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Cinematic Adaptations of Aladdin's Folktale:
A Study on the Faithfulness and Divergence in the 1992
Animated Film Adaptation and its 2019 Remake

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Dedication

I dedicate my thesis work to my dear husband, without whom I certainly have never been able to achieve it.

I dedicate it also to my loving mother for her prayers and encouragement, to the joy of my life, my cheerful sweetheart and my beloved daughter Miral.

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In the name of Allah, the Most-Gracious, the Most-Merciful, to Whom all praise is due,

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Abstract

Aladdin is a young man living in the capital of China. He is one day visited by a man claiming to be the brother of his recently deceased father, in other words his (pretended) uncle, but in reality, the man was no other than a sorcerer whose intent is to lure Aladdin into a magical and dangerous cave, in order to retrieve him a magic lamp. Aladdin later discovers the power of the lamp and uses it for his own benefit. The story continues with Aladdin becoming a prince and marrying the Sultan's daughter. After some struggle and difficulties, Aladdin eventually becomes the sultan himself. This folktale from The Arabian Nights has been adapted in 1992 into an animated film, and then into its remake in 2019. First, this thesis aims at exploring and critically analysing the original folktale along with its cinematic adaptations, one by one, in order to familiarise the reader with the works at hand as it is going to be a comparative study. Second, it compares all narrative elements and the use of literary devices in all three works' stories or plots. Finally, it lays out, sheer and clear, every similarity (faithfulness) and difference (divergence) to be found in the cinematic adaptations' plots with regards to the original folktale. This thesis also verifies the hypothesis which suggests that the aforementioned adaptations are not entirely faithful to the folktale despite the existence of some common points as obliged by both cinematic and literary practices. What stems from this is the fact that after analysing the works, comparing them, applying the techniques of measuring faithfulness in an adaptation, sorting out faithfulness and divergences and finally evaluating both, Disney's cinematic adaptations of Aladdin's folktale are not faithful to the original.

Key Terms:

Comparative study, Adaptation, Faithfulness, Divergence, Aladdin, Disney, Film, Folktale.

ملخص

"علاء الدين" شاب يعيش في عاصمة الصين. إذ في يوم من الأيام يزوره رجل يدعي بأنه أخ والده المتوفى حديثاً، أي بأنه عمه (المزعوم)، لكن هذا الرجل في الواقع ليس سوى ساحر يريد أن يستدرج علاء الدين إلى كهف سحري وخطير، لكي يجلب له مصباحاً سحرياً. يكتشف علاء الدين قوة المصباح ويستعملها لصالحه. تستمر الحكاية إذ يصير علاء الدين أميراً ويتزوج ابنة السلطان. عقب بعض المصاعب والعقبات، يصبح علاء الدين هو السلطان في حد ذاته. تم اقتباس هذه الحكاية من حكايات ألف ليلة وليلة عام 1992 لفلم متحرك ومن ثم لفلم مقتبس منه عام 2019. أولاً، تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى الاستكشاف والتحليل النقدي للحكاية الأصلية إضافة إلى اقتباساتها السينمائية كلاً على حدة، لأجل تعريف القارئ بهذه الأعمال، لاسيما وأنها دراسة مقارنة. ثانياً، تقارن الأطروحة جميع العناصر الأدبية (أو السردية) وتوظيف التقنيات الأدبية في قصص كل من الأعمال الثلاثة. وأخيراً، تستعرض بشكل منظم، محكم وواضح كل وجه من أوجه التشابه (التطابق) والتباين (الاختلاف) بين كل من الاقتباسات السينمائية والحكاية الأصلية. كما تتحقق هذه الأطروحة كذلك من الفرضية التي تفيد بأن الاقتباسات السالف ذكرها ليست مطابقة بشكل كامل للحكاية الأصلية على الرغم من وجود بعض النقاط المشتركة وهذا ما تفرضه التقاليد الأدبية والسينمائية. والنتيجة هي أنه، وبعد تحليل الأعمال، مقارنتها، تطبيق تقنيات قياس التطابق في الاقتباس، تصنيف التطابقات والاختلافات وفي الأخير تقييم كل منهما، فإن اقتباسات ديزني السينمائية لحكاية علاء الدين ليست مطابقة للأصل.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

دراسة مقارنة، اقتباس، مطابقة، اختلاف، علاء الدين، ديزني، فلم، حكاية.

Résumé

Aladin est un jeune homme vivant au capital de la Chine. Il est un jour visité par un homme se faisant passer pour son oncle, frère à son père décédé. En fait, il n'est qu'un sorcier qui cherche à attirer Aladin dans une caverne magique et dangereuse, pour lui récupérer une lampe merveilleuse. Aladin alors découvre le pouvoir de la lampe et l'utilise pour son propre bénéfice. L'histoire continue avec Aladin devenant un prince et mariant la fille du Sultan. Après des défis et difficultés, Aladin finit par devenir le Sultan lui-même. Ce conte appartenant aux Mille et Une Nuits à été adapté au cinéma en 1992 comme un film d'animation, et également sa remake en 2019. Premièrement, la présente thèse vise à explorer et analyser de manière critique le conte original ainsi que ses adaptations cinématographiques successivement, afin de familiariser le lecteur avec les présents œuvres car ça sera une étude comparative. Deuxièmement, elle compare tous les éléments narratifs ainsi que l'utilisation des procédés littéraires dans les scénarios des trois œuvres. Et enfin, elle énonce très clairement toute similitude (fidélité) et différence (divergence) qui se trouvent dans les scénarios des adaptations cinématographiques par rapport au conte original. La thèse vérifie aussi l'hypothèse qui suggère que les adaptations susmentionnées ne sont pas entièrement fidèles au conte malgré l'existence de quelques points communs en vertu de pratiques cinématiques et littéraires. Ce que d'en provient alors est le fait qu'après l'analyse et la comparaison des œuvres puis l'extraction des éléments de fidélité et de divergence, et enfin l'évaluation à la fois de ces derniers, les adaptations cinématographiques de Disney du conte d'Aladin ne sont pas fidèle à l'œuvre original.

Mots-clés:

Etude comparative, Adaptation, Fidélité, Divergence, Aladin, Disney, Filme, Conte.

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General Introduction

The tale of Aladdin and The Magic Lamp, or simply Aladdin, widely regarded as one of the most famous tales of One Thousand and One Nights, has never in fact been part of the original collection (in Arabic), and has no authentic Arabic text whatsoever, however, it was added to the collection by the French translator and author Antoine Galland in his own translation *Les Mille et Une Nuits*, published in 1710, who in turn acquired it from the Syrian storyteller Antun Yusuf Hanna Diyab whom he met with in Paris on March 25, 1709.

In 1992, Disney released their animated film adaptation of the tale "Aladdin", which was well received and critically acclaimed, though deemed not primarily faithful to the original mainly due to directions and orders from studio chief back then Jeffrey Katzenberg. In 2016, Disney announced that they were in the course of developing and producing a remake of the 1992 film, which was subsequently released almost three years later, in 2019.

The history of literature dates back to around 2500 BC in Ancient Egypt, when the history of translation (which is the earliest and the established sort of cultural exchange) dates back to around 300 BC. However, cinematic works, whether adapted or original, are not much older than a century, and therefore have not enjoyed much standardisation in the broad form (let alone folktales' adaptations specifically), and not many studies and theories have been conducted or adopted thereon. Cinema is still struggling to become an established form of literature (though it is regarded as a form of art), and this struggle does not necessarily come from it being inferior to literary works, but due to the ironic fact that cinema and literature became in reality interrelated: literary works and cinematic works are sources of inspiration for one another. It is for this shortage of studies on the topic of cinematic adaptation of folktales, this discussed "confusion" in contemporary media as well as for the shift from historical "cultural conflict" toward modern "intercultural dialogue" that the topic of this thesis was handled, especially that it deals with an "Arabic" folktale, its "Western" film

adaptation in an earlier era (1990s) as well as its modern-time film adaptation (2010s). Addressing all these details is definitely going to have a rich contribution to existing literature.

Due to the short length as well as the origin of the tale of Aladdin and The Magic Lamp, the film adaptations' scripts have had to revise and alter its story for literary, cultural and cinematic reasons as well as to meet certain artistic standards. As this would certainly imply divergence from the source, it was the aim of this thesis to point out this divergence, evaluate the level of faithfulness found in the aforementioned adaptations and finally make conclusions on this concern. The results sought here would hence serve to answer the relevant questions: Why has Disney chosen to adapt Aladdin into cinema? To what extent are these cinematic adaptations of Aladdin faithful to the original folktale, if at all? What could be the impact of a cross-cultural adaptation of a literary work on the target audience?

As mentioned earlier, the revisions of the story into a script have directly imposed divergence in the adaptation. This supports this thesis' hypothesis that these films are not faithful to the tale.

Earlier literature on this topic, in the form of textbooks and online articles, has been employed extensively. A main point to draw attention to is that the version of Aladdin's folktale as used here is an English translation, even though what can be considered its earliest and "original" text is ironically Galland's French translation, not even an Arabic one. What is also new in this study is the introduction of cinematic works (i.e. films) in the writing of a thesis, which would make quoting them "tricky" and challenging to both the writer and the reader.

Given that this study is a comparative study, Béla Balázs' *The Theory of The Film* is employed since it is arguably one of the earliest and the fewest theories on this field. The theory mainly considers an original literary work and its cinematic adaptation's script as two

separate literary works, which is in line with this thesis' approach for pointing out the similar and different elements in Aladdin and its adaptations. Karen Kline's Critical Adaptation's Faithfulness Paradigms are applied on the adaptations to evaluate their faithfulness.

The thesis is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is The Theoretical Framework, and it breaks down most of the technicalities of cinematic field that this study is concerned with. It defines also all relevant terms and sets out a background of the works to be studied in their cultural context. The reader is therefore thoroughly familiarised with the notions of adaptation and cultural exchange. The second chapter is The Practical Framework, and it deals with the actual study that is the comparison of the adaptations with the tale to evaluate faithfulness. The folktale and the two films are explored and analysed at length, from their plot summary to their criticism. The paradigms mentioned earlier are also at work here and the main purpose of this study is served by assessing the faithfulness and divergence of the adaptation from many angles, and by verifying the main hypothesis as well.

Chapter One: The Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter defines key concepts and terms related to the field of cinematic writing and literature and general. It stresses upon the significance of many components of a cinematic work and how can they been analysed from a literary point of view, in order to evaluate the possibility of faithfulness and the inevitability of divergence in an adapted work, and in the case of this thesis, an adapted film. This chapter is also a background to the Arabic literature and its influence on western literature, which serves as an introduction to the topic of the study, as it compares the western cinematic adaptations of an Arabic folktale.

