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ORIENTALISM IN I DREAM OF JEANNIE

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HOLLYWOOD'S HAREM HOUSEWIFE:  
ORIENTALISM IN I DREAM OF JEANNIE

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculties of the Departments of Chicana/o Studies,  
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By

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and that accomplishments do not make me more loveable. It is not a secret how proud I am to have them as my parents or how thankful I feel to be their daughter.

Naomi Shihab Nye has written that if grandmothers and children ruled the world there would be no wars. Her book Sitti's Secrets made me a believer. Although, I am not one to romanticize grandmothers, women, or youngsters as inherently pacifistic, while engaged in this project, I found myself returning to Nye's words time and again. I contemplate what life was like for my grandmothers and how it is and might be for the children of tomorrow. While I am not sure wars would end if they controlled the globe, I agree that their power and creativity are beyond measure and too-often overlooked. It is in the honor of grandmothers and children that I contribute this work.

Although grandfathers are precious in their own right, I often think of my grandmothers, all of whom have already passed, and am greatly motivated by the hope that my work follows their legacy. My Scotch Irish great-grandmother modeled the importance of sitting down together to share in conversation and laughter. Her daughter, my grandmother, was the one responsible for making the macaroni and cheese that filled my childhood with warmth and deliciousness. Being close to them in my childhood deeply affected me. It was not until years later, after I took up writing and activism, that I learned that they too had written and taken part in social-justice movements. Then I realized that I was following in their footsteps.

Although I never knew my Arab great-grandmothers, their decisions to leave Lebanon and Syria and sail to the “New World” greatly affected me. I often wonder what it was like for them to go through Ellis Island as young women, to raise children so far from home. I wish I could have spent time in their kitchens, listening to the Arabic flow off of their tongues, taking in the scents of garlic and thyme and soaking up the secret recipes for lentils and grape leaves. I would have liked to have known their daughters, my grandmothers, as well. It is my hope that if they were alive today that they would recognize in me the same determination, courage, and love that guided their lives.

The youngsters who surround me consistently move me. The ones I have taught have challenged me to be patient and present in today. The offspring of friends and family, especially my little cousins, remind me of the importance of play and hugs. All of them make me smile. I am inspired by the desire to create a safe space for these children and for those who have not yet arrived at our doorsteps. It is to grandparents and babes that I dedicate this work.

## ABSTRACT

Hollywood's Harem Housewife: I Dream of Jeannie

By

Stephanie Abraham

This thesis is a historical and textual analysis that examines the popular representations circulated in I Dream of Jeannie, a sitcom that aired from 1965 until 1970 and continues in syndication today. This study draws upon genre criticism, feminist analysis, post-colonial and race theory, as well as political history. It examines how Orientalism was mapped onto the female protagonist, Jeannie, and looks at how shifts in her character related to socio-economic events between 1964 and 1970. Furthermore, it explores the tension between science and mysticism as another example of Orientalism. It also interrogates Jeannie's role as a "magical housewife" in the fantastic-family sitcom genre of the 1960s.

Rather than employing a "stereotype analysis," this work strives to illuminate how I Dream of Jeannie can be viewed as a thermometer, elucidating and reproducing the temperature of the cultural climate of the 1960s. As a cultural studies project it highlights the interconnectedness of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, and contributes to television studies, genre criticism, as well as to the burgeoning scholarship that looks at

Orientalism in the media, primarily in the fields of media studies and Arab American studies.

While acknowledging that I Dream of Jeannie is a complicated text and at times transgressive, it concludes that over time the Orientalism mapped onto Jeannie's character shifts from exoticization to infantilization. This shift becomes even more pronounced with the introduction of Jeannie's "exotic" twin sister in the third season, whose debut swiftly followed the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. Additionally, it identifies the popular cultural text as a representation of Arab assimilation because of the ways that Jeannie is distanced from the Middle East and her family, "Americanized" and assimilated into her master's way of life in the U.S.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

I Dream of Jeannie is a television sitcom that aired on NBC from 1965 to 1970. The situation comedy was never among the highest-rated programs of its time, landing only twice on the top-30 list of the Nielsen Ratings – 27th in its first year and 26th in its fourth (Brooks and Marsh 1248-1249). Still, the show was and continues to be well known throughout the world, in large part due to its endurance in the syndicated-television market. During its run, Jeannie aired in over 45 countries, on six continents.<sup>1</sup> It continues in syndication today.

