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ALADDIN AS AN IMMORAL ETHICIST IN ALADDIN AND THE MAGIC LAMP

Jan Gresil S. Kahambing and Anne Dominique Duque
Leyte Normal University, Philippines
vince_jb7@hotmail.com, anneduque123@gmail.com
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Abstract
This study delves into the tale *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp* as the excerpt of the Middle Eastern folk tales collection *One Thousand and One Nights* rather than the popular Disney version. It problematizes the figure of Aladdin and rebrands him as an immoral ethicist as opposed to the Disney hero who seeks strength within himself and the other text versions of him as a "changed" man. This problematizing essentially entails a critique of the Westernized moral figure and its basic 'universal lesson' in the text to argue his being immoral. To do this, the methodology of the paper follows from a philosophical reading that subjectivizes the protagonist into the question of ethics. Specifically, it takes from Žižek's elaboration of the Nietzschean version of an immoral ethics that remains consistent with the fidelity to one's desire. Such Žižekian standpoint differs from Said's orientalist reading and antagonizes Jung's archetypal critical reading in literature. The novelty of the paper shows how the plot critiques the Aladdin figure as an archetype and reveals Aladdin's immoral ethics, which is founded on strength and constant activity but presupposing the voluntary knowledge and cleverness of his existential choice. To back this, the study finds three distinct features, namely: 1) disregard to authority, 2) love beyond good and evil, and 3) negative will to power.

Keywords: Aladdin, immoral ethics, Nietzsche, Žižek

Introduction
With the recent remake of the film Aladdin (Lin, Eirich, & Ritchie, 2019), it is becoming more crucial to revisit its content in terms of the tale's universal lesson. To do this, however, Elturki and Shaman (2013) point out that "Aladdin's Disney is not recommended because it is extremely westernized, and it does not preserve the essence of the cultural features of Arabic folktales" (p. 132). The story of *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp* can be contextualized as part of the collection of the Arabic Folktale *One Thousand and One Nights* popularly known in English as *The Arabian Nights* in its first English edition in 1706 (Rahayu, Abdullah, & Udasmoro, 2015). The *One Thousand and One Nights* book allegedly originated from a popular story of a king by the name of Shahryar who, due to his past experience of being betrayed by her former wife's infidelity, marries a new wife every night only to execute her. Knowing this dismal fate, Scheherazade, the new married queen, decides to tell exciting stories to the king in order to postpone her death. Whenever she is done telling a story, she begins

with another one and this makes the king curious about the new conclusion. This resulted in her stalling her death, lasting for 1001 nights. It was believed that the stories told by Scheherazade vary from love stories, tragedies, comedies, and poems, all of which depict different places, events, and magicians (Erturki & Shaman, 2013, p. 116). Among the collection of stories, poems and so on, in the 1001 Nights, the famous story of Aladdin and the magic lamp was added in the eighteenth century (Spielvogel, 2009). From Scheherazade's task of entertainment, one sees the importance of Aladdin and the stories in *Thousand and One Nights* in their contribution of "amusement and delight of every succeeding generation" (Weber, 1812, as cited by Caracciolo, 1988).

There are many versions, adaptations, and translations of the famous Arabic folklore, *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp*. Sabir Badal Khan (2004) discussed the Balochi versions from the two narrators Swali and Jangyan in relation to the themes and motifs of the Arabian Nights. His study pointed out that the oral versions of the narrators retained the basic plot and structure but when it comes to the details, each varies accordingly from the written source. As such, "the Balochi variants evidently derive from the text included in the Arabian Nights. As they constitute orally learned and transmitted versions, the narrators do not intend to produce verbatim renderings of their source text but have both added and omitted details*"* (Khan, 2004, p. 218). The analysis of Khan is similar to a study cited by Kapchan (1996) stating that *"*the stories told in the Moroccan marketplace today may well come from an Arabic translation of Galland's *Mille et une nuits* [*One Thousand and One Nights*]… which itself may enter the written tradition when collected and documented." Basing then from Antoine Galland's version, whose Aladdin text according to his diary can be traced from an added story told to him by a certain Hannah Diyab, the Balochi oral narrators have developed the source text (Arabian Nights) independently by drawing creative motifs and having some embellishments to suit the text to their local narrative traditions.

