place where sexuality and nudity prevail (Sahar 2014:81).The Harem was vividly present in *Arabian Nights*' stories. The latter bear the same of the eroticized description

of Oriental women in the Harem. Burton explains in one of his annotations in *The Thousand and One Nights*,

The Moslem Harem is a great school for this lesbian love...the motive of the practice lies deeper .As amongst men, the mixture of the feminine with the masculine temperament leads to sodomy, so the reverse makes women prefer their own sex.(Burton 1885:254)

The eyes of the male orientalist were deprived from having a single gaze upon women in the harem (Reclaiming Identity, 2011).This intrigues the orientalist men who were so keen to know what Arab men keep enclosed in their chambers and what lies behind the walls of the Harem .Their speculations about the harem life are the figment of their imagination (Sahar 2014:82). European writers, painters and travelers flocked together to bear witness to the sexuality of women in the Harem. By doing so, the European and American orientalists stripped out Arab women and Islam from all their virtual values in many areas of research and other arenas of media like Hollywood:

These Euro-American fantasies were not just based on Arabian Nights .They became an integral part of all cultural productions of the nineteenth century in Europe and increasingly in the United States .They were reaffirmed in political documents and diplomatic massives, as well as in travel narratives, paintings, photographs, posters, operas, bell dancing choreographies, and early Hollywood films.(ibid2014:112)

The Arab or Oriental women are represented as nude or half naked yet the Victorian and French women were clothed from head to toe. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to note that there are other European women who could have access to the Harem and offer genuine knowledge about Oriental women such as Henriette Brown (1829-1901) a French painter who dedicated many pictures about the Harem life in Turkey .In one of her paintings *Une Beauté Orientale* (1861), she shows a beautiful Turkish woman with a scarf wrapped in a Turkish way and wearing a Turkish belt on her embroidered outfit (see snapshot 30).



**Snapshot 30: *Une Beauté Orientale* (1861) by
Henriette Brown**

Moreover, some letters written by Montagu, which have offered unbiased knowledge about the Harem life, were sent into the oblivion. Lady Montagu is (1689-1762) a British traveller and writer whose husband was assigned as British ambassador in Istanbul and Constantinople. (ibid 83) In one of her letters, Lady Montagu describes the Harem life. She writes, “*I found the lady sitting on her sofa, in a sable vest. She advanced to meet me, and presented me half a dozen of her friends with great civility.*” (Montagu 1838:10) Montagu was watching with fascination and enchantment the Harem Life. She was taken up by the beauty and the civility of women in the Turkish Harem. She thinks that they are endowed with high civility and cherishes more freedom than Victorian women. When beholding the traces of the corset of Montagu on her body, one of the harem girls notices:

The husbands in England were much worse than in the East, for [they] tied up their wives in little boxes, the shape of their bodies...the greatest barbarities in the world and pitied the poor women for being such slaves in Europe. (Quoted in Ashenburg 2008:126)

However, for orientalists, the Arab man is hostile and takes it as a duty to protect his female but, in fact, he frustrates her and limits her freedom to speak and react. Likewise, He ignores her needs and looks down on her. He does not know how to communicate and the only language he speaks is the language of force and violence. When Jafar orders Jasmine to marry him, Jasmine gets speechless out of amazement; and then Jafar says: “You’re speechless; I see a fine quality in a wife ”. He objectifies Jasmine the way the Arab men do. He compels Arab women to obey his whims and succumb to his sexual desires. Lane thinks about Egyptians.

Arab women are in a desperate stoicism, enshrouded with fear, unable to defend themselves and stand up for the Arab male’s cruelty: “*Orientalists like Victorian housewives were confined to silence and to unlimited enriching production* ” (Said1985:103) Jafar in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) respectively force Armina and Jasmine into marrying them regardless of how much they hate them: “If the princess has not chosen a husband by the appointed time, then the Sultan shall choose for her ”

The conceptualization of gender differs from one character to another. Jafar is libidinous. He says to Jasmine: “A beautiful desert such as yourself should be on the arm of the most powerful man in the world ”. He takes Jasmine for a dessert to feed his lecherous desires. Jafar considers her as a sexual object. The Oriental Jafar does not perceive Jasmine the way Aladdin does. Even if the genie is more powerful than Jafar, he cannot make people fall in love. The Oriental Jafar thinks everything can be attained by exerting power and violence even love is a material thing to be acquired. He says, “I wish for princess Jasmine to be desperately in love with me ”. A wish

the Genie could not fulfill but Jasmine stands up for him and fights back when he forces her into this.

