Humanize before you submit

Likely Turnitin score: **15-50%** - likely over 20%

Humanize the colored text

Keep humanizing until this report says Ready to submit.

Once the title says Ready to submit, you're covered: if Turnitin flags it after that, get a free month of Pro Bundle ($14.99) - plus $25 if the text came straight from our humanizer. This report isn't covered yet. See terms

Reads as AI - catches 83 of 100 sentences Turnitin flags

Borderline - with blue, catches 95 of 100; marks a bit more than Turnitin

Measured on 1,707 Turnitin reports of 20% or more, October 2026. Papers vary.

Highlights are our estimate - Turnitin may mark other sentences.

EliteWorks is not affiliated with Turnitin.

Student Name

Student ID

Instructor's Name

Course Name and Number

Thesis Statement

This research asserts that Disney's *Aladdin* (1992) employs the unique affordances of animation, specifically through exaggerated caricature in character design, contrasting kinetic profiles in movement, and a fantastically hybrid mise-en-scène, to construct an Orientalist vision of the Middle East that codes its world as exotic, morally ambiguous, and subordinate to an implicit Western norm.

Abstract

Disney's *Aladdin* (1992) serves as a compelling case study in how animation's formal qualities perpetuate Orientalist discourse. Moving beyond narrative analysis, this study examines how the film's visual language, specifically character design, movement, and setting, constructs a reductive and exoticized vision of the Middle East. Through a visual semiotic analysis, it argues that the plasticity of animation allows protagonists Aladdin and Jasmine to be designed with relatable, Western-coded features, while antagonists and secondary characters are grotesquely caricatured. Furthermore, kinetic profiling assigns fluid, heroic motion to the leads, contrasting with the slinking, chaotic movements of villains and crowds. Lastly, the spatial construction of Agrabah synthesizes disparate cultural elements into a fantastical, timeless "Orient," framed through exotic color palettes and labyrinthine layouts. By employing Edward Said's postcolonial framework, this research demonstrates how these combined techniques visually code the film's world as mysterious, morally ambiguous, and subordinate to an implicit Western norm. The project ultimately reveals how

the “innocent” medium of animation naturalizes complex geopolitical hierarchies, making Orientalist tropes palatable and memorable for a global audience.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative visual semiotic analysis to deconstruct how *Aladdin* uses animated form to convey ideology. The methodology is structured in three sequential phases, each focusing on a specific affordance of animation.

First, character design and plasticity are analyzed by comparing the physical representation of protagonists (Aladdin, Jasmine) against antagonists (Jafar) and background characters. This involves examining how exaggerated features (e.g., angular faces, hooked noses) versus normalized proportions visually correlate with moral alignment and “otherness.”

Second, the deconstruction of motion analyzes the assigned kinetic profiles of different characters. Using scene comparisons, the study documents how fluid, athletic movement is associated with heroism, while stiff, slinking, or erratic motion is linked to villainy or undifferentiated crowds, translating behavioral stereotypes into visual performance.

Third, spatial analysis examines Agrabah’s mise-en-scène. This includes cataloging architectural hybridity, color symbolism (e.g., dusty markets vs. mystical blues), and spatial organization to demonstrate how the setting itself constructs a fantastical, subordinate Orient. Throughout, Edward Said’s *Orientalism* provides theoretical lens, ensuring the semiotic findings are framed within the critique of Western representational hegemony.

Annotated Bibliography

Aljahdali, Banan, and Lamis Hakami. “A Flawed World: Disney’s Aladdin through the Lens of Orientalism.” *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, vol. 7, no. 12, Al-Kindi Center for Research and Development, Dec. 2024, pp. 105–9, https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2024.7.12.14

The article presents quite the contemporary application of Edward Said’s Orientalism to the 1992 Disney animated film *Aladdin*. Here, the authors argue that *Aladdin* is a prime example of Western media creating a specific "truth" about and in the Middle East to hold onto power and domination. This is important to this research study, as they lay out the theoretical work of Said based on the narrative flaws and character representations present in Disney’s work; Of course, this will support the thesis by demonstrating how the "Orient" is constructed as the subordinate counterpart to Western binaries in its hierarchical representation