Elturki and Shaman (2013) critically analyzed the western version of *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp* from its Arabic versions. Based on the themes that have emerged, they found out that, in comparison to the Arabic version of Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp, the Disney variety is considered very Americanized in terms of characters, appearances, names, and events: "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" (Elturki & Shaman, 2013, p. 115). It was further elaborated that Arabic culture was misrepresented in terms of attire and personality for they were far-off from the Arabic version as well as the general cultural characteristics of the Arabic folktale.

Rahayu et al. (2015) also analyzed the Arabian Night's version of Aladdin and the Disney adaptation. It was found that the movie was adapted from the Arabian Night's version by changing many important parts, from the setting of the place, name of the characters, characterization, and the plot which builds a different discourse from the original text. Disney has successfully omitted the Islamic messages and values that exist in the tales of Aladdin in Arabian Nights. That is to say, Disney completely removed the Islamic language, messages as well as Islamic values and changed them into 'American values' such as freedom and the imaginary formula "happily forever after" which supports the initial claim of

Elturki and Shaman (2013) that "the Disney version of Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp is very Americanized" (p. 117). It was also stressed that the change in discourse presented the idea of Arab barbarism through the practice of stereotyping such as labelling the Arab people as barbaric, bad, silly, and wicked; hence depicting a dangerous and negative image (Rahayu et al., 2015, p. 24).

One of the most common differences noted in the analysis of the Arabian Night's version of Aladdin and Disney's adaptation is the characterization especially of the main character, Aladdin. Rahayu (2016) pointed out that "Disney's Aladdin constructs the identity that is completely different from the folktale of Aladdin." Aladdin's identity in the folktale is embedded in the cultural traditions of Muslims in the 10th-century Chinese cultural setting, while the constructed identification found in Disney's animated film is set within an Arabic background but with the American values of freedom and heroism.

Nope (2016) analyzed how Disney reconstructed the traditional men roles through Aladdin's character. Aladdin in Disney is "constructed as the hero who has light skin color and American look with the design of his figure is after a popular and handsome Hollywood actor in 1990s, Tom Cruise" (Rahayu et al., 2015, p. 29). The issue of masculinity also factors in: Tyson (2006) mentioned that men are traditionally cast as 'rational, strong, protective, and decisive' but somehow, Disney's description of Aladdin's character contradicts the ideal "traditional man" and depicts it as a New Male which is defined by Braught (2010) as "a strong male protagonist with hard-bodied, alpha male qualities as well as to advance a sensitive, romantic side." This conception proved to be an answer to the second wave of feminist movements which influence middle-class intellectual males to be more caring, sensitive and share domestic responsibility (Beynon, 2002), a kind of "campaign" of "the new face of masculinity… as an image of men who are more coveted by women" (Nope, 2016, p. 42).

A quick glance of the introduction part of some versions show, moreover, that Aladdin is 'poor', 'lazy', and a 'trouble maker' (Pullman, 2005; Kerven, 1998; Eastman, 1996) but in the end shows "change," a metanoia that is supposed to be translated as the basic 'universal lesson' of the tale. While these recent studies picture Aladdin as a figure who is bound within the panoply of societal and cultural values, they picture nonetheless an agent who struggles to fit altogether a moral character by later on submitting to the norms of his cult and finding a traditional conception of power within oneself. In summing up the sparse texts reviewed above, it can be seen how even with the other text versions, Aladdin is still thought as an archetypal hero who succeeds to tell a morale of the story.