Aladdin, the American-based character, does not behold Jasmine as an eroticized object. He does not accentuate her body. He describes Jasmine decently for who she is. He highlights her beautiful mental faculties and *je ne sais quoi* qualities. He says about Jasmine, “ She’s got these eyes that just...and this hair wow...and her smile ”. Nevertheless, Jafar calls Jasmine a pussycat a slang word which suggests being sexually attractive. Orientalists allegedly profess that Arab men are weakened by their libidinous desires: “*European who can discursively control the passions and excitements to which the Muslims are unhappily subject* ” (Said 1978:162). Jafar is infatuated and falls weak when Jasmine flirts him. He could not help himself. Jasmine fraudulently described him as someone who is “tall, handsome, well dressed and his beard is so twisted. ” . By this, she focuses on his most terrible physical features and means the opposite. Jafar is one of those Arabs who, according to the western orientalist like to marry little girls and they oblige women to marry them by force.

In *Thousand and One Nights* (1945), Aladdin bears the western orientalist discourse which claims that Arab men, who contrary to the Western man oppress Arab women and see them as sexual objects. To illustrate this point, it is easily perceived that Aladdin is not a voyeur .When the princess prepares herself to take a bath in her private place (the harem), he respects her in so far as he closes his eyes although he is disguised as a dog and he knows the princess does not feel his presence .This probably suggests that American culture is superior and it encompasses good manners and ethics. Aladdin can also control his inner instincts; he says in one of his conversations with Princess Jasmine: “silent to my impatient heart ”.

As regard the Harem, it is not a place characterized by nudity and sexuality in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). In both *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) the western-based characters get into the harem where there are identical, nameless girls with belly-dancing attires .Although the Harem is considered in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) as the private place of the princess where she could change her clothes (Babs said it is forbidden to get into the Harem), Aladdin insists to get in there because he could not wait until he sees the princess again. The main character Aladdin in *Aladdin* (1992) is seen lurking in the harem with the flirtatious and manipulative girls who are trying to seduce and coquet him.

The Harem girls are seductive and manipulative in *Aladdin* (1992) whereas they are revealed in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) as naïve and speechless girls who are used to entertain and sing for the princess to mellow her infliction (see snapshots 31, 32).However, not all the Harem Girls are naïve in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) .The case of the Harem girl Novira evinces that Harem girls and Arab women are not all submissive and mere objects.



Snapshot 31: The erotic Harem Girls in *Aladdin* (1992)



Snapshot 32: The naïve Harem Girls in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945)

They can provide assistance too and can be used otherwise. Whenever Princess Armina is in a fix, she tries to sort her out. Novira also helps Aladdin and Abdullah to escape from prison because the princess is afraid of losing him again.

As a conclusion to the Harem representations, sexuality is not reinforced and heightened in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). We do not really notice that the Arab men are libidinous and subject to their desires. They only have an inclination to blond women. This was seen earlier with the tailor who asks Babs to grant him anything he wants; he finds nothing to wish for except many redheaded women. Moreover, in *Aladdin* (1992), a bunch of Indians prostrates for Aladdin and half-naked harem girls flirting Aladdin who tries to kiss one of them. Aladdin is reinforcing here a constellation of anti-Arab stereotypes, and all disparaging images forged by the orientalist which include the divine rulers and the sexualized women.

As a matter of fact, Arab women are always associated with belly dancers. Belly dancing is not an Arabic tradition; neither does it originally belong to the cultural repertoire of Arabs. Belly dancing has Indian origins but it was not performed for the sake of men because they were not allowed to get in and mix up with women. Likewise, the costumes were not eroticized since there were only women there amusing themselves in puberty ceremonies (In IAM). With her belly dancing outfit, the American-based character Jasmine intends to transport more freedom for the suffering women in the Orient from the tight grip of the oriental man in the East. She represents both the oppressive culture and freedom with her belly dancing outfit. Jasmine seems to represent these ambivalent and paradoxical purposes:

belly dancing in the United States is used to evoke a culture that is simultaneously oppressive and liberating for women, socially and sexually, and the figure of the Arab woman is one that is both envied and patronized by American belly dancers. (Sunaina 2008: 18)

