

The Transition of Orientalism: Medieval to Modern

Orientalism, or stereotypical misconceptions that Westerners have about Easterners, has been present throughout literature and media of all types for centuries. However, more recently, Orientalism has showcased itself within literature and media created for the entertainment of children. By being exposed to these stereotyped characters and settings of the East at such a young age, children, mostly in the West, are growing up believing that these pieces of literature and films are historically accurate, influencing their Orientalist views of the East. These views will then only continue to be reinforced throughout the rest of their lives through modern day news media. Because of the exposure at such a young age along with reinforcement of modern news and media about the Eastern areas, Islamophobia, or fear of Arabs and Muslims, is then likely to be developed. The result is something that is seen every single day in the United States: fear of and prejudice towards the Eastern countries, people, and culture.

In 1978, Edward Said wrote his book *Orientalism*, thoroughly discussing the topic of Orientalism and its meaning. Said explains that Europe and the United States look at the countries and people of the Middle East subjectively through a certain lens that distorts the reality of those areas and people; that lens is Orientalism—the frame in which is used to make the Middle East appear frightening and threatening (Said 3). Said then explains how any society that is not run by a dictatorship typically has cultural views that stand predominate over others, which is called hegemony. Hegemony is what gave Orientalism the strength to survive all these years in the West because those from either the United States or Europe almost always consider their beliefs to be the only correct ones while any others are wrong (Said 7). This makes the West almost automatically look down upon the East because their culture is not nearly as good in comparison. Said says that when discussing Orientalism, one's views shouldn't be either too

general or too specific because then Orientalism becomes in danger of distortion, which is what it has come to in majority of the present-day United States and other Western countries (Said 8).

Dating back to the early 9th century, the story of *1001 Nights* was compiled. In this, there is a collection of tales that have been reworked hundreds of times by various authors and translators. Within *The Arabian Nights*, a 19th century English translation by Edward Lane, came three of the most famous characters that are still known today: Ja'far, Alaeddin, and the princess. However, Ja'far, Alaeddin, and the princess are now most famously known from the 1992 film *Aladdin* as Jaffar, Aladdin, and Jasmine. In the 14th century version of the text, within the sixteenth night, is "The Story of Three Apples" that gives the reader their first impression of Ja'far. Ja'far is the Caliph's vizier and is shown being fairly agreeable to just about everything that the Caliph says. For example, the Caliph tells Ja'far that he wants to go into the city to praise his administrators that those admire and dismiss those that they complain of. Ja'far agrees without any hesitation at all (Heller-Roazen 148).

Not long after they go into the city do the Caliph and Ja'far run into a poor fisherman. The Caliph, feeling generous, offers to pay the fisherman one hundred dinars for whatever he catches next; he catches a chest with the remnants of a murdered woman inside. Immediately, Ja'far is blamed by the Caliph because the Caliph was completely unaware of this death under his watch. The Caliph swears to "hang [Ja'far] and forty of [his] kinsmen with [him]" if Ja'far does not successfully find the murderer (Heller-Roazen 149). Ja'far agrees, but requests three days to find the murderer. Unfortunately, Ja'far decides to spend these three days doing nothing but awaiting his death because he has such a good conscience that he refuses to bring a random prisoner to the Caliph, accusing him of the mystery woman's murder. Ja'far claims that he will forever be "guilty of his blood" if he does so (Heller-Roazen 149). This section shows Ja'far's

conscience and the fact that he would clearly never do anything morally wrong, and would especially never have any intentions of hurting other people.

Once the day comes for Ja'far's hanging, he fully accepts responsibility for the woman's murder because he never finds the true killer, but he also shows no struggle. However, three different people step up and offer their lives for Ja'far's because they claim to be the ones guilty of the woman's murder. When Ja'far goes to tell the Caliph about these confessions, he is depicted as being very respectful, kissing the ground three times in front of the Caliph before he even speaks to him (Heller Roazen 154). In the end, the situation is resolved and all of those who had confessed are spared—even Ja'far.

In a later edition of the *Nights* from the 19th century, “Alaeddin; Or the Wonderful Lamp” is retold by Richard Burton. In this tale, Alaeddin is seen as an “idle” boy that has no job and is such a disgrace to his parents that his mother cries all the time and his father died. One day, a magician came to Alaeddin and disguised himself as his long lost uncle. Without his father around to tell him and his mother otherwise, they accepted the magician into their home. In short, the magician tricks Alaeddin into getting the magic lamp from an underground cave for him, but when Alaeddin refuses to hand it over, the magician traps Alaeddin inside with the magical treasures—the lamp and golden ring. Alaeddin makes numerous wishes, eventually resulting in his marriage to the princess.

Alaeddin is seen as an incredibly lazy boy in this story, which was taboo during this time period. When Alaeddin originally rubs the ring, he wishes to get out of the cave—a very reasonable wish. Then, when his mother accidentally rubs the lamp, Alaeddin wishes for a feast for them to share—another reasonable wish since they are starving. The feast ends up lasting

them quite a long time, and they even make money by selling the silver plates that the food came on. However, once Alaeddin breaks the rules and steals a glance of the unveiled princess, he falls in love at first sight and begins wishing for less reasonable things. He gives his mother some of the precious stones he took from inside of the cave as a bride price to win over the Sultan so that he may marry the princess. His mother is then told to wait three months since the vizier's son is also courting the princess, so she and Alaeddin obey (Burton 759-774).