In the light of such background, this study problematizes this caricature of Aladdin as this individual who distances himself with external power and manages to find the power within him. This can be based on the elements that do not add up, especially in the text version, where his attitude shows otherwise. Against such a picture, this problematizing offers a critique that essentially portrays Aladdin as an immoral ethicist. However, the manner of critique in this paper does not conform to well-defined critical standpoints in literature (e.g. feminist, Marxist, Psychoanalyst, etc.). What it follows instead is the uncanny style which Žižek uses as literary criticism and theory. In *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Literature but Were Afraid to Ask Žižek*, Sbriglia (2017) explains how Žižek works as a critic from a 'post-theory era' or as part of the

'theorists without theory' together with Judith Butler, Giorgio Agamben, and Alain Badiou. Following from Nicholas Birns, Sbriglia states that "whereas the 1970s saw the Yale School of deconstruction grow out of the work of Jacques Derrida, and the 1980s saw the New Historicism grow out of the work of Michel Foucault, from the 1990s onward theory" remains "broken up" (p. 3). If there is a similitude that this critique likens itself, it is the antagonism of Carl Jung's description of the archetypal hero. Accordingly, the archetype is "a figure…that repeats itself in the course of history wherever creative fantasy is fully manifested" (Jung as cited by Doble, 2011, p. 62). Notable examples are Jesus Christ and Clark Kent whose exemplarity resounds. Quite the anti-thesis of the archetypal hero, the manner of reading here reflects Žižek's understanding of an immoral hero. And yet even if the paper leans towards Žižek's manner of literary criticism, his position again dismisses any kind of structuring that makes his theory solid *as a theory*. In which case, this critical stand also differs from Edward Said's explication of orientalism which views the East – including Arab culture – within the "eccentricities of Oriental life, with its odd calendars, its exotic spatial configurations, its hopelessly strange languages, its seemingly perverse morality" (Said, 2003, p. 166). Albeit it sets the backdrop in an Arabic setting as a way of illustrating the text, the paper merely focuses on the hero, Aladdin, by presenting him as a unique archetype of a hero that can be framed within an immoral ethicist standpoint.

What remains new in this paper, therefore, is not only a critique of Aladdin as an archetypal figure but also a new introduction of Aladdin as a unique archetype with distinct immoral ethicist features. The following section expounds more on immoral ethics as the theoretical framework based from Nietzsche and Žižek's Archetypes.

Literature Review

Immoral Ethics, Nietzsche, and Žižek's Archetypes

Nietzsche, Žižek says, is the philosopher of immoral ethics par excellence. The masterpiece with which this can be gleaned from lies in Nietzsche's title *Genealogie der Moral,* not *der Ethik*, where ethics deals precisely with the consistency to one's fidelity of desire (Žižek, 2009). Such an ethics is fundamentally opposed to the concept of morality. Morality deals, on the contrary, with one's relation with the 'other', which is to say that if one's choice is consistent in its self-reference and in disregard to the 'other,' then it strictly veers towards the direction of its opposite – immorality. This ethical immorality (in its commutation) means that the existential choice that surrounds one's life-world is already void of a divine guarantor (Nietzsche, 1974): namely, that God is dead, its objective moral standing and the conventions upon which such an idea is hinged in the instrumentalities of cultural constructs. Immoral ethics, in this sense, abandons the idea of an authority, which in the case of the Christian ideal is a 'celestial dictator who would wish punishment for his creation' (Varghese & Idiculla, 2014, p. 51) and caters for a new freedom where one's choices are left to one's own – a vow of the self (Kahambing, 2014).

Žižek's first archetype of this immortal ethics, or ethical immorality, is Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. He recalls the life of Don Giovanni in Mozart's last act where the young and promiscuous hero is confronted with a choice. He is

Mozart's arrogant figure who is "utterly immoral" (Kitcher & Schacht, 2006, p. 176). With all his wrongdoings, he was asked before his death if he would show remorse and ask forgiveness. The choice befalls him, an existential one, where redemption is at stake. If he remains adamant, however, he will suffer eternal damnation. The ethical heroic act of Don Giovanni here is the insistence of his choice not to renounce what he did despite the crucial offer. But in no way did he persist with the rationale of wealth or pleasure. As Žižek says:

> The only explanation is his utmost fidelity to the dissolute life he has chosen. This is a clear case of immoral ethics. Don Giovanni's life is undoubtedly immoral. However, as his fidelity to himself demonstrates, he was immoral not for pleasure or profit but out of principle: acting the way he did as part of a fundamental existential choice. (Žižek, 2009)

Taking a feminine example from opera again, Žižek's second archetype is George Bizet's *Carmen*. Carmen also succeeds in living an immoral life: she ruins the lives of men, she destroys families and so on (Steen, 2003). But this is also a case of immoral ethics: "truly ethical, faithful to her chosen path to the end even if this means certain death" (Žižek, 2009). It is no wonder that Nietzsche becomes a great admirer of Carmen. Nietzsche says that he became a better person in engaging with Bizet's works (Nietzsche, 2008). Says Nietzsche: "as a matter of fact, each time I heard *Carmen* it seemed to me that I was more of a philosopher, a better philosopher than at other times" (Nietzsche, 2008, p. 19).