The Veil

Here I come to the veil which has always accompanied the orientalist image of Arab women. Wearing the veil may stand for: modesty, oppression or resistance (Reclaiming identity, 2011). The veil we see in *Arabian Nights* adaptations brought a misinformation about the veils Muslim women wear. Arab women in orientalist films are most of the time shown covering their faces with transparent veils and keeping their heads uncovered. The orientalist misconception of the veil dovetails with the English definition. According to the English definition, “a veil is a piece of usually more or less transparent fabric attached to a woman’s hat...to conceal the face or protect from the sun.” (Bullock xli:2002)

The veil is also stereotyped by the orientalist discourse. As a case in point, I refer to the French imperialism and the veil conception by orientalists in Algeria. This piece of cloth was thought-provoking and *bête noire* for the French orientalists under the colonial rule in Algeria. The colonial enterprise was not interested in the veil per se; it rather cared about a very important asset of the Algerian identity at the time. The veil was so irritating that the French colonialists considered it as an institution to be fought. Fanon posits that if you want to conquer a society, you should start with the veil. The colonial enterprise needed to know all the secrets of the society and distort their values and what hold them together. They sought to unravel their secrets and break their resistance.

Veiling and not seeing is a question that bewildered the orientalist who started raising many questions: “*The European faced with an Algerian woman wants to see .He reacts in an aggressive way*”. One of the doctors wonder: “*why they are hiding....we work in vain. Islam is holding its prey*” (Fanon 1967:168). French orientalists interpret the veil and Hijab as a disguise

of a world of secrets that they cannot be privy to and a reality out of touch . Veiled women were a subject or a prey to European voyeurism; however, veiling was not a big issue for Algerian men. They can pass without even being perceived (ibid):*“This woman who sees without being seen frustrates the colonizer. There is no reciprocity. She does not yield herself, does not give herself, does not offer herself.”* (ibid: 160). European colonizers wanted to reach reality and weaken the male dominance by getting access to the patriarchal houses and attack the privacy of their women and their inner life (ibid).

In *Thousand and One Nights* (1945), the stereotypical “ transparent veil ” and “belly dancing outfits ” are worn by Armina and harem girls but they are used as signs of oppression. Aladdin is “a veil chaser ”. He criticizes the veil which is linked with Muslim women and says that it hinders beauty from beaming. He tries to unveil one of the harem girls while singing for their sale . Aladdin also beseeches Princess Armina to take off her veil by saying, “Please unveil to me my lady ” .The desert and stars “did not hide their loveliness ” from him and so should princess Armina do (see snapshots 33,34) .



Snapshot 33 :Aladdin convincing Armina to unveil to him



Snapshot 34 :Aladdin unveils Princess Armina and discovers her dazzling beauty

The image of the oppressed veiled women is easily remarked in *Aladdin* (1992). The transparent veil is also present with the erotic harem girls. There are also scenes in the market where a veiled woman beholds Aladdin as a sexual object despite being a street rat. But common women use thicker veils on their faces and cover their hair with a head cover which looks like the twentieth century veil that Arab women wear today. Noteworthy even little girls wear veils on their heads. This indicates that not only oriental women are oppressed; even little girls are disregarded inasmuch as they are wrapped in veils.

The veil in *Aladdin* (1992) is also worn by western- based characters (Jasmine and Aladdin) but it is used for the sake of hiding and as a means of resistance to flee oppression. Jasmine does not wear a veil but she uses it in disguise to run away from the palace. Aladdin also uses it to run away from the guards. To illustrate this point, Aladdin wears the veil in the picture below which shows him holding a loaf of bread with two veiled women as a form of resistance to protect himself from the penalty of stealing (see snapshot 35).



Snapshot 35: Aladdin using the veil as a disguise to protect himself from the angry guards

Conclusion

Thousand and One Nights (1945) shows a less stereotypical image about Arabs and Muslims compared to *Aladdin* (1992). There is the absence of some orientalist ingredients like the exoticism of setting, eroticization, the English accent and the classification of characters. As a result I come up with the following findings which make *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) a less *Orientalized* adaptation of “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp”.

First, there is a variety of discourses in handling Arab men in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). There are three categories of Arab-based characters: good and helpless Arabs (The Sultan), Bad Arabs (Abu Hassan and Haji) and naïve Arabs (Common men, the peddler, the tailor, the prison guards). Yet there is a discourse which suggests that darker characters are inferior to the whiter ones with the villainous greedy old magician, the black genie and some Arab-based characters who have Arabic accent and low manners. As for the portrayal of Arab women, they are not as eroticized in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) as they are in *Aladdin* (1992).