However, after two months go by, it is announced that the vizier's son and the princess are to marry, resulting in Alaeddin becoming even greedier. He wishes for the vizier's son and the princess to appear in his home, then for the vizier's son to be left out in the cold. He lays in bed with the princess, and wishes for the bed to be transported back to the palace. He tells the princess that he brought her here because "'twas only to prevent the wrong man enjoying thee, for that thy sire the Sultan promised thee to me. So do thou rest in peace" (Burton 777). Alaeddin then falls asleep beside the terrified princess. After nights like these happen repeatedly, the vizier's son refuses to go through such terror for one more night and dismisses his marriage to the princess. At this point, it is exactly three months later, Alaeddin's promised time to wed, and he marries the princess, but not before he wishes for 80 slaves, 40 basins of jewels, a scent bath, another 6 slaves, 10,000 pieces of gold in 10 purses, a horse, a palace, and for the Jinni of the Ring to decorate the last unfinished window with the most precious jewels (Burton 805). In just this first section, Alaeddin is seen as a selfish boy who causes his mother great grief and his own father to die because of his laziness. He then shows even more laziness by wishing for countless amounts of things to impress the Sultan and the princess instead of working hard and earning money to become rich and court her; by wishing for all these things, Alaeddin is taking the easy

way out. Throughout the tale, Alaeddin wishes twelve times, but receives countless amounts of items.

Once the magician learns about Alaeddin and the magic he has used to marry the princess, he comes around and tricks the princess into trading her “old lamp” (the magical one) for a “new” (not magical) one. Deception with bad intentions is also commonly seen throughout this tale. Now that the magician has the magic lamp, he wishes for the Slave of the Lamp to take him, the princess, and the palace to Africa where they can live together without Alaeddin, putting the princess into yet another unwanted relationship. Shortly after the magician takes away the princess, the Sultan finds out she is gone and immediately orders Alaeddin to be executed if he does not find her (Burton 817). Alaeddin then uses the golden ring to wish he were with the princess. When he finds her and gets her alone, he says to her:

Hear me! I desire of thee that thou dress and dight thyself in thy best and thou cast off all outer show and semblance of care...Meet him with smiling face and invite him to come up and sup thee. Moreover, let him note that thou hast forgotten Alaeddin thy beloved...and that thou hast learned to love him with exceeding love, displaying to him all manner joy and pleasure (Burton 821-822).

Without even questioning Alaeddin, the princess agrees to dressing sexually to attract and distract the magician while he also suggests for her to be sensual. This shows how women in this area are only used for typically one purpose: looking and being sexual and sensual for men. The princess also listens and does exactly as Alaeddin says without any hesitation at all, even though he suggests for her to kill the magician. If she gets caught by the magician, it is likely that he will try to kill her with sorcery, but it does not even seem as though that crosses her mind. Luckily,

she is able to poison him with no problems arising. Afterward, the magician's more evil brother comes to avenge his death, but Aladdin proves to be triumphant and kills his brother by a fatal stabbing. In the end, Aladdin "lived with his wife in all solace and happiness" (Burton 837).

Also throughout "Aladdin; Or the Wonderful Lamp," women are continuously shown as being oppressed, from a Western point of view that is. The princess is forced into not one, but two arranged marriages and one completely forced "marriage" with the magician that she shows no sign of being happy about. It is never said in the tale whether or not the princess wants to marry the vizier's son, but it is assumed that she had absolutely no say in the arrangement. When Aladdin comes along, he ends the princess's relationship with the vizier's son and then makes an agreement with the Sultan to marry the princess, once again leaving her without a say. At first, she is completely terrified because Aladdin appears out of nowhere and then repeatedly uses magic to get the vizier's son to leave the princess. However, after a little time, the princess shows signs of enjoyment in her marriage to Aladdin.

Many people are actually unaware that this original story of "Aladdin; Or the Wonderful Lamp" is set in China, and the characters are actually Persian, not Arabian (Burton 731). In addition to this, Aladdin's story is not even part of the original *1001 Nights*, either. The original "Aladdin" was put as part of the *1001 Nights* in French by Antoine Galland and published in the early 18th century (Schacker 168). Then, around the 19th century, Richard Burton rewrote a version of *1001 Nights* that was recently translated into English and titled it *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, which included the tale, "Aladdin; Or the Wonderful Lamp," making it so popular in western, English-speaking areas.

In the late 20th century, the story of “Alaeddin; Or the Wonderful Lamp” was then turned into the animated film *Aladdin* by Disney in 1992. It was clear right away that the characters in this film did not portray Persian men and women, but actually Arabian men and women with their dark hair, dark complexion, and type of clothing they wore, like a turban on men and a veil on women. Also, although it was never explicitly said where this film was taken place, the opening scene of the movie played the original song, “Arabian Nights,” suggesting an obvious relation between Arabian countries and the characters and setting of this film.

Not only did Disney get the entire setting of the story all wrong, but they even depicted Arabs as threatening, barbaric people that everyone should be afraid of—none of which was in the original version. In this opening scene, a man with a large nose, beard, and an oversized turban is shown riding the back of a camel while the famous Disney original song “Arabian Nights” is playing and begins with:

Oh I come from a land, from a faraway place
 Where the caravan camels roam
 Where they cut off your ear
 If they don't like your face
 It's barbaric, but hey, it's home (Ashman).

