

Mariam Helmy  
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### **Lost in Translation? Examining Children's Perceptions of Middle East Culture Through the Usborne Illustrated Arabian Nights**

This essay will analyse the results of a small-scale explorative study conducted with two young children, which probes how a child perceives the Middle East after reading an adaptation of the *Arabian Nights* that portrays Arab traditions and legacies less dehumanizingly than its Orientalist predecessors. In this project, I investigate the following questions: how does “The Clever Prince, the Princess, and the Genie,” written by Anna Milbourne and appearing in *The Usborne Illustrated Arabian Nights* (2012), influence perceptions of the Middle East in young children? While some of the subsidiary foci may not be suitable for exploration through a case study, I nonetheless examine whether significant discoveries can be made in answering the following questions: do children at this age have preconceived notions of the Middle East? How is perception influenced by the tale of “The Clever Prince?” Does exposure to this non-stereotyping edition of the tale and its visual component form or influence children's perceptions of the Middle East? Finally, can this project provide commentary on what J.V. Wertsch in *Memory in Mind and Culture* (2009) refers to as the “cultural tool” of narration in the legacy of collective memory? The small-scale data collection shows evidence of how receptive young children can be to new information, and how willing they are to absorb novel stories. While a singular exposure to a non-stereotypical portrayal of the Arab world did not have a significant impact on my subjects' perceptions of the Middle East, the study shows that the children were still measurably influenced by “The Clever Prince, the Princess, and the Genie.”