aziz alhaqbani

prof. kate strode

4/20/2017

Disney movies have come under sharp criticism in the recent past for the racist and sexist stereotypes related to the Arabian people as depicted in the *Aladdin* Film released in the year 1992. The film was directed by John Mucker and Ron Clements. It is mainly built upon the Arab-style folktale *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp* from *One Thousand and One Nights*. It portrays Arabs in a bad way and heavily focuses on several stereotypes like the objectification of women and arabs being violent in nature which paint the Arab people as bad people. This review will focus on the various stereotypes regarding Middle East culture and the real life experiences associated with the depicted stereotypes.

The film opens with a song that insinuates that the city of Aghrabah (meaning "very strange" in English) is barbaric. There is a lot of violence with the main character Aladdin being beaten severely. Several other scenes also show the unreasonable amount of violence despite being a love story. This in today worlds has been witnessed with the stereotype that Arab people are violent. It has led to racial profiling and fear from other people and in some instances, Arab people being branded as a terrorist group.

The other thing evident from the movie that makes the Arab culture look bad is the

objectifying of women. Princess Jasmine suitors come with all kinds of worldly things in order to entice her. Her choice on who to marry is not based on who she loves but rather what material possession he possesses. Objectifying of women is a common misconception people have when it comes to Arab culture. It is very common to hear people question how women are treated in the Arab culture with an already formed opinion about the same.

There is also the issue of arranged marriage and women's rights. The film depicts the women as mere objects that are only meant to be seen and not to be heard. Princess Jasmine does not have any choice regarding her marriage partner. Even she is not allowed to have any friends. This is contrary to the actual facts in the modern world. It is sad that the movie creates impressions in the mind of children who see Arabs as very bad people that are mean to women.

Then there is another stereotype evident in the movie that of injustice in the Arab nations and failed judicial systems. The barbaric nature of Arabians living in the city of Aghrabah is shown by the practice of cutting the hands of thieves as a mode of punishment. The movie contains a scene that nearly shows the hand of princess Jasmine woman almost being cut off for helping a needy child. The lyrics in the opening song were quite offensive and categorically stated that in the city; they would cut off your ears if they do not like your face. This depicts Arabs as real bad people. Aladdin is sentenced and a punishment of being beheaded given without any trial or representation whatsoever. This concept has in very many instances found its way to the mainstream media without any factual evidence from the ground.

There is also the issue of deplorable living conditions. The issue of poverty and street

families is everywhere even in the most developed countries but in this particular movie, it is over emphasized with Aladdin living in the market and surviving on stolen vegetables. This finds its way to the mainstream media leading people to believe that people leaving in the Middle East live in deplorable conditions. Such kind of misconceptions goes a long way into influencing the thinking of people right from childhood. (One case in point is after the 9/11 bombing where Muslims and Middle East people were treated with contempt and even in some instances treated with contempt and even in some instances attacked and branded a terrorist. Then there are the recent regulations in the USA laws where people from several Middle East countries have been prevented from entering the country despite having valid documents, jobs, and families within the country. I have on several occasions been taken through more thorough screening and questioning at the Airports compared to other people

expand on your experiences

When stereotypes are tolerated in both mainstream and social media platforms, it actually forms a basis of propagating untrue issues about particular persons or things in life As some once said there only two types of people; good people and bad people, this applies to any population and not a certain race.

words :765