After the film came out in 1992, “American Muslims were irate that the opening song talked about cutting off an ear...[so] the music was changed” (Kincheloe 86). The new verse sang:

Oh I come from a land, from a faraway place
 Where the caravan camels roam
 Where it's flat and immense

And the heat is intense

It's barbaric, but hey, it's home (Ashman).

Although the gruesome lyrics about people cutting off a person's ear if they do not like they way they look were changed, the reference to this Arab country being "barbaric" was still kept in its same place. Even in the altered first verse, this song paints a really artificial picture for the viewers of Aladdin's homeland, making it seem that his home is just about impossible to live in because of its intense heat and comes across as almost imaginary, since it refers to it as "a faraway place." In general, the "traditional" Arabs in the film are shown to have "bad teeth, large hooked noses, and unclean tunics and caftans, and headgear that are just a tad too exaggerated" (Kincheloe 86).

Also in Disney's film, street merchants were portrayed as truly barbaric and frightening, threatening to cut off Jasmine's hand for taking an apple to feed a child. In Jack Shaheen's book *Reel Bad Arabs*, he found that "punitive laws" were only enforced if the same person has stolen on more than one occasion (Shaheen 51). Aside from that, laws that encouraged cutting off one's hand for stealing are only found in Saudi Arabia—not China. However, in this Islamic area, for those who take food for the sole purpose of feeding the hungry, it is not considered to be a crime. Shaheen states, "Islam teaches that any person who steals out of poverty or hunger should never be punished. Instead, Muslims are advised to give generously to such a person, to provide food and shelter" (Shaheen 51). Instead of portraying these merchants as generous and nice as they are in real life, Disney decided to make them threatening and evil, possibly to create the protagonists as angelic as possible.

Throughout the film, it is assumed that the characters are part of an Arab land, judging by the way they dress and the accents they have. However, there is never one character who speaks in Arabic, all of the Arabic names are mispronounced in a way that a Westerner would pronounce them, and the signs hanging out front of the stores in their town that are “ostensibly written to Arabic are actually nonsensical scribble” (Shaheed 51).

In Edward Said’s book *Orientalism*, he says that while on a trip to Beirut, he noticed that “the main thing for the European visitor was a European representation of the Orient and its contemporary fate” (Said 1). In the Disney film *Aladdin*, all the characters are from an Arabian area, but only the villains, like Jaffar, have foreign accents. Although Aladdin and Jasmine are also from the same Arabian area, they have standard American accents, making them more relatable and sympathetic to the European people watching the movie. Aladdin does not have the same big nose, thick accent, beard, or dark eyes that the others have—“What makes him nice is they’ve given him this American character” (Shaheed 52). In only the second scene, the thief that gave Jaffar his new trinket admits that he “had to slit a few throats” to get it, immediately making both Jaffar and this thief terrifying to the audience (*Aladdin*). Having the characters of Aladdin and Jasmine depicted in this way against characters like Jaffar and the thief sets up the film’s own “European representation of the Orient.”

It is also strange how the once submissive Ja’far from *The Arabian Nights*, who had a clear conscience because he refused to do anything morally wrong, is now transformed into this character who looks scary in his dark clothes with dark eyes and is immediately characterized as the main threat in the film. As for Alaeddin, who was a young boy who never worked but did everything right until the magic lamp came along is now transformed into a young beggar who steals to get by and lies about his true identity, but is still admired by the Western audience. It

also seems as though Disney, as a Westerner, tried hard to make Jasmine independent, going against her cultural norms. In the tale, the princess is forced into arranged marriages without a say and has to be told by Alaeddin how to seduce the magician to save herself from being with him. In the movie, the Sultan asks Jasmine if she likes the men before he arranges a marriage, and she thinks of the idea of seducing Jaffar to save herself from his captivity, surprising Aladdin. However, Disney still recognizes that Jasmine needs a man, or a husband to be specific, to be happy, virtually eliminating all of the work they did to make her independent.

For Western children who are watching *Aladdin* and are just beginning to understand the world, they may be more able to easily identify with Aladdin and Jasmine because of their clean-cut appearance and American accents, while the “traditional” Arabs have Arabic accents, look different, and are typically villains. Because of just these few things, Western children may also start stereotyping against Arabs, truly believing that all Arabs are dirty, threatening, have bad teeth, and have big noses, possibly creating Islamophobia.

The third verse of “Arabian Nights” goes:

Arabian nights

Like Arabian days

More often than not

Are hotter than hot

In a lotta good ways (Ashman).

It is at this time that the man riding the camel grabs the camels face and pulls it close towards his own, and the camel gives him an “alarmed look” (Scurry 30). Scurry believes this to be “the underlying implication [that] western sexual mores do not apply here; the men are sexually depraved and the women are sexually available” (Scurry 30). Early in the film, Aladdin is seen

running away from guards and passing through a “harem” inhabited by “barely-clothed dancing girls” (Scurry 30). Jasmine herself is also never once seen fully clothed, as typical Western women would normally be seen, making this unusual to Westerners.