Ayuningtiyas, Firda, and Ali Mustofa. “The Middle Eastern Culture and It’s Representation in Walt Disney Pictures Movie ‘Aladdin’ (2019).” *Humanitatis : Journal of Language and Literature*, vol. 8, no. 1, STMIK Bumigora Mataram, Dec. 2021, pp. 61–74, https://doi.org/10.30812/humanitatis.v8i1.1423

This paper analyzes the representation of the Middle East in Disney's Aladdin, looking at the complications between the authenticity of being representative and the impacts of "Disneyfication." This piece will be important in Section 3.1 comparative of analysis as it provides a thorough explanation of visual and linguistic signifiers within the text of the film. The authors explain the way in which the film's narrative maintains the difficulty of being marketable resulted in the commingling of how the film created a "Disney World" aesthetic suggestive of western like aesthetics not representative of any middle eastern culture. The

authors' conclusions lead to similar conclusions in the current paper, effectively providing a foundation for analysis of whether or not these films are representative of a real Middle Eastern identity or simply consumable as one.

Daisuke Akimoto. “Beyond Orientalism? Evolving Political Correctness in Disney’s Live-Action Film Aladdin (2019).” *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, vol. 8, no. 4, Al-Kindi Center for Research and Development, Apr. 2025, pp. 107–16, https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2025.8.4.13

Akimoto investigates whether the text of the live-action remake of Aladdin in 2019 advances "beyond Orientalism" through political correctness evolving. This source is important for Section 5.1 as it analyzes Disney's attempt to create an evolution and modified narrative towards cultural sensitivity. Akimoto establishes a finer level of evidence and validly critiques Disney's narrative on refining lyrics and each character's motivations. However, Akimoto interrogates these subjects about Disney's shifts in terms of them being performative. Thus, the simple act of modifying the shift of the narrative and character motivations are hacked by deeper Orientalist structures remaining intact. These same critiques are relevant in Section 5.2 regarding the limitations of racial refashioning, about whether it was depicting a culture shift, or protecting the brand.

Elhersh, Ghanem, and M. Laeeq Khan. *Decoding Disney’s Arab and Muslim Narratives*. Lexington Books, 2024, https://doi.org/10.5040/9798881888459

Elhersh and Khan examine the dual representations of Disney's representations of cultures, with a focus on both visual framing in animated productions and audience reception. The authors argue that Aladdin is a "vibrant hub of visual" attributes that bolster Orientalist stereotypes. This source is key to understanding the semiotic process within Disney

animation and bridges Said's foundational theory and the advertising visual affordances of characters, supporting methodology's focus on caricature as well as how visual representations create "Other" as a construct. This book algins with my thesis as orientalism is the mutual concept explored in the book and will be explored in my paper.

Herhuth, Eric. “Overloading, Incongruity, Animation: A Theory of Caricature and Caricatural Logic in Contemporary Media.” *Theory & Event*, vol. 21, no. 3, Johns Hopkins University Press, July 2018, pp. 627–51, https://doi.org/10.1353/tae.2018.0038

Herhuth provides a theoretical framework for conceptualizing caricatural logic in animation. The author argues that racial caricatured stereotypes in the film are made to be "easier to analyze" based off-their simplified semiotic structure. This is an important text for methodology as it explains the “how" behind animation meshing distorted structural features. It provides justification for caricature functioning as an ideological device of ideological reinforcement of cultural hierarchies, which can ease the decoding purpose of persuasiveness in the characters much more. Implementing Herhuth's theory not only readjusts the positionality of cartooning ethos but also proposes to build a more meaningful study of characters based off of *Aladdin's* plasticity.