Second, the Sultan in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) plays polarizing personalities. He is a good person despite the fact that he has a different physical appearance and different English accent compared to his daughter. The actor himself plays two polarizing personalities: the good Sultan and Sultan's evil brother. Not many details are evoked about the Sultan; he is only shown when the doctor pays him a visit and when he is praying. It cannot be judged whether he is a good ruler but it seems that he respects his daughter and listens carefully to her. In one of the scenes, he tells her that he should not have listened to her and put Haji earlier into exile. In this

scene Armina is not as insightful as Jasmine, she is sympathetic with her uncle's imprisonment; she tells her father that he is still his brother despite his misdeeds.

The representations of the grand viziers in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) is not identical. It is true that Abu Hassan the grand vizier in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) is not as evil and repugnant as he is villainous in *Aladdin* (1992). Abu Hassan is rendered dark to play the role of the evil character but this does not seem to be intentional because the Sultan's brother who is not darker is more evil than him. Besides, Abu Hassan is not a magician; there is another magician who is the darker old African man in the story. Furthermore, he is not as libidinous as Jafar in *Aladdin* (1992), but they share the same love for power even not in a sickly way as Jafar.

Concerning the English of the actors in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945), the English of the protagonists does not diverge from the English characters. They all have good English with no heavy accent. But it shows that the accents are different because the English speakers are not all Americans; some of them are from a different ethnic group or country. Noteworthy, British accent of Princess Armina does not make her more superior than Jasmine. She seems a little bit objectified. Comparatively, Jasmine with an American accent, is not constrained with the princess mannerism. She is vibrant and so comfortable with herself. However the accent of Princess Armina has more to do with "intelligence, breeding and refinement". It is as refined as her unalloyed blondness and golden hair.

In *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) the presence of animals is not predominant. There is no a single animal except horses and camels which are used as modes of transportation. But the camels are utilized by common people. This makes the latter different from the protagonists who

ride horses. Besides there are no magic carpets or magic rings but the homes are quite strange and exotic .They all have the shape of the Islamic Mosques. It is imagined that all the Arab homes have the shape of mosques as if they cannot distinguish between religion and the shape of their houses. As for the setting which is supposed to be Baghdad, the film makers did not show any evidence that the film is about Baghdad. Although Baghdad is a city at the time of the Abbasids, they only show the stereotypical image of the Arab Land which marks the presence of specific settings such as the desert, the market place and mountains.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Throughout this humble dissertation, I have attempted to analyze thoroughly the orientalist discourse in two of Aladdin's adaptations, *Thousand and One Night* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992). I tried to achieve this task by organizing my work in the light of the surrounding geopolitical circumstances of the films' production. In order to demonstrate the evolution of orientalist discourse in the films, I examined their relationship with their original literary version "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp", and other orientalist materials such as *The Thief of Baghdad* and *Sinbad* filmic adaptations. I have also put both adaptations under scrutiny for some discursive elements have been probed in both films namely exoticism, superiority and the objectification of Arab women.

Thousand and One Nights (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) are different adaptations of "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp". I have realized that the tale belongs to a book which is based on Burton's and Lane's travel writings and their experiences in the Orient. This makes clear that book of *Thousand and One Nights* and its different adaptations spring from an orientalist legacy. The book is presented to us through the eyes of orientalist translators: Antoine Galland, Edward Lane and Richard Burton. It is taken as a trustworthy reference for the West to know about the Orient, their traditions and Islam because every translator of *Thousand and One Nights* seems to speak in the light of his experience in the Middle East.

Galland, Lane and Burton bequeathed through *Arabian Nights* biased orientalist knowledge about the Orient. They used it as a reliable reference to record the Oriental's life. Similarly, the same book was used later by American orientalists to represent Arabs and Muslims in films like *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992). The film makers took certain content and

abrogated other aspects in the original stories of the English translation in order to pass tacitly their ideology. They heightened orientalism in the films by relying chiefly on textual background (The book of *Thousand and One Nights*) and other intertextual elements (other films). However, they affected the reality of Arabs and particularly Muslims despite the fact that they are not as evil as they appear in the films.

The film makers brought two different orientalist versions of Aladdin's filmic adaptations especially with *Aladdin* (1992). It is worthwhile to note that there is a quasi-absence of some orientalist elements in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) such as: the clear-cut binary otherness, animalization, eroticization and Islamophobia. Besides, exoticism is not intense in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) compared to *Aladdin* (1992) where it reached its peak. This suggests that the degree of orientalism in *Aladdin* (1992), "the *second successful Disney movie* ", is higher than orientalism in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945). This conclusion is formulated in accordance with the following findings.