Also, many Westerners even expect Arab women to always be completely covered up, veil and all. So when Jasmine is never seen wearing her veil except for in one scene, it is suspicious to Westerners and makes them believe that Jasmine is making herself seem sexually available to all men even though she is rejecting many. Because all women in the film were only “barely clothed” and dressed sexually, it gives Westerners the idea that all Arabian women both dress and act in a sexual manner all the time. Charolette Weber describes the veil as being something that “symbolize[s] Muslim women’s oppression and eroticism simultaneously” (Weber 125). Often Westerners find that when women wear any type of veil or facial covering it is because these women are seen as being forced to cover up because it is a sin to show too much skin to people other than their husbands. Veiled women are imagined as a female who “follows her husband like a dark shadow, is forced to remain silent and obey her husband at all times, [and] is granted a body only to deliver more children” (Darra 1). However, wearing the veil can also mean the complete opposite. In another scene, Jasmine “adopts the role of a sexual temptress to fool Jaffar later in the film, wearing even less [clothes] than usual,” but she is wearing a veil that she seductively drops, suggesting that she is sexually available, specifically to Jaffar (Scurry 30).

Back to when Aladdin runs through the “harem,” all three women are seen wearing their veils, and one even wraps up Aladdin in her veil as soon as he enters the room, suggesting her eagerness to engage in sexual encounters with Aladdin. At the end of this short scene, Aladdin runs off by singing, “Tell you all about it when I got the time,” possibly signifying that he will be

back to take advantage of the women's willingness to perform sexual favors (Ashman). However, if one looks up the definition of a harem, it comes up as, "The part of a Muslim palace or house reserved for the residence of women" ("Harem"). It is now assumed it had been a Westerner who supposed that since a Western brothel consists of unrelated women living together, it is likely to be that way for Eastern countries, too. However, this is not the case in Arabian areas. A harem was actually quite popular, going back as far as the early 9th century with the harem of the Abbasid Caliph Al-Muqtadir of Baghdad. Nadia Maria el Cheikh had said:

Even though the medieval West stressed Islamic sexual license, the harem as such did not exist in its representations of Muslim women. There is no harem, no veil, and no seclusion in Western medieval representations. And yet, after the beginning of the modern era, a representation of Muslim women not linked to the harem is almost unimaginable (Cheikh 3).

It was not until the 17th century in France that these views began to skew, suggesting that harems represented "sex and idleness" and even polygamy. However, historically, a harem is really just a place where the women of the Sultan lived; typically, they were just female family members, but sometimes may include concubines as well (Cheikh 3). Anthropologist Abu-Lughod actually proved that separating men and women in a household actually ended up creating a greater sense of independence in both sexes. Because of this, harems possibly existed so that it required women to live in close quarters away from men so that they would gain more independence for themselves instead of heavily relying on men, contrary to Western beliefs (Cheikh 5).

The persona of the Oriental dancer that performed “danse du ventre,” or belly dance, started to become popular in the United States during the early to late 19th century at the World Fair. It was said that Westerners, mostly women, hated the performance because it “seemed poised to embarrass the nation on a global level because it drove the shows’ male audience members to self-destructive and raunchy behavior” (Nance 171). As native-born Americans began to portray what they believed to be accurate and traditional Eastern Oriental dancers, danse du ventre eventually transitioned into “Midway dancing,” better known as the “hootchy-kootchy.” What was once a sensual, traditional dance is now seen as a degrading act in which Westerners now can find humor in those that still enjoy watching it.

The Western Orientalist view of the “belly dancing,” barely clothed Arab girls originally came from Egypt. The “ghawazi” girls are entertainers who typically dance for private male audiences that also may use scarves or other props “that add a sense of the acrobatic” and also practice “extending the breadth of their movements” (Nance 175). These girls are also dressed in exposing outfits that accentuate their curvy figures while dancing their traditional dances that have “more grace than modesty in them” (Nance 175). Eastern dancing eventually lost its popularity in the United States because of the American views of it being seen as “inappropriate.” In a different Eastern dancing show that did not involve risqué women, the person in charge of this show required that each viewer pay 25 cents for a cup of coffee to watch the entertainment. Outraged, people began to go elsewhere, like to see the “girls kicking high in ruffled drawers,” where it was completely free (Nance 176). However, the ghawazi dancers still remained popular as an image, mostly in fiction, but also on some print souvenirs from the World Fair at the Columbian Exposition’s Midway (Nance 177). By having these dancers remain only popular as an image, this could be what caused Westerners to remember Arab women as the

“typical” barely-clothed dancing girls from the shows and performances. Because Eastern women’s traditional dance was linked to sex, it is possible that Westerners themselves assumed that having multiple of these Eastern women living together without men in a harem was merely a brothel where sexual acts take place.

Samuel Scurry in “Orientalism in American Cinema: Providing Historical and Geographical Context for Post-Colonial Theory” also remarks how Alan Nadel first recognized “that virtually all of the characters play dual roles; their identities shift and they casually step in and out of good/evil and meek/powerful personas, representing the uncertainty and unreliability of the East itself” (Scurry 28). As seen in the original text of “Alaeddin,” right away the magician fooled Alaeddin by pretending to be his uncle, and then Alaeddin “pretending” to be rich to impress the princess. The deception continues once the magician is dead and his evil brother comes to avenge his death—he dresses up as the Holy woman to trick the princess into letting him into her palace and letting him stay with her forever.

The same kind of shifting of identities that Scurry talks about is still seen in the film adaptation, too. Not as literally, but Aladdin is now first seen as a boy who steals and is even threatened to have his hand cut off as punishment, sparking the entire chase scene in the first quarter of the movie. However, by the end of the movie, Aladdin is now seen as a good character because of two things: rescuing Jasmine from marrying Jaffar, the evil villain, and letting his third and final wish be for the genie to be free, which shows a lot of selflessness.