1. Definition of Key Terms

1.1. Definition of Folktale

Etymologically, the word *folktale* is an English compound noun composed of *folk*, which means *people* and *tale*, which is any sort of a story, usually an orally transmitted one, and characterised by its long chain of narration, usually for generations ("Folk tale"). Once written, a folktale can be then called a *fable*.

A folktale generally has no known or certain original teller, much like a proverb, and is characterised by being relatively short, using simple language, orally transmitted (usually), being popular, featuring elements of fantasy and in some instances has more than one version (i.e. retelling).

Folktales make up a great part of certain cultures (Appelbaum and Catanese 4), and they serve as valuable means to understanding their traditions, way of living and their knowledge and history in general:

Reports are emerging from all corners of the world, documenting a vast panoply of verbal art, plastic art and related forms that depend as much on voice, performance, audience and traditional rules for composition as on the written, printed or inscribed

page or surface. We are becoming ever more aware of how indebted many of our most cherished literary works and most treasured artefacts are to preliterate and paraliterate media. (MacKay, 1999, p. 11)

There are however traditional works which fit vaguely to the characteristics of a folktale, but can be considered as such. E.g. the ancient Greek works by Homer such as the Iliad and the Odyssey were transmitted orally (Nagy 1996), despite being long however.

There are several known and popular folktales like Cinderella, Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood, etc.

1.2. An overview of "The Arabian Nights"

One Thousand And One Nights, or The Arabian Nights, is a collection of Arabic tales, composed somewhere between the 8th and 14th century AD. Many of the tales are either related or a continuation to each other. In its Arabic version, it is essentially composed of a frame story, stories around it and some lone stories (Marzolph and Van Leeuwen 372). The frame story is that of King Shahryar and his wife Scheherazade, who happens to be his wife after a commitment he makes of killing a bride each morning following one night of marriage. This happens after he discovers he was being cheated on by his first wife. Nonetheless, his last bride Scheherazade uses a ploy to delay the king's decision for a very long time: she would start telling him a story but keeps it unfinished until the next night. If the story finishes, she would start a new one, and the cycle keeps going for a little over a thousand nights, hence the title.

It is not known of certainty how the tales got compiled together in their current shape, and many theories aroused on this matter. Notably, the tales have different origins: they can have Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Jewish or Greek origins (713). The majority however are from medieval Islamic era, i.e. Abbasid and Mamluk, while the frame story is thought to be derived from Persian works (672).

There are several themes dealt with in the Arabian Nights such as love, poetry, tragedy, comedy etc. among others. Many stories include Jinn, monsters and magicians. Nevertheless, the stories also include real life characters such as the Abassid Caliph Harun-al-Rashid, his vizier Jafar al-Barmaki and the poet Abu Nuas.

1.3. Arabic Literature and its Influence on Western Literature

Literature in general is composed of the collection of works of poetry or prose of a certain civilisation ("Literature"), usually in no more than one language, and can be either written or oral, and Arabic literature is no exception.

Arabic literature dates back to the 5th or 6th century AD, widely in the form of oral Jahili poetry (pre-Islamic poetry), with only very little written texts then exist (Cooper).

It is almost universally agreed that The Holy Quran is the very first complete book (and the only one for quite some time) ever compiled together in Arabic language (and by extension Arabic literature) around the 7th century AD (Brown 403), and this continued to be the case for a while, as the dominant form of literature was still poetry, which ceased for a period due to the effect of the revealed Holy Quran which rendered any oral or written composition eventually inferior to its language and style. Nevertheless, there have been some notable poets of this period, such as the Prophet's Poet Hassan Ibn Thabit, whose poetry was pro-Islam and for the Prophet's cause (PBUH) (Hughes 168).

From the 8th century AD onwards, Arabic literature flourished and diversified in themes and forms, covering all kinds of topics, starting from the Prophet's (PBUH) biographies and career books, i.e *Sirah*, to non-fiction literature like philosophy, geography, history and grammar (Meho et al. 1). This era witnessed the return of poetry, though it was deemed inferior to the pre-Islamic in quality.

Arabic literature was pioneer in many genres of literature: the Arabian Night's tale *The City of Brass* is believed to be one of the first models of what is to be known as science-fiction, strangely enough, the story features a flying balloon-like object, robots as well as some sort of machinery and mechanical instruments like levers and buttons. The theological novel *The Treatise of Kamil on The Prophet's Biography* (known in the West as *Theologus Autodidactus*), written by Ibn al-Nafis between 1268 and 1277, is one of the first Arabic novels, and arguably the first model of a science-fiction novel. The novel itself is rich with

innumerable revolutionary scientific and logical facts, philosophical point of views and, as the title suggests, a journey into the understanding of the Creator and theology in general (Campbell 58) (the English translation of the Latin title is *The Self-taught Theologian*).

The legacy and influence of Arabic literature on western literature is well recognised. The polish novel *Saragossa Manuscript* (published in 1797) is an example of the influence of The Arabian Nights on European literature (Irwin 245). It is to note that The Arabian Nights, since its translation into French by Antoine Galland in 1704, has sparked major interest in its content, and this led to many imitations such as Anthony Hamilton's *Les Quatre Facardins* (published in 1730), Crébillon's *Le Sopha* (published in 1742) and Diderot's *Les Bijoux Indiscrets* (published in 1748).

Another notable example of Arabic influence on European literature is in Dante's epic poem *The Divine Comedy*, which is considered a masterpiece of European literature, it is actually thought to allude to the journey of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the heavens, i.e. *Isra' and Mi'raj*, as presented in Abul-Qasim Al-Nisaburi's book *Kitab Al-Miraj* (Arabic for *Book of The Ascension*) and its depiction of Hell (Landau 77). This claim is well founded, as Al-Nisaburi died in 1027 AD, the book was translated in the 13th century into Latin, Spanish and later French; Dante Alighieri's Poem was finished in the 14th century (around 1320 AD), and there are accounts that Dante has come in touch with one of *Kitab Al-Miraj* translators (Kermani 46).

1.4. Comparative Study

It is the analysis and comparison of two or more objects or ideas. It demonstrates the ability to examine, compare and contrast subjects or ideas.

1.5. Film Adaptation

It is the transfer of a story any type into a film.

1.6. Plot

It is the sequence of the narrated events in a story or film.

1.7. Paradigm

It is a philosophical and theoretical framework of a scientific school or discipline within which theories, laws, and generalizations and the experiments performed in support of them are formulated.

1.8. Narrative Arc (also called a story arc)

It is serialised and continuing storyline in episodic storytelling.

1.9. Criticism

It is the work or activity of making fair, careful judgements about the good and bad qualities of somebody/something, especially books, music, etc.

2. Analysis of the Works

2.1. Aladdin's Folktale

2.1.1. Plot Summary

Aladdin, son of Mustafa, is a young man living in the capital of China. One day he is visited by a man who claims he is his uncle, brother of his deceased father, and pretends to be a rich merchant, while he is in fact a sorcerer from Africa (purportedly from the Maghreb) whose intent is to lure Aladdin into a cave so he would retrieve him a magic lamp. Aladdin is guided to the cave and given a magic ring to wear, just to discover that the sorcerer is willing to sacrifice him for the sake of the oil lamp. The young man then finds himself trapped inside the cave with no way out. When he unawaresly rubs the ring he wears, a jinni appears in front of him and releases him from the trapped cave. Aladdin heads for his family's house, along with the magic lamp, unaware of its nature.

One day Aladdin and his mother decide to sell the lamp to buy food for the night; when she tries to clean it, a very powerful jinni surprisingly comes out of it, who admits he is bound to fulfil the owner of the lamp whatever he or she wishes.

Now in hold of the lamp, Aladdin becomes very rich and marries princess Badralbodoor, the Sultan's daughter, and the lamp's jinni builds them an extraordinary palace, greater than the Sultan's.

The sorcerer learns of Aladdin's fortune and sets out to retrieve the lamp. He convinces Aladdin's wife of replacing their old lamps with new ones, when she, unaware of the lamp's secret, agrees to give him the magic lamp. The sorcerer uses the lamp to summon the jinni and asks him to transport Aladdin's palace to his land along with the princess inside it. Aladdin then uses the ring's jinni to transport him to where the palace is situated. Thereafter he kills the sorcerer and retrieves the palace.

The sorcerer's brother, who is another sorcerer, determines to take revenge on Aladdin, only to be discovered and killed as well.

Aladdin later succeeds his wife's father (father-in-law) as a sultan.

2.1.2. Commentary and Background

Aladdin and The Magic Lamp folktale is certainly one of the most famous stories in The Arabian Nights, though it was only incorporated into it by the French author and translator Antoine Galland, who in turn learned of it from the Syrian storyteller Hanna Dyab (Razzaque).

The strange setting of China (when the story in all its aspects is clearly Arabic) may have been intentional and chosen so in order to convey a faraway and mysterious land for the tale's original audience. It is obvious as well that this tale employs more magic than most other ones in the collection.

The jinni's powers are clearly shown by the actions he could exert. In the time the story is set in, the distance from the Maghreb to China was considered the longest distance to travel, hence for the genie to be able to transport a large palace all that distance is without a shadow of doubt the uttermost manifestation of his strength.

Additionally, he is able to turn a poor young man into an extremely rich one. This is in line with this common theme (poor to rich) that is evident in *The Arabian Nights*. Aladdin's tale may in fact be the best illustration of this theme.

Despite its short length, the story is somewhat complex in structure. Its storyline can be well considered a narrative arc. The introduction extends from the very beginning section reaching to when Aladdin uses the lamp for the first time. In the introduction, one comes to realise how poor and miserable he is, later the character of the stranger who claims to be his unknown uncle is introduced, this so-called uncle promises him a wealthy future. The rising action starts immediately after Aladdin's return from the cave back home: he and his mother become rich by means of the jinni's powers, and his fortune reaches the apex when he marries the sultan's daughter. The climax is reached when his so-called uncle, who is revealed to be in fact a sorcerer, steals the lamp and transports the palace (along with the princess) to Africa. The falling action occurs right after that point, when Aladdin faces and kills the sorcerer and his brother after that. Finally, the resolution is reached as they live happily ever after.

This story is a good example of the narrative arc, as it shows that conflict and resolution can be illustrated even in a story of this short length. It is also a notable Western narrative arc, under the classification in the Aarne-Thompson-Uther index ATU 561 ("ATU 561"), which may hint to the fact that Galland has probably reshaped it before adding it to the collection.