First, the theme of *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) has more to do with beauty and romance; it is dissimilar from the theme of *Aladdin* (1992) which deals directly with the barbarism of Islamic laws. Moreover, the image of the protagonists in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) is more idealized than their images in *Aladdin* (1992). Princess Armina has a more decent look compared to the bold "Jasmine" who is deemed as " *the sexiest character in Disney.* " Unlike Aladdin in *Aladdin* (1992), Aladdin in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) is the one who teaches morals; he is also eloquent and does not receive lessons from anyone. Conversely, Aladdin and Jasmine seem to be the noble savages in a forest (Agrabah) where survival is for the fittest. In many scenes, Aladdin is perceived jumping, vaulting and leaping here and there with a chord.

Second, the superiority of the American accent and physical features in *Aladdin* (1992) forces a clear -cut representation of characters which does not appear in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945): the western-based characters and the Arab-based characters. The Arab-based characters in *Aladdin* (1992) are portrayed as creatures which cherish no reason and obey only their instincts: “*An Arab Oriental is that impossible creature whose libidinous energy drives him to paroxysms of overstimulation* (Said 1978:312). They are uncivilized like Animals which live in barbarian ways .The first thing that strikes their minds is ending the lives of their fellowmen. They incarnate the early image of man who is close to nature and whose behavior is animalized: angry, violent, insolent, half -naked and without control over his desires for sex, money and violence.

Third, the orientalist discourse throughout *Aladdin*'s adaptation is hollow and a complete sham. The strategic location of the film makers goes like: *We are superior because We are white. We speak English very well and don't have that heavy accent that the others have. Besides, we are rational and civilized because we live in cities .We are not like the fanatic and barbaric Muslims who live in the desert. Our women are free; they are not oppressed because they do not wear veils. Our men are not voyeurs; they are able to control their inner instincts. They are different from the Oriental men who are subjects to their ravishing desires and who behold women as sexual objects.*

The discourses which prevail in *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) and *Aladdin* (1992) echo the discourses aired by American politicians. The orientalist discourse culminated during the 1990s .It is undeniable that the powerful institutions can do whatever it takes to reach their objectives. The degree of orientalism in *Aladdin* (1992) is probably due to the fact that American politicians' hunger for oil was more overwhelming at the time *Aladdin* (1992) was released .The

degree of orientalism mounts throughout the course of the years. During the 1940s, at the time *Thousand and One Nights* (1945) was released, the US foreign policies were not quite intermingled with the Middle Eastern affairs. The image of Arabs and Muslims were not as scary in media as they were during the 1990s. The American interests were more concerned with annihilating the Red Scare because the Green Scare, as alleged by American orientalists, has not started creeping to the American society yet.

During the 1990s, many Arab immigrants resorted to the West to hopefully find a place where to duck out of their anxieties. Unfortunately, they faced another form of imperialism; they were regarded as *others* in a country where they are never satisfied for whatever they did to assimilate. They were not able to practice their religion, speak their language, cherish their customs, and be proud of their names or the way they look like. They became subjects to a screaming dilemma in both their own countries and in their host countries as well. They were torn between their home countries where they faced wars, neocolonialism, extremism and stricken poverty; on the other hand, they endured a bitter stoicism in their host countries.

When politicians interfere and ideology imposes itself, they both inflict distortions on every single faculty of the human identity. So as to justify their interference and fuel their hegemonic projects in the Middle East, the Western politicians sought to uproot drastically the pillars of the identity of Arabs and Muslims (culture, religion, language and pigmentation). Since it is impossible for the *Orientalists* to implement the western model because they are not whiter and do not speak the same language, the West is deemed more civilized with claims of moral and cultural superiority. American citizens and the West are not to blame because orientalist images that the media dedicate about Arabs and Muslims manufactured the consent of the masses. We

can only blame it on the tenets of ideology which are designed by the western imperialists who cooperated to sharpen the suffering of the Orientals.

All in all, *Aladdin* (1992) seems an innocent movie which aims at entertaining children. However, the orientalist discourse in this movie lumps up a myriad of diverse societies with different religions and different ethnicities in the Far East, Middle East and North Africa as *Orientals* and Muslims. They dehumanized their identity, depraved their culture and distort their moral values for nothing; their sole felony is that they live in lands (the East) whose richness is mouthwatering for the West.