The third and perfect archetype of this ethics for Žižek is Stalin. Žižek recounts how Stalin, before his death, wrote at the back of Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* found in his bedroom the following notes: "'First, weakness. Second, idleness. Third, stupidity. These are the only things that can be called vices. Everything else in the absence of the aforementioned is undoubtedly virtue…' That's I think immoral ethics at its purest" (Žižek, n.d.). The heroic figure of an immoral ethicist in this regard shuns inactivity and considers such vapid disposition of idleness as both a weakness and is unwise. The direct opposite then of this figure is someone who considers himself weak against circumstances, who is not clever enough to critically assess situations and remains static. In short, an unethical morality, as opposed to immoral ethics, is the invalid commutation that presents its figure of a weak individual who is full of, in Nietzsche's terms, *ressentiment*.

Method

This paper rereads *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp* in the context of immoral ethics. The study first relies on the Transedition Books version of the story retold and illustrated by Martin (1994), since in its retelling, important features are uncovered, as well as depicted with crucial openings. For better backing, however, the paper proceeds to cross-check other sources such as that of Burton (2009; 2000) and Lang (2016) whose structure and image finds similitude to Martin's. Burton retains the Old English language used in the translation, making it closer to the original reading in Galland. Lang's version also presents an uncanny structure, however different to Martin (but the same with Burton) in terms of added side stories such as Aladdin's father at the beginning and the brother of the magician at the end. This is to follow Lechner (2007) who advised

that ‘no single book should be relied on as the sole source of information about any country or culture,’ (p. 1), while at the same time not overlapping with the study of Elturki & Shaman (2013) who already contrasted the other different versions albeit without Burton and Lang’s. The focus is then shifted towards the readings on the sources which were not found in previous studies. Within such a backdrop, it puts the protagonist, Aladdin, in question, specifically his existential choice. Through Žižek’s critical standpoint, following from the theoretical construct above, the paper extracts the features that make him an immoral ethicist and how these coalesce into a unique archetypal figure.

Findings and Discussion

From Stalin’s three vices, as presented by Žižek, one can surmise that any other acts qualify as virtuous ethical acts as long as they are not part of the three. Further, one can but highlight the important good note: “NB! If a man is 1) strong (spiritually), 2) active, 3) clever (or capable), then he is good, regardless of any other 'vices'! 1) plus 3) make 2) (Stalin, 1994; Rayfield, 2004, as cited by Žižek, n.d.; Žižek, 2009).” Following from such equation: “strength of self plus cleverness/capability equals activity,” the protagonist, Aladdin, is subjectivized as an agent that embodies an immoral ethical framework of action. The features of Aladdin’s immoral ethics that this study finds are the following: disregard to authority, love beyond good and evil, and negative will to power.

Disregard to authority

Aladdin’s immoral ethics is founded on his consistent existential choice: he wanted to have power but without responsibility. The fundamental drive that shows the whole time is the fidelity to this desire, an existential consistency that proves to be the general motif of the narrative. With his dispositional choice, Aladdin reveals his immorality by neglecting the figures of authority subjecting him to the societal and cultural status quo: he disregards the figures of the ‘other’ and prefers his desire. This can be shown in three major instances: his disregard to the authority of his father and mother, and his mistrust to the magician himself.