The character of Aladdin has its virtues and its flaws as well. First of all, he used to have no ambition or attitude; however he later finds a purpose in life as soon as his social status changes for the good. In other words, he can be considered a lucky person who relies on his luck. He is also well-spoken and clever nevertheless. However, he is unfortunately greedy and always wishes more from the jinni. He also likes to attract attention, mainly by building the magnificent palace. If had not done so, the sorcerer may have not realised the secret behind it and so would never return to seek the lamp. Aladdin's greed and desires are a norm for such a character, what makes it hard to believe he eventually preserved his fortune. Usually in this type of tales the character loses all of it to greed.

2.1.3. Setting

The original story of Aladdin and his magic lamp as appears in *The Arabian Nights* is set in the capital of China in part (with other events taking place in Africa), although with a seemingly Muslim community (and by extension possibly Arabs). Multiple Muslim communities have actually existed throughout the history of China (Israeli 12), nevertheless the narration itself does not convey any specific knowledge of the country, but rather implies a Middle Eastern society, in references such as the ruler's title, a Sultan, and the mentioning of a Jewish merchant in the story, things which are incompatible with China.

2.1.4. Characters

Aladdin: an intelligent but lazy young man, with no experience in life and no intention to practice any kind of work. He is depicted as preferring the company of his friends rather than help his mother in labour. His life however takes a turning point after using the magic lamp to his benefit. He later gets wiser, and eventually becomes a sultan.

Mustafa: Aladdin's father. He is a hard worker who tries every possible means to vainly get his son to work. He later grows tired and succumbs to an illness and dies as a result.

Aladdin's mother: a hard worker too who lives with difficulty after her husband's death. She cares much for Aladdin despite him not paying the deserved respect. She later helps convey her son's desire of asking the Sultan for his daughter's hand.

The African sorcerer: an evil man with a deceptive personality who introduces himself as Mustafa's brother. After failing to retrieve the lamp at the first attempt, he later succeeds in doing so. He is killed in his hometown by Aladdin.

The Sultan: the ruler of China. He is depicted as a reverend ruler who cares much for his only daughter, princess Badralbodoor. He later admires Aladdin after becoming his son-in-law.

The Vizier: the Sultan's servant and consultant. He is wishing the Sultan's daughter to his son and so is rivalled by Aladdin.

Princess Badralbodoor: the Sultan's daughter who becomes Aladdin's wife.

The ring jinni: a somewhat powerful jinni that helps Aladdin gets out of the trapped cave and later in reaching his palace which the sorcerer transfers to his town in Africa using the lamp.

The lamp jinni: a very powerful jinni that is bound to fulfil the lamp's owner's wishes. He is responsible of all Aladdin's fortune.

The sorcerer's brother: a similarly evil sorcerer who sets to take revenge on Aladdin. He disguises as a pious woman, but is discovered and killed by Aladdin.

2.2. Aladdin Analysis (1992 animated film)

2.2.1. Plot Summary

The film starts with a street peddler (seller of stolen goods), riding his camel through the streets of the fictional Arabian town of Agrabah. After he tries to apparently sell the viewer his goods, he pulls out an old oil lamp, claiming it "once changed the course of a young man's life. A young man who, like this lamp, was more than what he seemed: A diamond, in the rough" (*Aladdin* (1992) 00:02:31-00:02:40).

The peddler then begins to tell a tale, beginning on a dark night, where the Sultan's grand vizier, Jafar, meets with a thief named Gazeem. Gazeem hands over half of a gold scarab beetle, of which Jafar has the second one. Putting them together, the beetle flies off, before causing a giant tiger's head to rise from the sand. It is the entrance of the Cave of Wonders.

Jafar sends Gazeem to enter, telling him to retrieve a lamp from inside the cave. However, upon approaching the tiger's head, it speaks that only one may enter: "One whose worth lies far within: the Diamond in the Rough!" Gazeem still attempts to enter upon Jafar's orders, but upon entering the tiger's mouth, it closes off the entrance way. It is then that Jafar claims he needs to find the Diamond in the Rough in order to enter.

The next day, on the streets of Agrabah, a young street boy named Aladdin is struggling to steal a loaf of bread, along with his monkey, Abu. After escaping from some of the Palace Guards, he and his monkey sit to eat the bread, when they notice a couple of hungry children. Aladdin and Abu give the two their bread, but are then distracted when a Royal Prince marches through the streets, and claims that Aladdin is nothing but "a worthless street rat." Aladdin and Abu then retire to their humble home, with Aladdin promising his monkey that someday, things will be better.

The next day, the Royal Prince leaves the Palace, angry that Princess Jasmine has refused him, and that her pet tiger Rajah has bitten his pants. The Sultan talks to his daughter, who claims she is tired of living her life behind walls. The Sultan goes to consult with his adviser, Jafar, who claims he can help the Sultan, if the Sultan will give him the blue diamond ring on his finger. Using hypnosis, Jafar gets the ring, and goes back to his private place.

Later on that evening, Jasmine escapes from the Palace, and wanders the streets of Agrabah the next day. However, her act of giving an apple to a hungry little boy puts her in trouble with the street merchant who sells them until Aladdin interferes and leads Jasmine away.

Meanwhile, Jafar has already used the blue diamond ring of the Sultan to consult The Sands of Time (a magical hourglass), when it reveals him who he needs to enter into the Cave of Wonders: Aladdin.

Aladdin has retreated with Jasmine to his place. However, Aladdin is suddenly caught by the Royal Guards. It is then that Jasmine reveals herself to them, demanding that Aladdin should be released. However, the head of the Royal Guards, Razoul, claims he is following Jafar's orders.

Returning to the Palace, Jasmine confronts Jafar, who claims that Aladdin was captured because he kidnapped her. When Jasmine claims this to not be the truth, Jafar tells her that Aladdin has been executed, she then drowns in tears.

In reality, Aladdin has been imprisoned in the Royal Dungeon. Abu manages to free Aladdin, but are then met within the dungeon by an older prisoner, claiming he needs Aladdin's help to locate The Cave of Wonders. In truth is that the prisoner is actually Jafar in disguise, who manages to help Aladdin escape the dungeon.

After they all arrive at the Cave of Wonders, Aladdin is allowed to enter, with the cave commanding him to "touch nothing but the lamp." Aladdin and Abu go deep into the cave, where they first encounter a magic carpet, which then leads them to the lamp's location. Aladdin is able to retrieve it, but Abu breaks the rule by stealing a large ruby, causing the cave to begin to collapse on them. Using the magic carpet, Aladdin and Abu manage to get to the entrance of the cave, where the old man asks Aladdin to give him the lamp. Aladdin does so, when the old man reveals a dagger, intending to kill him. Luckily, Abu bites him, and both Aladdin and Abu fall into the cavern, as the giant tiger's head disappears under the sand.

Jafar then laughingly reaches for the lamp, only to find it is gone. Abu managed to steal it from him before he fell into the cave with Aladdin. Deep within the cave, Aladdin begins to examine the lamp, finding an inscription on the side of it. Rubbing it, a large blue genie (spelled in this way in the film's script) comes out of the lamp. The genie tells Aladdin that for rubbing the lamp, he is allowed to make three wishes (and that wishing for more wishes is also not an option), except that he cannot kill anyone, make anyone fall in love with someone else or bring dead people back to life.

Using his tricks, Aladdin manages to cheat Genie into getting him out of the cave without using a wish. Landing in a small oasis, Aladdin contemplates what to wish for, and asks the Genie what he would wish for. The Genie mentions how he would wish to be free of the lamp, prompting Aladdin to promise to free the Genie after making his first two wishes.

As the topic turns to Aladdin's wishes, he thinks of wanting to be with Jasmine, and though he cannot make her fall in love with him, he decides to wish to be a prince, as she is a Princess. Aladdin uses his first wish; the genie will turn him into an extraordinarily rich prince. Abu is transformed into a large white elephant and will be Aladdin's mount.

Meanwhile, back in Agrabah, Jafar is still upset that he has not got the lamp. Willing to find some way to obtain power, Jafar attempts to convince the Sultan that there is a point in the royal rules that if Jasmine has not been suitably married in a certain time, Jafar can marry her.

However, the plans are suspended when a large and noisy royal procession enters the Kingdom, proclaiming the arrival of Prince Ali Ababwa, who in fact Aladdin. The procession is huge, with riches, exotic animals, hundreds of servants and Aladdin himself, impressing the sultan. Jafar appears suspicious and toward the new suitor. Aladdin is taken to Jasmine, who is unimpressed and rejects Aladdin's charms. However, when Aladdin removes his hat scare Rajah, Jasmine remembers the street boy. Aladdin tries to gain Jasmine's interest again by telling her how rich and powerful he is but she remains reluctant. Aladdin decides to leave Jasmine and stands on his magic carpet. Jasmine wishes to ride with him and the two take a trip around the world. Aladdin's charm eventually wins her.

Returning Jasmine to the palace, Aladdin is captured by palace guards who tie him up and throw him in a lake. When he accidentally rubs the lamp, Genie appears and convinces Aladdin to use his second wish to save his life. Aladdin returns to the palace to find that Jafar is using his cobra-shaped wooden staff to once again hypnotise the sultan, demanding that he orders his daughter to marry him. Aladdin figures out Jafar's plan and smashes the staff. Jafar escapes before the palace guards can arrest him, when he notices the lamp hidden in Prince Ali's/Aladdin's hat. After he leaves, the sultan sees that Jasmine has accepted Aladdin and wishes to marry him.

However, Aladdin is still troubled by the fact that he is not a real prince and has been lying to the princess. Genie appears and tries to persuade Aladdin into using his third wish to free him from the lamp as he promised. Aladdin tells him he cannot since he still feels

he is betraying Jasmine. The genie suddenly retreats into the lamp, feeling betrayed himself.

Jafar returns to his secret place under the palace, apparently defeated but he laughs hysterically when he realises who Prince Ali really is. He then sends his pet parrot Iago to steal the lamp which he does easily. Jaffar calls the Genie. Genie is forced to fulfil Jafar's wishes and appears in a giant form, grabbing the palace and taking it to a remote mountain. Jafar uses his first wish to become the world's most powerful sorcerer and reveals to everyone that Aladdin is nothing but a street boy. He throws him out of the palace and he lands in a snowy mountain region. Jafar then uses his second wish to become the sultan of Agrabah and imprisons the sultan and the princess until she agrees to marry him.