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APPENDIX I***The Stranger (1958), Rudyard Kipling***

The Stranger within my gate,
He may be true or kind,
But he does not talk my talk—
I cannot feel his mind.
I see the face and the eyes and the mouth,
But not the soul behind.
The men of my own stock,
They may do ill or well,
But they tell the lies I am wanted to,
They are used to the lies I tell;
And we do not need interpreters
When we go to buy or sell.
He may be evil or good,
But I cannot tell what powers control—
What reasons sway his mood;
Nor when the Gods of his far-off land
Shall repossess his blood.
The men of my own stock,
Bitter bad they may be,
But, at least, they hear the things I hear,
And see the things I see;
And whatever I think of them and their likes
They think of the likes of me.
This was my father's belief
And this is also mine:
Let the corn be all one sheaf—
And the grapes be all one vine,
Ere our children's teeth are set on edge
By bitter bread and wine

APPENDIX II**“Arabian Nights”, the Opening Song of *Aladdin* (1992)**

Oh I come from a land
From a faraway place
Where the caravan camels roam
Where they cut off your ear /Where it's flat and immense
If they don't like your face /And the heat is intense
It's barbaric, but hey--it's home!
When the wind's at your back
And the sun's from the west
And the sand in the glass is right
Come on down,
Stop on by
Hop a carpet and fly
To another Arabian night!

Arabian nights
Like Arabian days
More often than not
are hotter than hot
In a lot of good ways

Arabian nights
'Neath Arabian moons
A fool off his guard
Could fall and fall hard
Out there on the dunes.

APPENDIX III

“A Whole New World”, the Closing Song of *Aladdin* (1992)

Aladdin: I can show you the world
 Shining, shimmering, splendid
 Tell me, princess, now when did
 You last let your heart decide?
 I can open your eyes
 Take you wonder by wonder
 Over, sideways and under
 On a magic carpet ride

A whole new world
 A new fantastic point of view
 No one to tell us no
 Or where to go
 Or say we're only dreaming

Jasmine: A whole new world
 A dazzling place I never knew
 But when I'm way up here
 It's crystal clear
 That now I'm in a whole new world with you

Aladdin: Now I'm in a whole new world with you

Jasmine: Unbelievable sights
 Indescribable feeling
 Soaring, tumbling, freewheeling
 Through an endless diamond sky

A whole new world

Aladdin: Don't you dare close your eyes
 Jasmine: A hundred thousand things to see
 Aladdin: Hold your breath - it gets better
 Jasmine: I'm like a shooting star
 I've come so far
 I can't go back to where I used to be

Aladdin: A whole new world
 Jasmine: Every turn a surprise
 Aladdin: With new horizons to pursue
 Jasmine: Every moment red-letter
 Both: I'll chase them anywhere
 There's time to spare

Let me share this whole new world with you

A whole new world

That's where we'll be

Aladdin: A thrilling chase

Jasmine: A wondrous place

Both For you and you

Le Résumé

Cette thèse porte sur le discours orientaliste dans deux films hollywoodiens : *Mille Nuits et Une Nuit* (1945) et *Aladdin* (1992) .Mon objectif est de révéler la puissance de l'idéologie qui a ostensiblement terni la représentation des Arabes et des Musulmans dans les films. Afin d'entreprendre cette étude, les idées de Said concernant l'orientalisme accompagneront la majeure partie de mon travail. Cela dit, mon travail traite trois sujets principaux. Tout d'abord, il tourne autour de l'influence de la politique étrangère américaine sur la fabrication du discours orientaliste dans *Mille Nuis et Une Nuit* (1945) et *Aladdin* (1992) .Deuxièmement, j'ai humblement tenté de démontrer le fait que de nombreuses images orientalistes dans *Mille Nuits et une Nuit* (1945) et *Aladdin* (1992) sont forgés en vertu de certaines histoires dans le livre *Arabian Nights* tels que des adaptations cinématographiques. Dans le dernier volet de mon travail, deux sujets ont été analysés y compris l'altérité de la culture arabe et la supériorité de la culture américaine. L'analyse a montré qu'il existe une célébration évidente de la culture américaine et un dénigrement claire de l'identité et de la culture des Arabes et des Musilmans particulièrement dans *Aladdin* (1992). Ce dernier a une image plus orientalisant sur les Arabes et les musulmans par rapport aux *Mille Nuits et Une Nuit* (1945). C'est probablement à cause de l'intervention remarquable des politiciens américains au Moyen-Orient dans les années 1990 .Ils ont embauché des propagandistes qui ont utilisé le film de Disney *Aladdin* (1992) comme un moyen pour faciliter leur accès aux réservoirs de pétrole dans la région du Golfe.