As for Jasmine, she sneaks out of the palace and dresses up in a head scarf, making her appear as a regular peasant woman. She also plays this role in front of Aladdin until the guards find her and her true identity is revealed. Again, when Jasmine pretends to be completely

captivated by Jaffar and begins to seduce him, she is deceiving him by pretending to have feelings in which she does not in reality. She is pretending to be compliant, but is actually doing the exact opposite by proving her power over Jaffar.

Muslims have also had a history of deception carried behind them for a very long time. From between the 12th and 14th centuries, *The Song of Roland* was incredibly popular. Throughout *The Song of Roland*, “the pagans,” or Muslims, are portrayed as of how Christians saw them to be—deceitful savages. It was told early on how the pagans are shown to have a history of deception to those who are considered to be threats. Roland reminds the Emperor of Charlemagne how previously Marsilla, the Muslim king of Saragossa, sent hostages to Charlemagne that forced Charlemagne into a short-term peace before Marsilla brutally murdered Charlemagne's two messengers. Marsilla, once again, is planning to send a messenger that will then be held hostage once the Emperor realizes that the riches and conversion to Christianity Marsilla promises never arrive or occur.

This proves right away how the “pagans” do not fight fairly. “The pagans” are full of deceit and are emotionless when it comes to killing. Ganelon, the Charlemagne messenger, comes to Saragossa and encourages the killing of Roland since he was the one who nominated Ganelon as messenger. Although Ganelon is considered to be a traitor to his country for doing this, Marsilla can be seen as being even more conniving than before because he agrees to this unfair plan of action by killing the sole person that keeps Charlemagne's army together rather than attacking their entire army. Marsilla does not even seem to care at this point whether or not they beat the Christians, he just wishes “a shameful death on [Roland]” (Sayers 76). Furthermore, Marsilla plans to attack at the point in which Charlemagne's army is the most vulnerable.

While the army of Charlemagne has 20,000 soldiers, which seems like a great number of fighters, “the pagans” round up 100,000 soldiers, greatly outnumbering their enemy on purpose to not have a fair fight. Even once Oliver and Roland see the “pagan” army and how many more soldiers they have, Roland refuses to blow the horn and ask for help from his fellow soldiers because of fear of a “living man should say he saw [him] go / Blowing of horns for any Paynim foe!” (Sayers 93). Roland believes that “the pagans” can easily be beaten by his great army even though they are strongly outnumbered. The way he refuses to ask for help shows that “the pagans” are nothing anyone should ever ask for help over because they are so much weaker; others would view Roland as pathetic if he asked for help in defeating such a weaker counterpart.

Even after the big fight where “the pagans” have just about killed all of Roland's army, a “pagan” is found who “has feigned death, and lies among his people, / And has smeared blood upon his breast and features” (Sayers 138). He gets up and attempts to kill Roland before Roland passes away on his own. This, once again, shows the deceitfulness of “the pagans” as well as to the extreme extent to which they would go to shame Roland. There is no need to kill Roland if he is already showing signs that he will pass on his own very soon, but the “pagans” continue to show their brutality and savagery by attempting his murder anyway. Even as “the pagans” began heading back home after they heard the horns of the Emperor coming, they were still attempting to slay the last few Christians while riding away, proving that although they did not necessarily need to kill them, it almost seemed like a game to them, battling over who could kill more soldiers.

Throughout history, Muslims and Arabs have been consistently stereotyped and oppressed by Western countries for their appearance and “threatening” nature. This can go all the way back to the mid-7th century with the Muslim conquest of Persia where these viewpoints of

Muslims being a threat possibility originated from. Muslim Arabs invaded Persia most likely because of Persia's exhaustion from constantly fighting against the Byzantine Empire, making them an easy target for conquering (Morgan 528-9). Then, around the 11th century, the Crusades began when Pope Urban II instigated the Christian movement to reclaim Jerusalem, also known as the "Holy Land" (Qadir 528). The Muslims resisted, and in the end, "the Christian cohesion was in sharp contrast with the insular condition of Muslim states that participated in or were affected by the crusades" (Qadir 528). Because the Muslims fought back, the Western Europeans who were fighting for Pope Urban II's plea thought they were dangerous instead of submissive like they probably originally believed that they would be. Then, later on in the early 18th century, Napoleon invaded Egypt to achieve his overall goal of seizing land in the Middle East so that Europe can have easier contact with India, resulting in more fighting (Sigler 41). Overall, Muslims have mostly always been seen as an armored military fighting against other countries and people, resulting in the everlasting impression that Muslims and Arabs are not only deceitful, but also dangerous and threatening to the Western area. With Napoleon's invasion, this became the first time that the West was directly affected by the Muslim's army, making them finally come across as a true threat to the Westerners.

When Arabs were migrating to the United States around 1870, many decided to pursue their own version of the "American Dream" by speaking publicly for the Middle East, representing their country "accurately" in tent shows, mainly the circus (Nance 111). There was a demand for true foreigners to come to the United States and represent their home countries because, at the time, there were only Europeans who were inaccurately acting as "true" representations of people from a country they have never been to. While watching shows and performances, the Westerners loved the foreign element "because they present something or

someone that is familiar and strange at once” (Nance 113). The Arabs themselves even helped to create the desert horseman settings and shows that often depicted “a more secular, masculine free spirit and heroic villain” (Nance 112). Most Western viewers loved the “spiritual” aspect of the Eastern performances. One man even recorded how much he preferred watching the Eastern performances over Western ones:

I came to realize that a tall, skinny chap from Arabia with a talent for swallowing swords expressed a culture which to me was on a higher plane than the one demonstrated by a group of earnest Swiss peasants who passed their days making cheese and milk chocolate (Nance 151).

