

Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp: How are Foreign Folktales Conveyed in Western Children's Literature?

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Abstract

This paper seeks to examine how the Middle Eastern folktale *Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp* was retold to the Western children through critically analyzing 8 English versions of the story and an Arabic version to compare the different English versions to it. Through looking at the settings, the characters and the events as well as the cultural characteristics presented in the books, we found that most of the English versions were not faithful to the Arabic version- specifically the Disney version of Aladdin, which was the most Westernized one. Based on the findings of this study, we recommend that teachers, educators and parents should not rely on a single book to be the only source for providing information. Rather, they need to locate different books especially when introducing a certain culture.

Keywords: Arabic folktale, cultural representation, children's literature.