Lee, Josephine. “THE RACIAL REFASHIONING OF Aladdin.” *Oriental, Black, and White: The Formation of Racial Habits in American Theater*, University of North Carolina Press, 2022, pp. 21–43. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469669632_lee.6

Lee, Josephine. "THE RACIAL REFASHIONING OF Aladdin". Oriental, Black, and White, University of North Carolina Press, 2022. [id:6]Lee places Aladdin into one aspect of the continuum of what might be called "racial refashioning" in American theater practices, tying the construction of characters into a set of historically based racial habits. This will be

important to Section 5.2 because it will show why these Orientalist tropes persist—they are far too embedded into habitual performance. Lee's research is particularly useful in deconstructing some of the racial dynamics of the 2019 film by underscoring elements of "refashioning" that carry the weight of the live theater tradition. Moreover, Lee enters into a genealogy of these assumptions and habits of race, adding a historical dimension that pushes back against the notion of the 2019 version being a clean break from the context of Disney's Aladdin.

Said, Edward W. “Orientalism by Edward W. Said: 9780394740676 | PenguinRandomHouse.com: Books.” 2025, www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/159783/orientalism-by-edward-w-said

Edward Said's groundbreaking *Orientalism* critiques Western scholarship and cultural representations that construct the "Orient" (Middle East and Asia) as an exotic, timeless, and inferior "Other" to sustain imperial power. This foundational text is indispensable for my paper on Disney's *Aladdin*, as it frames how animation's unique affordances, exaggerated caricatures in villain designs, fluid protagonist motion versus slinking antagonist kinetics, and Agrabah's fantastical mise-en-scène, perpetuate Orientalist binaries. Westernized heroes like Aladdin and Jasmine embody civilized norms, while secondary characters signal moral ambiguity through grotesque features, aligning with Said's discourse of subordination. My visual semiotic methodology operationalizes this theory to reveal how children's media normalize geopolitical hierarchies.

Schmidt, Silke. “The Framed Arab/Muslim: Mediated Orientalism.” *(Re-)Framing the Arab/Muslim: Mediating Orientalism in Contemporary Arab American Life Writing*, transcript Verlag, 2014, pp. 137–90.http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1xxs1s.6

Schmidt creates and analyzes a framework called "mediated Orientalism" through identifying how contemporary media also frames Arab and Muslim identity in tools of consumerism. This text will assist section 2.3 by focusing on and analyzing Orientalism to a shift 21st-century media frames of the "Other" from the literary. Schmidt’s work extends the Orientalist frame by arguing that media frames the "Other" in a way that commodifies them as a product, which is instrumental in discussing the commodification of Middle Eastern culture through Disney’s branding efforts. The notion of the framed subject highlights the methodological framework for how both films framed visual signifiers that, in effect, instantiated a static, magical past that denied to its audience the contemporary condition of the culture of the community.

Skenderovic, Damir, and Christina Späti. “From Orientalism to Islamophobia: Reflections, Confirmations, and Reservations.” *ReOrient*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2019, pp. 130–43. https://doi.org/10.13169/reorient.4.2.0130

Skenderovic and Späti discuss the shift from traditional Orientalism to modern Islamophobia, emphasizing that while classical Orientalism demonstrated multi-layered meanings, contemporary Islamophobia tends to exist as an omnipresent, one-dimensional hostile hostility to Muslims (Skenderovic). This source will be key to an investigation of Aladdin because it connects exoticized spaces to racialized caricatures. What is important is that the reference to old tropes to justify contemporary threats helps provide a framework to argue that Disney's visual coding of the populations it depicts is reflective of a systematic realignment toward structural anti-Muslim sentiment in Western media and culture.

Whitley, David. “Learning with Disney: Children’s Animation and the Politics of Innocence.” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2013, pp. 75–91. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43049666

Whitley demonstrates that children's animation engages with "politics of innocence," implying that its innocent or purportedly innocent content has a pedagogical function. He further argues that the innocence of children's media operates as a cover for a host of ideological narratives while using innocence as a shield from the critical eye of adults (Whitley). This framework will be essential in deconstructing the ways in which Aladdin uses animation to produce and normalize Orientalist stereotypes. Disney frames Aladdin as innocent fun, reducing adults' cognitive resistance and allowing troubling representations to be internalized as common-sense universal truths, all under the guise of childhood innocence and playful, apolitical storytelling.