In Burton’s *Aladdin; Or, The Wonderful Lamp* (2000), Aladdin refuses to learn the craft of his father. He prefers to expend his days playing. When Aladdin reached the age of ten, his father thought of bringing him to the shop to teach him a trade that would be his profession so he could provide for himself in the future: “But, as Aladdin was a scapegrace and a ne'er−do−well and wont to play at all times with the gutter boys of the quarter, he would not sit in the shop for a single day … Such was his case− counsel and castigation were of no avail, nor would he obey either parent in aught or learn any trade” (Burton, 2000, p. 190). This refusal and consequent insistence of his desire were maintained even until his poor father got sick and died. In Lang’s *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp* (2016), Aladdin’s disregard for the authority of his father *is* the very cause of his death: “This so grieved the father that he died” (p. 1).

In Martin’s version, Aladdin already lost his father and the choice of enjoyment is propagated even more without regard to his mother. His mother often asks him to “work to earn” a living and the response is a zealous mockery: “But Aladdin laughed [...] ‘I’d rather enjoy myself!’ (Martin, p. 273).” There were many occasions that Aladdin values more of his decisions driven by his desire and neglected his mother’s requests without considering the authority she holds as his

mother. Lang narrated that after the death of his poor father, his mother continued to persuade him to secure a profession "…yet, *in spite of his mother's tears and prayers,* Aladdin did not mend his ways" (2016, p. 1; Italics mine). He continued with his actions. During the first appearance of the lamp Genie before his mother, she (his mother) immediately commanded him to throw/ sell the lamp and the ring for they should not "interact" with the works of the devil but Aladdin refused and at once acknowledged the things he could do as a virtuous agent of immoral ethics: "'No,' said Aladdin, 'since chance hath made us aware of its virtues, we will use it, and the ring likewise, which I shall always wear on my finger' (Lang, p. 3). During the time when Aladdin wanted to court the princess and ask for her hand, he commanded his mother to do his bidding: "Through whom shall I ask it, O my mother, when thou art present? And who is there fonder and more faithful to me than thyself? So my design is that thou thyself shalt proffer this my petition" (Burton, p. 204). In fact, the manner that Aladdin treats his mother is often this entitled plea of attending to his desires: "I be thy son and thou truly love me, that thou grant me this favor. Otherwise, thou wilt destroy me, and present death hovereth over my head except I win my will of heart's dearling" (Burton, p. 204). In this sense, Aladdin's rhetoric is always crafted as a wish to secure his own happiness. He remains a spoiled lad who insists on his desire: "And now, O my mother, thou hast no excuse, so compose thy thoughts and arise. Take thou this bowl, and away with it to the palace" (Burton, p. 205). Ali and Tehseem's (2016) analysis, moreover, examined the anti-romantic feature of Aladdin's relationship to his mother: "He let her do all the hard work."

A final instance that shows his consistency can be shown in his reply to the magician. In Burton and Lang's versions, this magician presented himself as Aladdin's uncle, brother to his deceased father, who directed him a way to become rich: "He [the magician] said to the boy, 'Would you like to become rich?' 'Of course!' said Aladdin. 'But one has to work to earn money, and I prefer to play.' (Martin, p. 274). With some persuasive words that catered to Aladdin's desire, he "trusted the magician and went with him" as if his master (Martin, p. 274). However, when he was about to hand over the lamp, he showed signs of cleverness that catered to his mistrust to the magician's authority: "Aladdin saw the man's eyes light up with such greed that he did not trust him" (Martin, p. 280) – a clear disregard to the master who showed him a way to achieve his desires.

It must be noted, most importantly, that this breaking away from authority relies on the consistency of Aladdin's existential choice in such a way that the alterations of his attitude can only happen if they would always reflect his desire. When he acts on his choice, he fervently shows signs of the strength of will and cleverness. He was not stupid and idle: along the lines of his pursuits, he learns "the art of distinguishing glass from diamond" (Martin, p. 285). His disregard to authority in order to follow his desire is shown quite earnestly in his disobedience to the command of the Sultan to go back to their homes and continued to watch the princess when she is about to take a bath (Burton, 2000, p. 213).