Trapped in the mountains, Aladdin finds the magic carpet and is able to return, sneaking into the palace. He finds the genie, who tells him he cannot help him since Jafar holds the lamp. Aladdin tries to sneak up on Jafar to steal back the lamp; Jasmine pretends to be suddenly in love with Jafar to distract him. However, Jafar discovers Aladdin and pushes him away and traps Jasmine in a large hourglass. Jafar transforms himself into a giant cobra to scare Aladdin, who fights back in vain. While surrounded by the cobra, Aladdin tries to trick Jafar into using his third wish: he tells Jafar that the Genie is still more powerful than him. Jafar then wishes to be turned into a genie himself, which Genie fulfils. As Jafar is amazed by the power he has suddenly gained, and after freeing Jasmine from the hourglass before she suffocates, Aladdin reminds him that being a Genie means becoming a servant to whoever holds his own lamp. Jafar is suddenly sucked into the new lamp created by his wish and is trapped.

Genie takes the Jafar lamp and throws it out into the desert, where it lands in the Cave of Wonders. The genie then tells Aladdin that if he wants to use his third wish to become a prince again he can. Aladdin, however, wishes to free the Genie. The lamp becomes

inactive and the Genie is set free. Happy that he is no longer a servant, the Genie plans to travel the world. The sultan, knowing that Aladdin is not a prince, decides to let him marry his daughter nevertheless. Abu is changed back into a monkey and the Genie leaves after an emotional goodbye. Aladdin and the princess are married and Aladdin becomes heir to the kingdom. They fly away on Aladdin's carpet toward the moon (ibid.).

2.2.2. Commentary and Background

Aladdin is a 1992 American animated musical fantasy film produced by Walt Disney Feature Animation and released by Walt Disney Pictures. It was produced and directed by Ron Clements and John Musker, and is based on the Arabic folktale of the same name from the One Thousand and One Nights. The voice cast includes Scott Weinger, Robin Williams, Linda Larkin, and Jonathan Freeman among others.

The script writers and filmmakers of *Aladdin* saw that the moral of the original folktale was not totally convenient for a cinematic adaptation, so they decided to alter it by making wish fulfilment a great solution, but eventually becomes a problem. Another theme is the act of pretending to be a different person, as both Aladdin and Princess Jasmine face problems for doing so, and Aladdin as Prince Ali could not attract her attention. She falls for Aladdin upon learning about his true identity. The theme of imprisonment is recurrent as well; in fact most characters face this at some point. Aladdin and the Princess are limited by their type of life, the Genie is imprisoned in the lamp and Jafar is a servant of the Sultan. There is a scene where Jasmine frees birds from their cages (qtd. in "Aladdin (1992 Disney film)").

2.2.3. Setting

The story of the animated film takes place in the fictional Arabian city of Agrabah, located near the Jordan River, as opposed to the capital of China in the original story.

Aladdin is also briefly exiled to a frozen wasteland from which he returns to the palace with the help of the magic carpet.

2.2.4. Characters

Aladdin: a poor but good-hearted thief. He is depicted as an orphan whose parents have died long ago.

Genie: a comedic jinni with great power to fulfil the wishes of his master.

Jasmine: the princess of Agrabah, who is bored of the life in the royal palace.

Jafar: the power-hungry Grand vizier of Agrabah.

Abu: Aladdin's kleptomaniac (obsessed with stealing) pet monkey.

Iago: Jafar's evil parrot.

The Sultan: the slightly childish but friendly ruler of Agrabah, who desperately tries to find a husband for his daughter Jasmine.

Razoul: the Captain of the Royal Guards.

Gazeem: a thief that Jafar sends into the Cave of Wonders at the beginning of the film but is trapped inside for being unworthy.

Prince Achmed: an arrogant prince whom Princess Jasmine rejects as a husband.

2.2.5. Criticism of the Animation

The 1992 animated adaptation of Aladdin and the Magic Lamp was met with universal acclaim from critics. Film review website [rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com) gave the animated film 95% of positive reviews based on 73 critics ("Aladdin" (Rotten Tomatoes)), and in a poll conducted on audiences, CinemaScore gave the film "A+", a rare grade in their history (McClintock). The film also made over \$500 million in revenue, the highest in its release year ("Aladdin" (Box Office)). It has also won two Academy Awards, i.e. *Oscar*, for Best Original Score as well as Best Original Song for *A Whole New World*, among many other nominations ("65th Academy Awards").

Nevertheless, the animation was criticised in many aspects, mainly in its depiction of some characters who, according to critic Roger Ebert "...have exaggerated facial characteristics – hooked noses, glowering brows, thick lips" (Ebert), something considered racist to some degree. This view is also shared by The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (Wingfield and Karaman).

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee also complained about a verse in the opening song *Arabian Nights* about Arabian lands that reads: "Where they cut off your ear if they don't like your face", which was subsequently changed to "Where it's flat and immense and the heat is intense" in video releases. For this incident, the American monthly magazine *Entertainment Weekly* ranked the animated film among the most controversial films.

2.3. Aladdin (2019 live-action remake) analysis

2.3.1. Plot Summary

Aladdin is a street boy who regularly steals to eat with the help of his pet monkey, Abu. One day while in the streets, Aladdin notices a girl who gets in trouble after giving bread to some children without paying. Aladdin comes to help her, and together they get chased by the Royal Guards. After a while they escape from the guards, and Aladdin takes the girl to his place for some tea. The girl calls herself Dalia, and is the handmaiden to the Princess of Agrabah. She suddenly has to leave as another suitor for the princess, Prince Anders, arrives. Dalia is revealed to be Princess Jasmine and Dalia is the name of her handmaid and best friend. Meanwhile, The Sultan's vizier, Jafar, is plotting to overthrow the Sultan by means of the Magic Lamp. However, it is hidden in a dangerous Cave of Wonders, and only the "Diamond in the Rough" may enter, which he is not. So, he spends a long time searching for this Diamond in the Rough.

One evening, after refusing Prince Anders' hand in marriage, Jasmine is surprisingly visited by Aladdin, who has come to return her mother's bracelet, which Abu stole. While still thinking she is Dalia, he leaves her with a promise to meet her again, but is caught by the royal guards. The next day, Aladdin finds himself in the desert with Jafar, who assumes that he, i.e. Aladdin, is the Diamond in the Rough. He tells Aladdin that the girl he met was the princess and that he can make him rich enough to impress her if he helps him retrieve the lamp. By evening, they arrive at the cave, and since Aladdin is the Diamond in the Rough he is permitted to enter the cave safely. The Cave of Wonders is filled with wondrous treasures that amaze both Aladdin and Abu. However, they have been warned to only retrieve the lamp and not touch any of the treasure otherwise they would be trapped inside the cave forever. Along the way they meet a Magic Carpet and find the lamp. However, Abu attempts to steal a big shiny ruby. This angers the spirit of the cave, which starts to collapse. Aladdin and Abu barely make it back with the Carpet's help, but end up trapped in the cave after Jafar takes the lamp and betrays him.

Trapped inside the cave, Abu reveals that he stole the lamp back from Jafar. Aladdin notices the lamp is a bit dusty rubs it. This causes the lamp to release a powerful Genie who can grant him three wishes, as long as he is holding the lamp. Aladdin wishes to escape from the cave (though he makes a wish without holding the lamp, keeping his three wishes as they are), and he, Genie, Abu and Carpet find themselves in the middle of the desert. After seeing Genie's capabilities, Aladdin wishes to become a prince hoping that he can be with Princess Jasmine. Genie transforms him into Prince Ali, and parade to The Sultan's Palace, where the Sultan welcomes him.

Aladdin feels a little uncomfortable being a prince and trying to impress Jasmine, especially when Genie has him dance spectacularly in front of the princess. Instead of being impressed she just leaves. Meanwhile, Jafar becomes suspicious of Prince Ali.

Later, Aladdin decides to go and see Jasmine in her room, while Genie takes Dalia out for a late night walk. While being himself, Aladdin takes Jasmine on a magic carpet ride, where the two of them become close. While watching the city's people from above, Jasmine figures out that Ali is Aladdin, but he manages to convince her that he is really a prince and that he dresses as an ordinary person to escape palace life. Then he takes Jasmine back to the palace.

The next day however, Jafar captures Aladdin, who has figured out who he really is. He threatens to throw him into water unless he tells him where the lamp is. When Aladdin denies everything, Jafar pushes him out of his tower and he falls into the sea. Abu and Carpet arrive with the lamp, and Aladdin manages to rub it before drowning. Genie rescues Aladdin, and after speaking with Jasmine they report to the Sultan Jafar's treason. Jafar tries to hypnotise the sultan to think that they are lying, but Aladdin destroys his staff, proving to the sultan what they claimed. He is taken to the dungeon, but escapes after his parrot Iago brings him the keys.

Meanwhile, the Sultan thanks Aladdin for revealing Jafar's treason, and would be happy to have him marry his daughter. This makes Aladdin decide not to use his last wish to set Genie free as he promised earlier, as he believes he cannot stay a prince without him. Genie is disappointed that Aladdin wants to continue living a lie and retreats to his lamp. Aladdin goes back to his old home to think, and realises that Genie is right. He decides to tell Jasmine the truth, when he realises that the lamp is gone and is now in Jafar's possession.

Jafar wishes to become sultan, but when the guards refuse to obey him he uses his second wish to become a sorcerer. He banishes Aladdin to a snowy wasteland and threatens to kill Dalia and the Sultan unless Jasmine agrees to marry him. However, Genie sends carpet to find Aladdin and Abu.

As they proceed with the wedding, Jasmine notices Aladdin coming on Carpet. She acts as if she is unaware, but once she gets close enough to Jafar, she steals the lamp from him and jumps on Carpet. Jafar sends Iago after them, turning him into a giant parrot. They almost lose the lamp during the chase, but get it back. However, Iago steals it back, but then loses it when the Sultan interrupts Jafar's sorcery on him. He changes back into a normal parrot. However, Jafar then sends a sand storm that captures Aladdin and Jasmine and brings them back to him. Jafar now has them at his mercy, to declare that he is the most powerful man in the world. However, Aladdin tells him that he is not as powerful as he thinks, and that the Genie remains the most powerful being in the universe as he gave Jafar his power in the first place and can also take it away from him. Realising what Aladdin says is true, Jafar uses his final wish to become an powerful genie. Seeing Aladdin's plan, Genie grants his wish, turning Jafar into a terrifying and powerful genie. Jafar gets imprisoned in his own lamp, which sucks him inside with his parrot Iago.

Jafar's magic over Agrabah is gone and Genie throws Jafar's lamp to the Cave of Wonders, where he and Iago would remain for many years. Aladdin apologises to Jasmine and the Sultan for deceiving them, and is just about to leave until Genie reminds him that he has one wish left to make himself a prince again or erase the law of a prince marrying a princess. However, Aladdin decides to use his last wish to set Genie free. Genie decides to spend his freedom seeing the world with Dalia, who he has fallen in love with, and have children together.