Westerners began to love these performances because it opened up their eyes to an entirely new culture that actually seemed “mysterious” or “strange” to them but in an enjoyable way (Nance 151). However, the Eastern performances started to become indecipherable only a few years later around 1893 at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Many blame it on the language barriers that existed, causing confusion and frustration between the Easterners and the Westerners who wanted to learn all about the Easterners and their culture. Because of the language barrier, native-born Westerners began to, once again, perform as Easterners, but were able to “add novel Eastern characteristics to themselves to invite similar confusion and inquiry by observers,” and that made them seem like true Easterners (Nance 152). The native-born performers also began to work closely with the Easterners, almost mimicking what they did. As these native-born performers continued to learn by watching and then making up their own performances that *they* believed to be “accurately” representing the East, modern day perspectives of the east now began to distort.

With the language barriers that existed along with the Westerners' views of the sexualized, inappropriateness and brothel-like harems that existed with Eastern dancers, the West's entire view of the Eastern cultures and people became deformed. It was clear that Americans hated the sexualized representation of women, so when Edward Lane translated the *1001 Nights* into the first English edition in the early 19th century, he kept in mind that this translation had the sole purpose of adapting the tales to relate to "their particular language, audience, and time" (Nance 22). Lane's translation was meant specifically for the middle and upper-class readers that focused on the "creative agency of Middle Eastern artists...[and] sought to engender the reader's sympathy toward a part of the world routinely criticized by the Europeans" (Nance 23). *Atlantic Monthly* argued that Lane's edition was the closest to the original in a language other than Arabic, but those who did not speak Arabic would really have no idea if this was even true (Nance 23). This resulted in Westerners trusting in Lane's version of *Arabian Nights* to be the most historically and traditionally accurate of the Eastern countries, probably creating many of the Orientalist ideas there are of the East today.

In more modern day events, the government and police forces in America have had a big influence on Westerners' perceptions of Arabs and Muslims, mostly in a negative aspect. For example, after the tragic Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, it was immediately assumed that the suspects who had been responsible for the bombing were Muslim. The Sunday *New York Times* "Week in Review" created the title of their January issue as, "The Red Menace Is Gone: Here Is Islam" (Gana 1575). However, it was later discovered that the actual people responsible for these bombings were native-born Americans that did not resemble Muslims in any type of way. One person from *Newsweek* suggested that "[i]f we couldn't identify a country to bomb, at least we could have [had] the comfort of knowing that the depravity of the crime—its subhuman

quality—was the product of another culture unfathomably different from our own” (Gana 1575). Blaming a foreign country where the people and the culture are different acted as an easy scapegoat because America never believes that their own people and culture can do anything wrong because their culture is the best culture—hegemony.

After September 11th, 2001, fear and hatred of the Arabs and Muslims overcame many Americans, mostly because of the modern news and media. People were no longer worrying about whether Arabs were black, white, or Asian; they were worrying whether they were Muslim or not because Muslims distinctively were seen as “a terrorist threat to homeland security” (Gana 1575). Only a month later, the PATRIOT Act was enacted which gave the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation the rights to heavily focus on preventing terrorist attacks instead of taking legal action after crimes had been committed (Gana 1576). By having this high focus on the hatred and fear of Muslims by America’s own government, the people who are in charge of protecting Americans, it created an even bigger fear within American residents. The PATRIOT Act also maintained a center focus on Muslims by allowing FBI agents to “spy on individuals, mosques” and even gave civil rights groups the right “to track students who come to study in the United States,” specifically Muslims and Arabs (Gana 1576). In 2003, two years after the United States Attorney offices sent letters requesting interviews to nonimmigrant aliens that had come from countries with a presence of al-Qaeda, just about 10,000 people from Iraq were officially interviewed (Gana 1576). The intention of this interviewing process was “to gather information about worldwide terrorist activities, information the government needed to collect in order to thwart future attacks” (Gana 1576). Both local and state police were helping to conduct these interviews, which resulted in making many Arab and Muslim residents of the United States feel relatively “monitored and threatened” because the

police that typically make United States residents feel safe and secure are now making them feel the complete opposite (Gana 1576).

In 2002, Operation TIPS (Terrorist Information and Prevention System) was introduced. This allowed Americans to personally report “suspicious terrorist activity” at any point in time. This system basically granted Americans the freedom to spy on one another and then report any type of behavior they deemed to be “suspicious,” practically encouraging racial stereotyping and supporting Americans to stay cautious around any Arabs or Muslims at all times (Gana 1576). However, Operation TIPS was never actually implemented. Then, In 2003, the Special Registration Program was renamed the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) where non-U.S. citizens were required “to be fingerprinted, photographed, and interrogated and to provide detailed information about their plans or change of plans as they continued to report routinely to the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement” (Gana 1576). With this, the Department of Homeland Security was allowed to further question and investigate any non-U.S. citizen that was registered; by May 2003, 82,581 people were already registered (Gana 1576). This program was considered to be extremely racist as well as gender-specific because it looked at men over the age of 16 who were also from countries where being Muslim dominant.