Love beyond Good and Evil

One of Nietzsche's aphorisms highlights another crucial factor in the immoral ethicist framework – love. Someone who is in love does not necessarily conform to a moral constitution: "Whatever is done out of love takes place beyond good and evil" (Nietzsche, 2002, p. 70). In this sense, love bypasses being a moral

sentiment and breaks away from norms. This directly connects Aladdin's disregard to the mandate of the Sultan despite the harsh societal prohibition that anyone who does not retire to one's home will be met or punished by death. When Aladdin cleverly peeked to see the princess who is about to take a bath, that is, "when the princess lifted up her veil the young man saw the most beautiful face he had ever seen. The next second he had fallen in love with her!" (Martin, p. 287). As the narration showed, Aladdin experienced "Love at first sight", "Stuck by her [the princess'] great beauty" and "fell in love with her on the spot." Her name in Martin's version is Badroulboudour the eldest daughter of the sultan and a princess of high rank (p. 286). When Aladdin saw her, "his strength was struck down from the moment […] and his thoughts were distraught. His gaze was dazed, the love of her got hold of the whole of his heart" (Burton, p. 203).

It has to be known in this regard that this love has a deep connection to his choice and the paradox of its desire will always point back to it, that is, Aladdin does everything out of Badroulboudour because she is *his* love. Consequently, Aladdin's love in the story traverses precedent norms: his personal desire grows stronger when he immediately professed that he wants to marry the princess. This desire is supported with proving a lavish dowry stemming from a love that would do anything. As Aladdin says: "I would do a great deal more than that for the Princess" (Lang, p. 5). Doing everything out of love, bestowing every demand with his persistent strength of will and knowledge, he finally got the approval of both the Sultan and the princess: "The sultan welcomed him. He was not disappointed with the look of his future son-in-law and neither was Badroulboudour. She looked at Aladdin from behind some screens and fell immediately in love with him." (Martin, p. 296).

What makes this love essentially immoral is precisely its transgressing element – that it does everything for its sake – seen when Aladdin commits murder, i.e. when he begins to kill out of love. In this sense, love truly functions as that which goes beyond good and evil. When the magician was able to find out of Aladdin's sudden rise to royalty and was able to successfully snatch the lamp to transport the kingdom to his region, the resolution of the narrative portrays Aladdin and the princess as callously amenable to killing him. "'At the moment the magician is not here,' she said. 'As soon as he comes back, you must hide. Tonight I will put poison in his drink that the servant has brought for me. After that, it will be up to you to find us a way home again'" (Martin, p. 306). After the execution of this murder, Aladdin "cried out with relief. The magician lay dead on the floor and the magic lamp stood next to him!" (Martin, p. 309). And this is expressed with no feeling of remorse whatsoever: "'Now we are saved!' cried Aladdin" and having rubbed the lamp and wished for the genie, said "'We want to return to our beautiful country!' cried the happy young man" (Martin, p. 309). This was Aladdin's happiness, but contrary to virtue ethics which deems happiness as a product of good habits, the utmost quality of human flourishing or excellence that figures the ultimate end of man, the heroic ethical act was to return to *their* beautiful country. And this was done in an immoral sense: out of the death of his former master, or the killing of the other.

This was, however, not the end: in Burton and Lang's version, Aladdin killed another person after this. In what may have been the clearest or explicit portrayal of murder, Aladdin slain the magician's brother who pretended to be a holy

woman: "when the magician came near, Aladdin, seizing his dagger, pierced him to the heart" (Lang, 2016, p. 10), or in Burton's words, he "seized him with a forceful grip and, wrenching the dagger from his grasp, plunged it deep into his heart" (2000, p. 233). The princess showed initial disapproval of this: "'What have you done?' cried the Princess. 'You have killed the holy woman!' (Lang, p. 10)" But upon knowing that it was the magician's brother, the shock and condemnation suddenly dissipated.