The Sultan has decided to pass his crown to Jasmine, making her the Sultan of Agrabah. Meanwhile, Aladdin goes away unnoticed, still thinking he is not right for Jasmine. However, she catches up with him and the two embrace and later marry.

2.3.2. Background

Aladdin is a 2019 American musical fantasy film produced by Walt Disney Pictures. Directed by Guy Ritchie, it is a live-action remake of Disney's 1992 animated film of the same name, which itself is based on Aladdin's folktale from One Thousand and One Nights. The film stars Will Smith, Mena Massoud, Naomi Scott, Marwan Kenzari and others.

2.3.3. Setting

The story of the live-action remake takes place in the fictional Arabian city of Agrabah, similarly to the animated film. Aladdin is as well briefly exiled to a frozen wasteland from which he returns to the palace with the help of the magic carpet.

2.3.4. Characters

Aladdin: a poor but good-hearted thief and street boy who is in love with Princess Jasmine.

Genie: a comedic and kind jinni who has the power to grant three wishes to whoever possesses his magic lamp.

Princess Jasmine: the Sultan's daughter and princess of Agrabah who wants to decide how she lives her life.

Jafar: an evil, deceptive, power-hungry sorcerer and the Grand vizier of Agrabah who, frustrated with the Sultan's ways of ruling, makes a plot to overthrow him as the ruler of Agrabah by acquiring the Genie's lamp.

The Sultan: the wise and noble ruler of Agrabah who is trying to find a capable husband for his daughter Jasmine.

Dalia: Jasmine's loyal handmaiden and best friend.

Prince Anders: a potential husband for Jasmine from the kingdom of Skanland.

Hakim: head of the palace guards who is loyal to the Sultan of Agrabah, as his father worked for the Sultan as a palace servant.

Iago: Jafar's intelligent parrot companion. In this film, Iago is portrayed a little more realistically than the original.

Abu: Aladdin's kleptomaniac but loyal pet monkey.

Chapter Two: Methodology and Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter deals with the study, how it is designed and conducted. It defines the Theory of The Film as well as The Faithfulness Assessing Paradigms. This chapter also defines the relevant terms and gives a full analysis of Aladdin's folktale and the two adapted films, with regards to plots, themes, characters, and son.

1. Definitions & Background

1.1. Definition of a film script or screenplay

A screenplay or a script is: *"the words that are written for a film, together with instructions for how it is to be acted and filmed."* ("Screenplay")

A script can be original or adapted, which means that it can be either written directly as a script or transferred and shaped as such from a novel or a story. Written scripts have a specific format and follow a set of standardisations (August), the elaboration on which is beyond the scope of this thesis. It suffices to say that a script is composed of two elements: action and dialogue (Glebas 72). Action describes the set and setting, the performance of actors and all non-verbal sounds, in brief, everything other than the dialogue. Dialogue is what is to be spoken by the characters and includes monologue as well.

On the other hand, a scenario is the skeleton of a script and it deals only with the narrative and dialogue (Maras 92). It resembles more or less a novel or a short story and so does not deal with the technical aspects of the film such as production design and direction.

1.2. Definition of adaptation

Adaptation in arts refers to one of the following: literary adaptation, theatrical adaptation or film (cinematic) adaptation.

As the term states, literary adaptation is basing a literary work on another, e.g. the serialised magazine story "...And Call Me Conrad" (1965), which has been adapted into a full novel called "This Immortal" (1966).

Theatrical adaptation is a play which is based on a novel or short story, or even a story from oral lore.

The film adaptation is the main focus of this thesis, and thus is the form to be elaborated more on. This form of adaptation is deriving a film's plot from another established story or account of any form (written, oral, fictitious, real, long, short, published, unpublished...) into a full film, which in turn may be a basis of further sequels that can be a continuation to its story and not necessarily inspired by the original.

Film adaptations are fairly common in cinema: Aladdin (1992, based on a folktale), Shutter Island (2010, based on a fiction novel), The Walk (2015, based on a non-fiction book), Bridge Of Spies (2015, inspired by real events), to name a few, are some examples of this trend.

1.3. Significance of script in film study

Since film is composed of a set of visual elements, in the form of successive shots (also called frames), usually accompanied by an audio material, whether it is a spoken dialogue, sound effects, music or the combination of all, presented through mediums such as cinema theatres, television or any sort of display (Santas 75), it cannot be therefore compared in a direct manner to any form of written literature (that is to say "poetry" or "prose") in its current shape, hence comparison should rather be turned to its literary foundation to achieve this end.

A film can be broken down into two main components: a motion picture and a soundtrack (which in turn is composed of the film score and the dialogue). Both of which are composed or "written" in some way (75), but the written part is what is relevant to this research. It is the script (also called screenplay) which dictates every element in the film from the dialogue and

narrative to the actions and events taking place within it. As such, dealing with a film from a literary perspective is dealing with its script (Miller 11), since it is the very component upon which literary criticism can be applied.

1.4. The results of the process of adaptation

Adaptation in arts refers to the creation of a derivative from another work of art, in part or in whole, a process through which the resultant work is arguably considered by itself a new, separate entity, for two main reasons: first, from a literary point of view, the derivative work is almost always not a word-for-word copy of the original as an adherence to literary ethics (such as the reliance on paraphrase as opposed to plain plagiarism), and indeed the only remaining component through the process of adaptation can be the atmosphere of the work, i.e. the impact on its audience. In other words, both the original work and its adaptation have to invoke similar emotional responses in the receiver; regardless of the artistic aspects employed in both of them. Second, from a legal point of view, both the original and the derivative work must have separate copyrights for the sake of intellectual property protection, with the exception of the case when one of them (usually the former) is in the public domain (i.e. it has no copyright whatsoever, depending on many factors such as the expiration of the copyright protection, or when the work being a classic, such as Shakespeare).

As explained above, considering the original work of literature and its adaptation as separate implies the application of a different methodology in the analysis and criticism of both, due to their different natures and forms (Byrne 271). For an adaptation to be called so, it must be of a different artistic nature or form compared to its basis, as stated in the definition of adaptation, and because, technically, a film that is based on another film is called a "remake" and in the case of a novel, it is called a "retelling", both of which cannot be deemed true adaptations.

However, in the scope of this study, the focus is only on film adaptation as the main concern.

1.5. Adaptation of non-fiction

The adaptation of non-fiction into cinema or literature is essentially distinct from that of fiction; as in fiction, the adapter enjoys more freedom in the process, since historical accuracy is not usually a matter of concern (Steccanella 125), but quite to the contrary, imagination is rather welcomed here, and as human work is naturally subject to flaws, the adaptation of fiction is encouraged to address these flaws, stress on spectacular elements, solve out mysterious ones, etc.

Literary speaking, adapting a non-fiction work, such as a journal article, a non-fiction book or any piece of literature based on real-life accounts often entails reinterpretations, addition and omission, generally for dramatic purposes. This is the case of nearly all films inspired by real events. These aspects can be broken down into the following:

- Reinterpretation in the general sense is somewhat comparable to paraphrasing. In the context of film adaptation, it is the retelling and the rearrangement of events to evoke a cinematic appeal (e.g. mystery, thrill, romance, etc), or a political purpose (as can be seen in World War II films and their depiction of Nazi Germany).
- The addition of certain narrative elements or new characters is common in such kind of adapted films, the purpose of which is artistic as well, but can be specifically used to fill narrative gaps to bring together distant events in a coherent manner. As for characters, their addition or "creation" is sometimes employed to complement the reason behind some ambiguous or missing historical actions, but can be also used as heroes or antagonists in order to serve a smooth plot and cinematic experience to the audience.
- In their adaptation to non-fiction, filmmakers may omit events, dialogue or characters from the final version of the film due to either length constraints of the film, the

little importance of some events (or their unreliable accounts), private life concerns or in some instances due to some religious or political issues.

1.6. Comparison of cinematic works and literature

The very building block of a film is the scene (Goodwyn 58), whether it is composed of a series of moving photographed pictures (usually accompanied by sound), or an animation, whether it is computer-generated or hand-drawn (also accompanied by sound). On the other hand, a written story is made out of text which generally, yet not always, encompasses both the narrative and the dialogue. Consequently, it is not feasible to draw any straightforward comparison between the two (scene and text), since they are obviously of different forms, so the attention is eventually shifted to the film's script, which is the literary foundation of a film, in order to carry out any comparative study.

As defined earlier, a film's script, or screenplay, is a written medium comprising every aspect of film structure, from acts and actions and how they are performed by actors (or animated characters in the case of an animation) to the dialogue and the course of events and the set and setting as well. Out of this definition, it is actually possible to design a formal comparison between a film and a story, notably the literary work the film is based upon, or its adaptation as is the aim of this study.

Moreover, this study is essentially concerned with the faithfulness and divergence in a film adaptation of a folktale, in which case a script is valuable to accomplish it; nevertheless, watching the actual film is of added benefit in order to formulate a coherent image of the narrative in one's mind apart from the technicalities of a script.

Notwithstanding, the 20th century French film theorist Jean Mitry argued that faithfulness to the original text is not possible (Mitry 328). It has also been argued that the motives of the adaptation are more important than faithfulness itself:

The six-question approach term, interpretation, assumes that departure is a necessity of form and concentrates instead on the **motivations** behind the changes made in the **transition from page to screen, rather than faithfulness**. (Grissom, 2014, p. 3)

The question of whether faithfulness (or fidelity in some sources) is of any importance is still a matter of debate. It is to note that, however, there are some academic journals dealing with this question. It is thus fair to say that "...the field is still haunted by the notion that adaptations ought to be faithful to their ostensible source texts" (qtd. in Ingersoll 5).

1.7. Faithfulness and divergence in literature

Faithfulness in the broad meaning of the word refers to the state where something remains in line with the qualities of whatever it is based upon, related to, derived from or inspired by.

Literary speaking, faithfulness of a derivative work (or adaptation) to the original implies that the former conveys the same information as the latter as much as possible, i.e. most literary elements (plot, themes, characters etc) are preserved in a convenient manner within the derivative or suitably adapted at least to the prerequisites of the adaptation process.

The terms faithfulness and accuracy intertwine in many critical accounts. Though accuracy concerns with technical details such as dates, figures and laws of nature, it gets however pointed to in some occasions of adaptation criticism. In essence, historical accuracy is the most debatable type of accuracy (Marcus et al. 92), mainly due to the fact that an existence of an inaccuracy would oftentimes raise ethical, political and social concerns, and rarely goes undetected.

In her critical essay about the film *Braveheart* (released in 1995), Sharon Krossa commented "The events aren't accurate, the dates aren't accurate, the characters aren't accurate, the names aren't accurate, the clothes aren't accurate—in short, just about nothing is accurate" ("Braveheart 10th Chance").