In 2010, the Park51 Islamic community center began construction close by “Ground Zero” where the attack at the World Trade Center on 9/11 occurred. This is when Americans had the most unfavorable attitudes towards Islam even though “the perception that Islam encourages violence” was at the lowest it had been in five years (Smith 3). This may be because although there was a war going on between Iraq and the United States, Islam did not have any direct attacks on the United States that Americans saw through the media. This caused Americans to

believe that although Islam was not reacting violently towards them at the time, building an Islamic community center so near to the site of which an Islamic attack occurred only a few years prior is just disrespectful to America and those who lost their lives in the World Trade Center. Assuming that this building was at the fault of the Muslims, Americans blamed them for their discourtesy, resulting in the highly unfavorable views Americans had of them.

In addition to the government and police forces, modern day news and media has also had a direct connection to the way Americans feel towards Arabs and Muslims. Ironically, it was found that Americans had the most positive attitude towards Islam and Arab Muslims right after 9/11; it was more of a sympathy “for innocent Muslims defamed by the actions of extremists and targeted by retaliatory hate crimes” (Smith 2). It was only after the news and media kept pressing about how terrible all of these people were that Americans’ views began to change.

The media was able to understand that fear can lead to prejudice, and began gradually increasing the amount animosity and hatred that filled up the news stations about Islam; a lot of this animosity went hand in hand with assessments of the Islamic faith as well, which eventually proved it to be much different than Christianity—the predominate American religion. With very little Americans being able to successfully understand all there is to the Islamic faith and with the media covering conflicting representations of Islam for years, the Americans who understood the least about that religion were “the most susceptible to these competing media representations,” making these types of people’s viewpoints easy to control (Smith 2).

The year 2003 was when the general public of the United States considered themselves to be just simply uninformed about Islam, but by 2006, most did not support Islam at all. Within just these 3 years, the media covered so many hostile reports about Islam and Muslims,

demonstrating that the media can actually be incredibly influential to American viewers (Smith 2). This also proved that the media can influence certain viewpoints more so than education can, meaning that even though those people were still learning world history in schools and may have been researching aspects about Islam and Muslims outside of schools, the way the media portrays certain types of people was still much more influential statistically (Smith 2).

Later on in 2006, caricatures of the prophet Mohammed were published in a Danish magazine and were considered to be offensive to Muslims. As retaliation, Muslims began violent protests, which were shown on American news stations. Because of this, American beliefs from 2001 were once again reinforced about how Islam encourages and often practices violence in their day-to-day life. Also, it furthermore made Americans find that the Islamic faith was highly unfavorable yet again. Strangely enough, this view of the Islamic faith being unfavorable continued even after the amount of violence declined in their countries (Smith 8). This can be seen as Muslims being unable to be like-minded to American and Western values in that the Muslims “represented a cultural threat to free speech [against] Western democratic values” (Smith 9). For some Americans, these critical views were difficult to change once certain aspects of the Islamic faith and culture were first noticed.

Mixing government with media, there were television commercials that aired in the 1980s about OPEC nations. Since oil is not found in sufficient amounts anywhere in the United States, the United States looks at other countries that have the ability to produce oil as a threat because without them the United States cannot live their current lifestyle. With the East already posing as a threat to the West because of their aggressive stereotype, Consolidated Edison of New York aired a television commercial that pictured three Islamic men that were “immediately recognizable OPEC personalities” and left viewers to feel “that this all-male cast of villains has

placed Americans in the grip of an unrestrained sadism” (Moustafa 170). This commercial that aired in 1980 made its viewers feel as though it were these men in particular that controlled the oil industry and were evil for not giving in to what the United States wanted—a “fair share” of oil.

In reality, it is more than likely that the West was greedy and desired to be in control of the oil industry and have the President of the United States and other recognizable governmental faces in commercials about oil and the OPEC nations. Even before this, Said states in “Islam as News” that it was well known that people within the government strongly suggested President Carter to focus on “a real crisis with a clear enemy—OPEC” (Moustafa 170). In this case, it is clearly stated that Islam is the targeted enemy and the United States should fear this country because they pose as a threat to them. Said confirms this when he says that “for hundreds of years great Islamic armies and navies threatened Europe, destroyed its outposts, colonized its domains. It was as if a younger, more virile and energetic version of Christianity had arisen in the East...invigorated itself with a simple, fearless, and warlike creed” (Moustafa 171). Especially with the rise of oil prices in the 1970s, Islam was seen, once again, as this same huge threat to the rest of the West.

Because Islam has this constant power over the everyday lives of the people of the West by controlling their oil industry, the West has always found Islam to be a huge threat that must be controlled at all times. By having the “huge threat” of the oil industry being in Islam covered on the news so much, Westerners slowly began to develop Islamophobia, understanding that they should fear the Arab and Muslim world because they are so powerful over the Western world. With something as simple as Islam raising the price of oil, the Western way of living can easily crumble right before their eyes. Especially with the Consolidated Edison of New York airing their commercial with the “immediately recognizable” Islamic men attached to this picture of

being villains as well as the government publicly speaking about how the OPEC nations are a clear threat to us, Westerners began to have an outright fear of Islam and the Arab and Muslim world. Throughout all aspects of the news and media coverage, as well as knowing Islam has control over a very important part of their lives, it is almost impossible for Westerners to escape the idea that Arabs and Muslims are bad people and should be seen as an enemy, creating Islamophobia.