Aladdin's love then is a clear case of immoral ethics, which can be capped perfectly through the words of Aladdin's mother when she was talking to the Sultan: "she then told him of her son's *violent love* for the Princess" (Lang, 2016, p. 3; Italics mine). What does this violent love constitute? Is this not the same Shakespearean adage that says: 'these violent delights have violent ends?' Such *violent love* is shown once more in the extra portions found in Lang and Burton's version. During the time of courting, the Sultan granted the Vizier's wish to withhold the acceptance of marriage for three months. And this is where Aladdin fitted the virtues of an immoral ethicist quite seamlessly: showing signs of strength of will, he "waited patiently for three months" (Lang, p. 3), and when the Sultan broke his promise "for nearly three months" by letting the son of the Grand Vizier marry the princess, showed signs of cleverness/capacity by wishing that he creepily replace the Vizier's son in bed at night while the latter is put "outside in the cold" until daybreak. Completely satisfied with this wish, Aladdin "lay down beside her and slept soundly" while the princess "was too *frightened* to speak, and passed the *most miserable night* of her life" (Lang, p. 4, Italics mine). This was to the discouragement of the Vizier's son who one day confessed about everything and asked for a separation, that is, that he would "rather die than go through another such fearful night" (Lang, p. 4).

Negative Will to Power

It is difficult to imagine how this figure passes as something moral, and yet a final feature that adds to his immorality is Aladdin's will to power. It is important to note that in Nietzsche's early conceptions before *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the will to power can be taken both positively and negatively. As a negative drive, the will to power is "the negative motive which would make us avoid something", while as a positive drive, it is "the positive motive which would make us strive for something" (Kaufmann, 1974, p. 190). Upon delving into the text, a close reading suggests that the whole backdrop of the story becomes immoral in the sense that Aladdin was, following from his disregard to authority and love beyond good and evil, operating on a negative will to power: Aladdin's whole motive was simply to avoid becoming subsumed into the whole normativity of values and cultural constructs of his life-world. This is best accompanied by the power of the two genies in the ring and the lamp. There was no limitation of this power and this boosts the desire of Aladdin. His will is subsumed into this state of potency that he can now avoid the working class fate of toiling for riches: throughout the narrative, Aladdin has "found a way to earn their living without getting tired!" (Martin, 1994, p. 285).

All the things that Aladdin did, even in fact the positive ones that would explain his improvements in a manner that is reflective of a positive drive, instead support his case of 'negative will to power.' This was his recurrent existential choice, retained in the end by the immoral features. The immoral ethicist features

add up in his character: strength of will plus cleverness equals activity. And he fought for this constant instigation to activity to avoid his father and mother's fate. In Ali and Tehseem (2016), one of the features of Aladdin's character is "a Leader and Fighter" through the following keywords found in the narrative: "Overcome with anguish", "I command you", "Made a plan", "Hid himself behind some curtains", "Snatched the lamp from the Magician's bosom", "Ascended the throne." Against virtue ethics, which is character-based in its activity, the activity found in Aladdin stems from his choice, backed by the recesses of power – and the story could not have proceeded to such linearity had it not been for the power that he possesses. In contrast then to the moral configurations that portray power as a 'power within', Aladdin's negative will to power proves that the story would not go on if not for external power. The loss of a guarantor itself, the void of authority and responsibility, replete with the desire to avoid something fills Aladdin's lack of positive agency.

In a clever way of filling in this void, "he would await his father's leaving it for some purpose, such as to meet a creditor, when he would run off at once and fare forth to the gardens with the other scapegraces and low companions, his fellows" (Burton, 2000, p. 190). The changes that accompany this negativity are but mere cover-ups to hide the fundamental drive of the plot: Aladdin is simply a boy who grew up, acquired accidental power, fell in love, murdered, and strangely enough, lived with it – all in avoidance to the normal course of his situation in life.

Conclusion

Following Stalin's three vices of weakness, idleness, and stupidity, Aladdin's case shows virtues that can no way be classified as vices. He is a boy who grew up to be a celebrated man and did his work in strength of will, activity, and cleverness. However, his fidelity to his desire from the start is reflective of an immoral ethicist: he shows disregard to authority or the 'other', he loved beyond conventions, and his actions point to an original avoidance that was sustained until the end of the narrative. These are supported by the text versions of the story, which are laden with crucial openings and points for discussion apart from the simplified and Westernzied version of the film. So, disregard to the other, love beyond good and evil, and negative will to power – with such three features, this study finds through the texts, that in *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp*, the hero is not a moral character but an immoral one, ready to pay the price for his existential choice.

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