As far as divergence (which is the opposite of faithfulness) and inaccuracy are often criticised and confronted with negativity, faithfulness and accuracy are in contrast praised by critics. Nevertheless, flawless accuracy in cinematic adaptations may neither be possible to filmmakers nor plausible to the audience:

To insist that historians begin to make films that are absolutely accurate, absolutely true... Not only is this **impossible for financial reasons**, but when historians do make "accurate" films, they tend to be **dull as both film and history**, for they do not make use of the full visual and dramatic power of the medium. (Landy, 2000, p. 65)

Landy further argues that divergence and inaccuracy in the adaptation is not inherently harmful, as neither do necessarily disrespect the established standards, but may rather convey the same information in a different and modern manner, in a way not also to replace history, but to "stand adjacent" to it (65).

1.8. Definition of dramatic effect

The term "dramatisation" is interchangeable with "adaptation". "Dramatic effect" however refers to the inclination of adapters to emphasize struggle in the original work into the adaptation, either internal or external, in a way to induce suspense, sympathy, acknowledgment of a character's decisions, to create a conflict, to convey a moral or a lesson etc., among other motives.

Dramatic effect constitutes an essential feature of many (if not most) cinematic adaptations, distinguishing them from documentaries, which value more historical, technical and scientific credibility over "show" and entertainment (Gates 34). Nonetheless, it is the dramatic effect what makes films "films", by setting their plots apart from everyday life's events, to which the audience are generally accustomed to and therefore desensitised by them.

To a great extent, dramatic effect implies divergence, which makes it, as expected, subject to criticism once more according to "faithfulness and accuracy" standards.

Dramatic effect and purposes sometimes tend to not only emphasize struggle, but also manipulate names, events, facts, places or characters. E.g., commenting on the several scientific inaccuracies in his science-fiction space film *Gravity* (released in 2013), director Alfonso Cuarón stated "This is not a documentary; it is a piece of fiction" (France).

Additionally, sound effects can serve a dramatic effect in themselves. As along with music, they can symbolise certain emotions such as grief, joy, surprise, triumph, etc (Burnand 145), and many of notable notes have become stereotypes and clichés in cinema (e.g. dark and gothic musical notes in horror films, trumpets and their symbolisation of victory etc, among others).

2. Study design

2.1. Form of the study

The current study is a comparative study. It evaluates the level of faithfulness of Disney's cinematic adaptations of "Aladdin". The study applies the theories of the film theorist Béla Balázs as they appear in his book *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*.

2.2. Theoretical basis

The theory used as a backbone and reference in this study is Béla Balázs' *Theory of the Film*. This theory is chosen for this purpose since it is one of the earliest ones on the topic of cinematic adaptation of literary works (Moore 62). The theory mainly considers the original work and the film's script as two separate literary works (Balázs 246), and as such it is possible to conduct a comparative study on them in order to answer the research question of this thesis.

The paradigms suggested and illustrated in Karen Kline's article *The Accidental Tourist on Page and on Screen: Interrogating Normative Theories about Film Adaptation* are applied on the adaptations as a tool to measure faithfulness and divergence (Kline).

2.3. Critical opinions on the adaptation's faithfulness, its possibility and its success

It is to note that cinematic adaptation of literary works is the subject of criticism since the beginning of cinema itself. Kline argues that: "The issue of adaptation has long been a salient one among film critics for quite practical reasons" (ibid.).

Dudley Andrew also stated: "The making of a film out of an earlier text is virtually as old as the machinery of cinema itself..." (Dudley 98). He further argues that adaptations are not always faithful to the source nevertheless: "...though by no means all of these originals are revered or respected" (ibid.).

Faithfulness, according to Kline, has been disputed among film critics, though being a fundamental factor in assessing an adapted film's success:

In light of the important role novels have played in service to filmmaking, then, it is not surprising that, when faced with the prospect of evaluating a film based on a novel, critics often ground their judgments in **assessments of the effectiveness of the adaptation**. Yet, it is not uncommon to find **contradictory evaluations** of the same film, with one critic judging the adaptation successful while another deems it a failure. Some might argue that such disagreement simply illustrates the utter subjectivity of criticism; however, I contend that these differences in judgment stem

from the critics' adoption of **differing paradigms** for evaluating the film adaptation.

(Kline)

2.4. Techniques and tools for assessing and measuring faithfulness

As explained in her article, Kline proposes four paradigms in criticising an adaptation, by applying them on the film adaptation of *The Accidental Tourist* (a novel by Anne Tyler). They are used in this study in order to evaluate the cinematic adaptations of Aladdin's folktale.

The paradigms are:

- 1- **Translation:** in this paradigm, "the novel is the privileged artistic work, while the film exists to 'serve' its literary precursor." (Kline). It also appreciates and focuses primarily on similarities (thus faithfulness) over differences (i.e. divergence) between the original work and its adaptations. In other words, a critic who adopts this paradigm evaluates the adaptation based on its fidelity mainly in narrative elements such as characters, setting and theme. Critics Michael Klein and Gillian Parker suggest that the film should remain faithful to "the main thrust of the narrative, to the author's central concerns, to the natures of the major characters, to the ambiance of the novel, and ... [its] genre..." (qtd. in Kline). Therefore, critics who adopt the "Translation" paradigm may condemn film adaptations which are not in line with these requirements.
- 2- **Pluralist:** Kline hypothesises that a successful film adaptation "presents 'analogies' between the novel and the film, thus implying that there are essential differences between the[se] two sign systems. Nevertheless, the possibility of equivalence is also assumed by advocates of [the pluralist] paradigm..." (Kline). Differences between the film adaptation and the original work are "acceptable" but "similarities are expected

as well", therefore a "successful" film adaptation must "find a 'balance' between these two opposing tendencies" (ibid.).

Kline further argues that "Critics adopting this model value the film's ability to present a coherent fictive world within itself which bears significant traces of the novel operating at a somewhat abstract emotional/intellectual level" (ibid.). Dudley has labelled this the film's allegiance to the "spirit" of the novel (qtd. in Kline). Of central concern from this critical perspective are the film's ability to exist in its own right but also "to convey such qualities as the novel's mood, tone, and values" (Kline). Kline illustrates this quoting Morris Beja:

Of course what a film takes from a book matters; but so does what it brings to a book... The resulting film is then not a betrayal and not a copy, not an illustration and not a departure. It is a work of art that relates to the book from which it derives yet is also independent, an artistic achievement that is in some mysterious way the 'same' as the book but also something else: perhaps something less but perhaps something more as well. (qtd. in Kline)

An adaptation so "'remains true to the spirit" (Levine qtd. in Kline) of the original work even though it may change it (e.g. by creating new scenes to emphasize principal characters, or by omitting some minor characters while stressing out other ones).

3- **Transformation:** Kline states:

There are two significant assumptions underlying critical work within the transformation paradigm. First scholars adopting this approach consider the novel and the film to be separate, autonomous arts, constituted by different sign systems. Finding equivalencies between the two systems is not a priority,

and, indeed, may not be possible according to this paradigm. Second, critics adopting this paradigm often end up privileging the cinematic text over its literary source in their commentary. (Kline)

Consequently "Critics adopting this approach consider the novel raw material which the film alters significantly, so that the film becomes an artistic work in its own right" (ibid.). Transformation critics hold "a range of positions" depending on the "extent to which [they believe that] the connection between novel and film should be retained in the adaptation" (ibid.). Some critics praise a film adaptation that transforms the original work to a new and dissimilar object, but they still consider the existence of traces of the original literary work; others see the original work simply as a starting material. Critic Keith Cohen stands by the idea that for a film adaptation to be successful it should not be dependent on the original, so to "subvert its original", otherwise the adaptation is "nothing more than... seeing words changed into images" (Cohen 255, qtd. in Kline). There are other "transformative" critics such as John Orr and Gabriel Miller who acclaim film adaptations that enhance their literary originals (Kline).

- 4- **Materialist:** critics adopting this approach consider the cinematic work as the product of cultural-historical processes (ibid.). Although they do not totally neglect the original work, its influence is not considered as essential as understanding "the world from which [the film adaptation] comes and the one toward which it points" (Dudley 16-17, qtd. in Kline). Materialist critics would rather prioritise factors which affect cultural productions over whether film adaptations are comparable to the original work or not (Kline).

Kline concludes that:

A film adaptation cannot be all things to all people, especially when the people in question are film... In this essay, I have explored four paradigms that are prevalent in normative critical discourse about film adaptations... In the end, the critical paradigm might best be understood as a filter or lens which shapes the critic's perspective. (ibid.)

Chapter Three: Evaluation of Faithfulness and Divergence

Introduction

This chapter compares the works at hand and evaluates the level of faithfulness to be found in the cinematic adaptations of Aladdin's folktale. It starts with abstract comparison then moves to a more detailed one. Finally, findings are summarized and conclusions are drawn.

3. In-depth Comparison: Folktale vs. Animated Film

3.1. The Narrator

Aladdin's animated film (1992)

After a scene depicting hot sunset dunes, the sultan's palace, and an Arabian village on a dark night, the audience are introduced to the narrator. He informs that he is in Agrabah, a town in the Middle East, and that he has the best merchandise offered to sale. He presents the audience with various pieces of junk, but when the camera starts to wander away he tries to grab attention by showcasing a special oil lamp.

He warns us not to be fooled by appearances, and that this particular lamp changed the course of a young man's life. He then proceeds to tell the tale of the lamp.

Aladdin's folktale

Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp, or simply Aladdin, is one of The One Thousand and One Nights tales told by a woman named Shahrazad (or Scheherazade) to King Shahriyar to delay her execution.

At first, King Shahriyar finds out that his own wife is cheating on him, and so begins to distrust all women. This leads him to the habit of marrying women and then executing them the next day. The royal vizier is terrified of his king's anger and does not know how to remedy the situation, but one of his daughters, Shahrazad, volunteers to be the king's next bride, believing she can cure his vengeful attitude. She starts to tell the Sultan a story but by not finishing it the same night, Shahrazad keeps the Sultan from murdering her the next morning, and the morning after that, and so on.

This narrative framework is absent in the animated adaptation, and the closest reference to it in the film is the opening song of Arabian Nights, and a brief mention of Scheherazade in the genie's song Friend Like Me.

3.2. Main Characters

Aladdin's animated film (1992)

Aladdin is an orphan who has to steal to survive in the streets of Agrabah, together with Abu, his pet monkey and friend. As well as being different from the typical Disney princes, he has a strong sense of morality (despite being a thief).