Islamophobia is a term that developed in the late 1990s and early 2000s used to describe anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim thoughts and attitudes. Islamophobia was first used in modern discussion by the British race relations non-governmental organization at the Runnymede Trust in the report “Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All” in 1997 (Bleich 1582). Over the years, this term has had multiple definitions, but the definition used at the 1997 Runnymede Trust report seems to be the one used most frequently as, “a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam—and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims” (Bleich 1583). However, it can also be used as simply as, “the fear or dread of Muslims and the Islamic faith” (Bleich 1584).

Discrimination against Muslims and the Islamic faith as well as hate crimes acting out against Muslims are behavioral effects that often go hand in hand with Islamophobia (Bleich 1591). So, for example, the 1992 movie *Aladdin* can even be seen as an expression of Islamophobia. To some, it may be harder to see because the Muslim and Arab stereotypes that are portrayed within the movie are typically what Westerners truly believe of the Muslim and Arab countries and cultures; the big noses, bad teeth, big turbans, and “scary looking” villains with thick, Arabic accents are all Western stereotypes of Arabs. By showing through a seemingly harmless cartoon what the Muslim culture is like, Westerners are simply unaware that this

children's film is actually encouraging Islamophobia because this film is presented through an Oriental lens in which only Arab characters as stereotypes are presented. Even looking back at the original tale of "Alaeddin; Or the Wonderful Lamp," it can be seen how the French translator possibly inputted some of his own "Eastern elements," as many people were proven to do when making aspects of the Eastern world more relatable to the West. For example, the narrator often switches between the word "Sultan" and "King" but is talking about the same person. This may have helped to bring an understanding to Westerners that a Sultan has just about the same power as a King. Burton may have thought these "Eastern elements" worked well with within the story, making them relatable to his specified audience.

Unknown to many, the story of *Alaeddin* has been used in cartoon films many times before Disney picked it up. However, around 1907 with the movie *Aladdin's Lamp* was when filmmakers began "dramatizing the Aladdin fantasy" (Shaheed 50). This film depicted the apparition of numerous magical genies. Then, in 1934, *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp* was the first to portray Aladdin and the princess as Western characters as the other Arab characters appeared as the stereotypical Arabs that are seen in the 1992 version of *Aladdin* today (Shaheed 50). Later in 1939, the genie in *Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp* has the first genie that appears to be foolish and gullible, just as Genie in the 1992 *Aladdin* is seen today in contrast to the scary and wise genies in the early 19th century *Alaeddin; Or the Wonderful Lamp* that apparently "closely resembled" the original Arabic version of the tale. Lastly, in 1948, a Bugs Bunny episode was created based off of *Aladdin* called *A-Lad-In His Lamp* in which "the genie sides with Bugs," just as Genie in the 1992 *Aladdin* befriends Aladdin (Shaheen 51). When Disney picked up the English version of the tale to transform it into a film, it is also possible that they thought the storyline would work better if it portrayed Arab Muslims instead of Persian

characters, especially since that is what it seemed to be portraying already as according to American stereotypes. Then, if Disney had seen all of the other adaptations of *Aladdin*, it is possible that they decided to continue with the same stereotypes that were presented, such as the Western protagonists and threatening Arab antagonists, possibly because they believed them to be true.

In addition, the television commercials that aired in the 1980s about the OPEC nations, objectifying Muslims as a threat to the United States can be seen as a form of Islamophobia. Then, in 2006 when the Danish magazine created offensive cartoons about the prophet Mohammad causing Muslims to riot, Westerners were terrified about the Muslims' violent actions. Even though these riots had very little to do with the West, the West still reacted in a way that seemed as though the riots were directly in response to the West. Just based on the West's reaction to these riots alone, it is clear that the West reacted in a way that those struggling with Islamophobia would.

Throughout history it can be seen that Orientalism has always been evident, whether it has been through literature, film, music, or true historical events. Unfortunately, because of fact that Orientalism has always been present, the likelihood of it transforming into Islamophobia remains highly probable. Modern day news and other forms of media also have never helped to decrease the chance of Islamophobia developing and tend to actually increase the amount of fear and hatred Westerners have for Easterners. Throughout the centuries, Orientalism and Islamophobia in the West have never showed signs of lightening up, only developing into something even worse, especially in more recent years after the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11. This may be because the same children who have watched the movie *Aladdin* have grown up firmly believing in these Arab and Muslim stereotypes since they have learned

from such a young age that Arabs are considered to be threats to the modern hero—the West. With that, the more times *Aladdin* is watched or the news talks badly about Islam, the Orientalist ideas of the Arabian world are embedded into each child's mind, reinforcing these exaggerated ideas. As these children grow up, they will now truly believe that Arabian countries are just like everything in the movie *Aladdin* and will expect nothing different because they, more likely than not, have not visited a real Eastern country before and/or have never been shown films that depict true Arabian life and culture. Then, as they grew older, the news and media reinforced these stereotypical ideas by confirming that the West should fear the East because of their violent behavior. Orientalism is still alive and well in not only the film industry today but also the news, which always represents itself as being unbiased. Children are still watching these Disney classics and are being exposed to Orientalism at a young age, creating unrealistic expectations of Eastern countries and then having them only be reinforced by watching the news as a young adult or adult later on.

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