Aladdin Story and Film Adaptations Comparative Analysis

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Aladdin is one of the most well-known tales in the world; the stories have been told orally and written in many languages since its addition in One Thousand and One Night by the French traveller Antione Galland. The story is re-told with variations in both literature and film media. The essay intends to draw a comparison between the three variants of Aladdin to reflect the temporal, spatial, and societal differences and evaluate the intended meanings of the stories in the different settings of the various periods of human history.

Three Aladdin Variants Across Time and Media

The variants selected for this analysis consists Antonio Galland a Frenchman who heard this story from a Syrian traveler and later added in the Arabian Nights, the story is set in China where all the major events happened in the story. Second, this variant was written by Jonathan Clements, named The Nobility of Faith, and was published in Short Trips: The Ghosts of Christmas, set in the 20th-century modern world. Third and last is the Disney screen adaptation of the story, released in 1992. The first story is set in medieval China; the story follows the typical rags-to-riches story where a poor boy happens to have a magic lamp to fulfil his wishes.

Modern Retellings and the Transformation of Magic

The second story that was written by Jonathan Clements does follow the same plot that involves heroism, but in a very modern sense, in this story, Aladdin is not saved by the Genie but the doctor. The Disney adaptation of Aladdin (1992) is designed for the American audience, and unlike Aladdin and the Magic Lamp, this screen adaptation is set in Agrabah (the city of mystery and enchantment); the place is fictional. Nonetheless, it was inspired by the city of Baghdad during the golden age of Islamic civilization in the 12th century. Unlike Disney's adaptation and Aladdin and the Magic Lamp, the Nobility of Faith is the comical retelling of the story of Aladdin, where the Genie is replaced by a doctor and the magic ring is replaced by the TARDIS (Scott and Mark, 2007).

Heroism, Self-Worth, and Changing Moral Values

Nevertheless, the story follows the same plot of heroism that is common in all the variants under consideration. Aladdin and the Magic Lamp although set in China follows Muslim names, Aladdin falls in love with Buddir al Buddoorand. The Disney variant of folklore shows a shift in ideology and discourse, as the story is directed to the American audience, and it has a strong sense of American heroism compared to Arabian culture (Galland, 2016). The changes were made to suit the present need and not lose the original story's original awe-inspiring adventurous spirit. Their considerate difference resides in the different avatars of Aladdin. For instance, according to the story, material wealth is an essential thing for survival, while in the case of the movie, the theme of self-worth is emphasized. By doing this, Disney changed the context of the story to suit its intended audience. The Disney variant also changes the moral of the story, and this is very interesting to note that the according to the original story it is alright to lie under the problematic situation, the story shows a strong sense of moral flexibility (Ron and John, 1992).

Cultural Adaptation and the Removal of Islamic Traditions

The Disney version of Aladdin completely removes the cultural aspects of the story, especially those of the Islamic traditions, to the matching set of the masses (Ron and John, 1992). As the movie's target audience was children, it eliminated this theme of moral relativity. Highlight differences highlight the impending cultural, temporal, and spatial variations that the variants are supposed to take to suit their intended audience. The story that was heard by Antonio Galland from a traveller is variant in the sense that according to the storyteller, the story is set in China while most of the names are of the Arabic language (Galland, 2016). There are still many variants of the story preserved in oral tradition in Pakistan and India; hence, the origins of the story are unknown. Jonathan Clements' comic take on the Aladdin provides an interesting perspective on the 20th century. According to this variant, Aladdin is trapped in a pit full of treasure, where he loses hope in life and reconciles with death.

The Scientific Recasting of Magic

The TARDIS (Time and Relative Dimension in Space) are used to rescue the princess (Scott and Mark, 2007). This one is a comic variant that is told to replace the old-age magical terms in a comically scientific context. Though funny, it does give some insights about the age at which it is written. Aladdin is placed in a modern world and, hence, mocked because there are no magic lamps, and the doctor consequently rescues him. Instead of magic and the lamp, Time and Relative Dimensions in Space are used to save the girl. All three variants have comedic endings wherein, in the end, everything is resolved, all the conflicts are solved, and the boy and girl marry and live happily hereafter.

Shared Adventure Across Different Cultural Contexts

The three variants are told at different times and represent different cultures. As we can see, Disney changed the names and characters to varying degrees to match their target audience. Aladdin and the Magic Lamp depicts the material realities of medieval China, where wealth was associated with one's identity and status. Nevertheless, all three variants reflect the moral standards of their time while maintaining the heroic and adventurous spirit of the original tale told centuries ago and transferred through oral tradition from generation to generation.

Works Cited

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