Princess Jasmine is the daughter of the sultan who is not willing to marry any suitor who comes through the gates of the palace. By law she has to choose and marry a prince in

three days' time, but she only wants to marry for love, and so ends up rejecting every prince she meets with the help of her loyal tiger, Raja. She also dreams of escaping to a life outside the palace walls.

The comic and interesting genie appears when Aladdin rubs the magic lamp, and says he will grant him three wishes, unless he wants to kill someone, make someone fall in love, or bring people back from the dead (arguably the kinds of wishes which are first on many people's lists). He makes sure he grants wishes in the strangest way possible, and also becomes friends with Aladdin.

Jafar is the royal vizier and the villain of the story. With his trusty animal companion Iago, he is plotting to take over the sultan's kingdom by acquiring the magic lamp. He also appears as toothless old man who tricks Aladdin into the Cave of Wonders.

Finally, the sultan, Jasmine's father, and king of Agrabah. He is warm-hearted and just, but annoyed by his daughter's refusal to marry a prince, as well as having a childish and comic character.

Aladdin's folktale

Aladdin is said to be either Chinese, or at least he lives in China, and he also has a living mother and father earlier in the story. Since he prefers playing out in the streets with other boys rather than earning a living, his father literally dies, partly due to his son's behaviour, and his mother is forced to work to make them a living. He does have a good heart though, as he is willing to share his wealth with the other people later in the story, and once he marries the woman he wishes, he lavishes her with attention and riches.

That woman is the sultan's daughter, Princess Badralbodoor (which means "full moon of full moons"). She is betrothed to the royal vizier's son, and seems to be indifferent to marrying anybody.

The trustworthy-looking man who visits Aladdin and his mother is an evil sorcerer from the Maghreb who seeks the power of the lamp. He follows its trail to China, and poses as Aladdin's long lost uncle in order to gain access to it.

The reason he is after the lamp is because of the jinn inside it, who can grant his master wishes.

There are two jinn in this story – one residing the lamp, and is presumably more powerful, and another in a ring that Aladdin is given by the sorcerer. Both jinn have similarly plain personalities, simply appearing, granting a wish and then disappearing. The one in the lamp reappears near the end of the story to grant a certain wish, that is to bring back Aladdin's palace which is taken by the sorcerer to his homeland (with the help of the jinni), and other than that, he does not appear much and does not befriend Aladdin.

Aladdin's mother is a hard-worker, as she spends her days weaving to make money. After Aladdin uses the lamp to his advantage, she meets the sultan's requests by delivering heaps of jewels to try to impress him. She is the main advocate of Aladdin's wishes to marry the princess, and is fully supportive of her son once he ceases his behaviour matures.

Finally, the sultan also plays a part in this, and like the one in the film he is very suggestible, completely believing that Aladdin came up with vast riches or built a palace within only a couple of days. He is shown as somewhat merciless, even towards his daughter.

In the animated film, the setting is clearly in the Middle East, and the princess and the genie are more developed and independent to an extent. Aladdin's story is tale of success after struggle, as he is an orphaned street thief. The sultan is also a very simple person. The original version has a completely different setting with much more traditional portrayals of the characters. There is also no depiction of animal companions, such as Aladdin's monkey, Jasmine's tiger or Jafar's parrot.

3.3. The Quest for the Lamp

Aladdin's animated film (1992)

The story begins with Jafar trying to gain access to the Cave of Wonders so he can retrieve the lamp. He sends a thief in to bring it, and is warned by the cave's entrance that "only one person can enter the cave" and this person happens to be Aladdin. Using his dark magic, Jafar finds out who he is and has him thrown in the palace prison, and then in the guise of an old prisoner convinces him to help obtain the lamp. Aladdin enters the cave and finds it, but Abu amazed by the forbidden treasures and touches one of them, causing the cave to collapse and melt into lava. Fortunately, on their way inside they befriend a magic carpet that tries to takes them to safety.

A falling rock suddenly smacks the carpet away and Aladdin and Abu are left hanging off a ledge. Jafar does not help them unless they would give him the lamp, but once Aladdin do so, Jafar tries to kill him. Aladdin and his monkey tumble into the abyss as the cave finally collapses, but fortunately, Abu swipes the lamp of Jafar, so he and Aladdin are not as trapped as it appears.

Aladdin's folktale

The sorcerer in the folktale already knows Aladdin is the only person who can enter the cave, so after winning his family's trust with fine food, clothes, and the promise of buying them a shop, he takes Aladdin to the mountains to find the entrance. Instead of a tiger's head, it is a merely a trapdoor. The sorcerer advises he must go down to retrieve the lamp, but must not touch any of the other treasure. He is however allowed to pick some of the

rubies and emeralds and other jewels that this pretended uncle promises Aladdin with. Finally, he gives Aladdin a magic ring, saying it will protect him as long as he follows his instructions.

Aladdin goes down into the cave and retrieves the lamp but is unable to climb back out again. The sorcerer asks him to give him the lamp, but Aladdin cannot, and says he needs help climbing out first. The magician gets frustrated and traps Aladdin and the lamp in the cave forever before going back to the Maghreb.

The sorcerer in the tale is somewhat more prepared than Jafar and more dedicated to winning Aladdin's trust, but has considerably less patience when things do not go according to plan. The cave in the film is more magical and threatening, as there is an obvious supernatural presence watching over it, which prohibits its visitor taking anything else apart from the lamp, and should first be "The diamond in the rough". Aladdin in the tale is still permitted to take some jewels on the way out, but this also leads to his failure. In both stories, Aladdin has the lamp in his possession.

3.4. Aladdin's Plans

Aladdin's animated film (1992)

Since he has nothing else to do while being trapped in the cave, Aladdin rubs the lamp and the genie comes out of it. He says he will grant him three wishes, and then entertains him with song about being his friend. Aladdin then tricks the genie into getting him out of the cave to avoid wasting a wish, and although the genie is initially angry, he calms down when Aladdin asks what the genie himself would wish for – thereby discovering that the genie is a prisoner, and that only his master can wish for his freedom.

Aladdin agrees to wish for the genie's freedom once he has used his other two wishes, the first of which is to make him into a prince so he has a chance at winning the hand of the princess. He and the genie therefore become friends and the genie says to Aladdin that he should really be himself when meeting the princess, and not just a typical prince. Aladdin ignores the advice and spends most of his time, with the genie's help, trying to impress Jasmine and the sultan with signs of wealth and by acting like a member of a royal family.

Aladdin's folktale

After being stuck in the cave quite some time, Aladdin accidentally rubs the ring the sorcerer gave him. This releases a large jinni, who says he will grant him any wish he chooses. Aladdin asks for him to free him from the cave and take him safely home.

Once there, his mother is relieved to see him and Aladdin explains what happened with the sorcerer. She says perhaps they can sell the lamp for money, but it may need polishing. It is therefore Aladdin's mother who releases the lamp jinni, who does not seem to have any limit to the number of wishes he can grant. Aladdin and his mother first ask for food, and

then sell off the silver platters they are served on. This goes on until Aladdin sees the princess, and he then uses more wishes to conjure up vast riches for his mother, so she can go to the palace and suggest his hand for that of the princess.

Despite having two jinn, and apparently an infinite number of wishes, Aladdin in the tale does not immediately grasp the full possibilities of this. He also sends his mother along to the sultan instead of an elaborate parade in the animated film, but in both stories Aladdin's main focus is winning the heart and hand of the princess.

3.5. Aladdin and the Princess

Aladdin's animated film (1992)

Aladdin and Jasmine first meet when Jasmine has run away from the palace in disguise to avoid getting married. Having been sheltered her whole life, she does not understand the notion of buying and selling, and she almost has her hand chopped off by an angry merchant when she does not pay for an apple. Aladdin intervenes with some clever acting and they escape together, after which he takes her to his private home: a rough building with a view of the palace.

Aladdin is attracted to her that she is all he thinks about; even when he is thrown in the prison and is probably going to get his head cut off (which is the story Jafar tells the princess when he kidnaps him to procure the lamp).

They meet again later in the film, when Aladdin is disguised as Prince Ali. Unfortunately, Jasmine finds his aforementioned display of riches and servants rather unattractive, and is dismissive of him like all the other suitors.

Ironically, when she eventually speaks to him, she recognises his mannerisms and realises he is the same boy from the market, so rather than setting her tiger on him as usual, she agrees to go for a ride with him on his magic carpet. Having finally chosen a suitor, she is able to get married. He is unable to keep up the charade of being a prince without the genie's help, and so he confesses to him that he cannot set him free after all. He then comes to his senses and realises he has to tell Jasmine the truth about who he is, but before he can tell her he's really just a poor boy, they are interrupted by Jafar.

Aladdin's folktale

Much like the film, Aladdin catches sight of the princess in the street, but as a simple spectator – the entire quarter has been closed off as the princess wants to use the public baths, and he catches a glimpse of her going into the building. He is struck by her beauty, and charmingly confesses to his mother that he thought all women looked like her until he saw the princess, when he falls in love. He makes it his mission to have her hand in marriage, and since by this point he already has the lamp, this should be fairly easy.

The sultan agrees to let Aladdin marry her after his mother presents him with fine jewels and gold, but says this will in some time as the royal vizier, whose son she is betrothed to, may want time to try to surpass what Aladdin offered. However, the sultan breaks his word and Badralbodoor is wed to the vizier's son.

On the wedding night, and every night until the sultan dissolves the marriage, he uses the jinni to bring the married couple to his room so they cannot consummate the relationship. While this is happening, Aladdin lies on the bed with the princess with a sword between them. Both the bride and groom are too embarrassed to tell anyone about this.

Once the marriage to the vizier's son has been dissolved, Aladdin makes a show with the jinn's help, with servants and riches. Although Princess Jasmine is not impressed in the animated film, it totally works for Badralbodoor, and this, along with Aladdin's good looks, wins her heart and they are happily married about half-way through the story. Aladdin uses his wishes to build a palace for himself and the princess right outside the sultan's window, and it seems that they will live happily ever after with everything they could desire.

In the animated film version, the couple meet as equals and fall in love, but the issue of status seems to bother Aladdin more than Jasmine. In the tale, status is not important as long as the princess' suitor has enough wealth, and this is what wins over Badralbodoor initially. Aladdin in the book also takes more direct action to stop other people from marrying the girl of his dreams, and his marriage to the princess occurs half-way through the story.

3.6. The Sorcerer's Revenge

Aladdin's animated film (1992)

Having given up hope of ever finding the lamp, Jafar tries to find other ways of usurping the sultan – namely by marrying the princess, or rather hypnotising the sultan so he forces Jasmine to do so. When Prince Ali comes, Jafar tries to kill him, and gets the guards to tie a ball and chain to his feet and throw him into the sea. Aladdin therefore uses up his second wish unintentionally, and the genie saves his life. When he returns to the palace, he exposes Jafar's plan and the sultan and Jasmine throw him out. While being handled by the guards, Jafar spots the lamp in Aladdin's hat and realises who he is before escaping.

After Aladdin tells Jasmine who he really is, Iago steals the lamp and delivers it to Jafar. The vizier uses one wish to become sultan, and another to become the world's most powerful sorcerer, whereby he turns Aladdin back to how he was and then sends him to a far wasteland. In the meantime, he moves his palace on top of a cliff and turns the sultan into a jester and Jasmine into a slave. He asks Jasmine for her hand in marriage again, and when she refuses, he asks the genie to make her fall in love with him, unaware that this is one of the only wishes he cannot actually grant.

Aladdin's folktale

While Aladdin is living the life of wealth, married to the sultan's daughter and handing money to the poor and needy, the sorcerer finally goes back to China and discovers Aladdin is alive and well and using the lamp's magical powers. The sorcerer uses his magic to find out where the lamp is in Aladdin's palace. He then goes there offering to exchange new lamps for old ones.

Badralbodoor allows him to swap her husband's "old" lamp for a new one. Then the sorcerer uses the lamp to transport Aladdin's palace away to Africa, with the princess inside.

In both versions the sorcerer identifies Aladdin as the holder of the lamp and moves away the sultan's palace (or part of it), along with the princess, but in the film this is due to Aladdin's arrogance, whereas in the tale it is mainly down to the princess' action. In either case, Aladdin is far away from the sorcerer's palace and seemingly helpless without the power of the lamp.

3.7. Aladdin's Rescue

Aladdin's animated film (1992)

Thanks to the magic carpet, Aladdin manages to return to the palace. The genie cannot help him because Jafar is his new master. Aladdin manages to sneak up on Jafar, mainly because Jasmine is pretending to be in love with him, and so begins a struggle for the lamp. Jafar seemingly has the upper hand, being the world's most powerful sorcerer, and then transforms himself into a giant snake.

Before being crushed to death, Aladdin tricks Jafar into wishing he was a genie, as he would apparently be more powerful. This of course restricts him to living in a lamp, and unable to wield powers without his master. The villain vanquished, everyone and everything

returns to normal, and Jafar's lamp is thrown away to be swallowed up by the Cave of Wonders.

Rather than change back into a prince, Aladdin uses his last wish to set the genie free, gently explaining to Jasmine that he has got to stop pretending to be someone he is not. Luckily, the sultan suddenly remembers that he can change the law so that Jasmine can marry whomever she wishes, prince or not, so she and Aladdin can finally be together. The wedded pair then fly away on the magic carpet to a new life.

Aladdin's folktale

In retaliation for the princess being kidnapped, the sultan decides to behead Aladdin – it's only the protest from the townspeople outside that stops him. Aladdin asks for some time to find her, which the sultan agrees to. Aladdin's remembers the ring he has ends up rubbing it. The ring jinni is unable to bring back the princess because he cannot undo the magic of the lamp jinni, but he can take Aladdin to the palace in the Maghreb. Aladdin manages to kill the sorcerer afterwards. They then use the lamp to transport the palace back to China, to its original location.

However, sorcerer has a brother, who also journeys to China with revenge. He disguises himself as a local holy woman named and gets himself invited to the palace to see Badralbodoor. While there, he advises her that she should hang a roc's egg in the middle of the palace to make it even more holy and special. Badralbodoor asks Aladdin to get this for her, but when he asks the jinni, he roars with anger at his ingratitude, and threatens to burn him and his wife. It turns out that the roc is their master, and to ask such a thing is forbidden. Since the jinni knows they has not offended him on purpose, before disappearing he reveals that the holy woman is the magician's brother in disguise and is intent on killing Aladdin.

Aladdin later manages to kill the man and eventually becomes the sultan, and they live happily ever after.

Albeit by either the magic carpet or the ring jinni, Aladdin in both stories is able to reach the sorcerer. In the film, Aladdin is more forgiving with the sorcerer's fate, and the sultan simply watches Aladdin's actions rather than threatening him. There are more twists and turns in the tale, and it's implied that the jinni leaves Aladdin due to his terrible request rather than because he is free. Both turn out happily nevertheless, but with more blood and beheadings in the original version.

3.8. Folktale vs. Live-action Film adaptation

3.8.1. Abstract Comparison

Similarly to the animated film, the One Thousand and One Nights' version of "Aladdin" shares some similarities with the remake film. It is too about a poor young man named "Aladdin" who gets tricked into retrieving a magical oil lamp from a magic cave. Aladdin also meets a jinni and ends up marrying the princess, though his journey to get there is different.

3.8.2. Similarities and Faithfulness

The protagonist in the live-action film and the original tale is young man named "Aladdin". They also feature a sorcerer who is seeking a magic lamp from the Cave of Wonders. Aladdin is also seduced by the sorcerer into retrieving the lamp (similarly yet distinctive from his way in the animated film), only to be trapped with it inside the cave. He escapes the cave and uses the lamp's jinni to become a rich prince so he could marry the Sultan's daughter.

The sorcerer later gets hold of the magic lamp and strips Aladdin of his fortune. Nevertheless, Aladdin also marries the princess eventually.

3.8.3. Differences and divergence

The setting of the film is the Middle Eastern city of Agrabah, populated by clearly Arab people, whereas it is the capital of China in the original tale. There are many differences too. The Jafar character in the film is a combination of both the grand Vizier and the sorcerer in the original story (similarly to the animation).

Another key difference is that, in the original folktale, Aladdin has a magical ring that has a second, less powerful jinni who helps Aladdin escape the trapped cave, as opposed to the lamp's jinni having this role in the film. The film also features a magic carpet which is absent in the original. The lamp's jinni is similarly powerful in both versions but is also humorous in the film and is bound to fulfil only three wishes.

The princess' name is "Jasmine" in the film while it is "Badrabodoor" in the original version. Aladdin marries her early on in the folktale. The conflict comes from trying to keep that power and happiness after the jinni fulfils all his wishes.

The sorcerer is killed by Aladdin in the original, while in the film he turns into a jinni after he wishes so, and is trapped inside his own lamp. There is also no mention of the sorcerer's brother in the film.

Aladdin becomes a sultan in the original tale but his wife Jasmine becomes the Sultana in the film.

There are also extra characters in the film that do not appear in the original, such as Jafar's parrot and the princess' tiger.

General Conclusion

The Thousand and One Nights, though it is generally composed of many unrelated stories, is however considered a predecessor to the western novel and modern novel in general, and how this came to be is due to the complex nature of its storytelling, long before any modern literary genre, theory or technique was ever conceived. Because of its similarity to the rest of the tales in the collection, Aladdin and The Magic Lamp was incorporated into it by the French author and translator Antoine Galland in his version of the tales which he published in 1710, and has since been regarded as part of The Thousand and One Nights and a notable one. The tale of Aladdin can be regarded from one perspective a coming-of-age story, as the eponymous protagonist's character develops from being a poor and reckless teenager to a determined young man who creates his own wealth, marries the sultan's daughter and defeats the sorcerer who seeks to compromise all of this. From another perspective, the tale is a magical fantasy with pronounced elements of supernatural as well. The character of the sorcerer from the Maghreb serves as an introduction of magic to the story and the life of Aladdin as a result. This sorcerer provides Aladdin with a magic ring and reveals the existence of a magic lamp which will be demonstrated later to contain a very powerful jinni. Aladdin becomes a prince and builds a magnificent palace with the help of this jinni.

The influence of Aladdin's tale on the literary field is still evident until this day. In the highly renowned classification of folktales' types, the Aarne–Thompson–Uther Index, it is classified under the reference "ATU 561" by its own name and serves as a prominent example-type of any other possible tale with similar structure. It was adapted to a musical comedy play early in 1788 by John O'Keefe, and since then there have been numerous musical theatre adaptations until as late as 2014, however, the most notable adaptation thus far is Walt Disney's musical animated film of 1992, untitled "Aladdin", although its plot is only loosely faithful to the original tale. The animated film retains some elements

nevertheless, such as the protagonist's name, the magic lamp and the wish-granting jinni that dwells it, Aladdin's marriages to the sultan's daughter and the antagonistic sorcerer who first uses Aladdin to retrieve the lamp and later stands in his way to fulfil his own wishes thus depriving Aladdin of his. The key differences between the two stories is primarily the order of events, as in the tale Aladdin becomes a prince and marries the sultan's daughter early on, and he is later disturbed by the sorcerer, whereas the animation's resolution occurs with him marrying the princess as a tribute to the established western fairy tale genre's recurrent culmination of events: "...and they lived happily ever after." The animated film adaptation, though widely divergent from the original, has in fact influenced most subsequent works and became the basis of its own sequels per se. Many international adaptations made references to it, mainly in the character and appearance of the Genie and the name of the princess, which is Jasmine as in the animation, rather than Badr al-Bodour as in the tale. This film is a stark example of both pros and cons of the process of adaptation. On the one hand, it was acclaimed by both critics and audiences and was a high-grossing film in its year of release with \$ 502 million in revenues, surpassing any other film of any genre, and has eventually invoked great interest in the folktale and Arabic literature in general. As of 2020, the animated film was followed by four related and released films, one of which is a remake, and three other films yet to be announced. On the other hand, it was subject to severe criticism and controversies, such as the one raised by the barbarising verse about Arabian land: "Where they cut off your ear if they don't like your face", which was subsequently changed due to complaints. Another aspect which drew criticism is the portrayal of Aladdin and the princess, who were described as having western features, while all other characters have stereotypical and villainous ones.

Disney released a live-action remake of the 1992 animation in 2019, claiming that it is rather "ambitious and non-traditional". This adaptation of the previous adaptation has generally addressed the criticism directed to it, but was not a more faithful adaptation. In fact,

the live-action film retained all the elements from the animation, while either introducing new characters, such as the princess' handmaiden, or replacing existing ones, such as Prince Anders instead of Prince Achmed. The film was acclaimed by audiences and to some extent by critics, and was a major commercial success as well, grossing over \$ 1 billion in revenues.

As illustrated above, the cinematic adaptations of the folktale "Aladdin and The Magic Lamp" were not faithful to its story almost at all, but this has nevertheless not affected their reception by audiences and critics, rather to the contrary, they were commercial successes and found their way into the relevant culture. This is evidence that the process of cinematic adaptation produces a new and different work, as stated in Béla Balázs' Theory of The Film, which makes it in turn the subject of criticism based on itself, rather than its relation to the original work. In other words, the adapted work can be successful and praiseworthy regardless of its faithfulness or divergence from its parent work, which is the main aspect that matters to the adapter.

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