The production notes for the series summarize the scheme well: “Cast a handsome young astronaut on a lonely Pacific Isle, add a beautiful, blonde and determined genie in exotic harem garb seeking a master and—presto—the plot thickens instantly into the delightful premise of Screen Gems’ hilarious new television series.”<sup>2</sup> The notes go on to say, “Tony stares in disbelief at the foreign-speaking, harem-garbed beauty who clings to him in gratitude for being rescued from her quart-sized prison.”<sup>3</sup> In an interview, Sidney Sheldon, creator of the series, explained, “Once I had hit upon the idea of a female genie – actually a jinni of Mohammedan lore – I had to choose a career for the young man. [...] Once I had decided to make the hero an astronaut, the comedy situation possibilities seemed endless.”<sup>4</sup> Simply put, the series revolved around Jeannie (Barbara Eden), a genie whose sole purpose was to please her “master,” the astronaut Major Anthony Nelson

(Larry Hagman). The gag was that Jeannie's "magic" consistently put Tony (and herself) in compromising situations and sticky mishaps.

Programs like I Dream of Jeannie have received little critical attention not because they are undeserving but because, as Lynn Spigel asserts, "They seem to represent the 'lower depths' of television's primetime past" (1991, 206). However, John Storey notes, "Cultures are made from the production, circulation and consumption of meanings. To share a culture, therefore, is to interpret the world – make it meaningful – in recognizably similar ways" (Storey 3). The cultural maps that Storey refers to are particularly relevant in the discussion of media representation and Orientalism. Indeed, a surface read of the text can easily overlook its significance. However, this sitcom offers an excellent entry point into a rich cultural excavation of societal questions still relevant today.

This thesis will attempt to uncover these questions, asking how Orientalism was originally mapped onto Jeannie's character and how that mapping shifted during the five-year run as well as how Orientalism moved throughout the scheme as a whole through the ever-present scientific positivism vs. mysticism dialectic (another manifestation of West vs. East). Many enthusiasts of I Dream of Jeannie do not think of the protagonist as an example of an Arab in U.S. popular culture. Yet, the casting of Barbara Eden as an Arab character is consistent with Hollywood's practices in which white women play Middle Eastern females whereas men of color play Middle Eastern men. Furthermore, Jeannie's peppy tone and slapstick timing allowed her to fit in on TV's primetime.

Eventually she even “passed” as a “respectable” NASA wife, but, not without much debate.

The first year of I Dream of Jeannie portrayed Jeannie as stereotypically Middle Eastern. She occasionally spoke “Arabic”<sup>5</sup> and made references to sultans, dancing girls, and camel drivers for comic relief. She identified with and often reminisced about her homeland. Most plots revolved around her cultural Otherness clashing with her master’s way of life in the U.S. However, NBC executives viewed Jeannie’s character as threatening and subsequently, in a variety of ways, to be discussed in more depth later, Jeannie’s character was “toned down” and over the years became more “Americanized,” ultimately assimilating into a white, middle-class, suburban lifestyle. These character changes were manifest in shifts in the outward expression of Jeannie’s “Arabness”; in the representation of her Middle Eastern family members and relations; and in the eventual taming of her sexuality through marriage to her master, Major Nelson.

### Background to the Problem

Cultural-studies scholars have produced a great body of knowledge in media analysis that relates to the themes I am exploring. However, to my knowledge no other academic study has offered an in-depth analysis of I Dream of Jeannie or placed an analysis of this popular text within its specific cultural history. The scholarship examining the series has been conducted primarily by feminist cultural theorists who by and large focus solely on questions of gender and sexuality, to the exclusion of race and

ethnicity. Still others, mostly television scholars, consider it another example of the “fantastic-family genre” but do not go into depth or analyze the series on its own. That the racial multiplicity of the program has been ignored speaks to the need for media studies literature to offer analyses of Arab characterizations and “Oriental” themes. This work addresses this need.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the evolution of character representations in the 1960s sitcom I Dream of Jeannie. Its interdisciplinary focus values the interconnectedness of race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality and how they intersect in U.S. popular culture texts. It examines the series as a site of Orientalism in the media and explores how the tropes of Orientalism were represented and how character development shifted throughout the five years it was produced. It also identifies the text as a site of Arab assimilation in U.S. popular culture and documents Jeannie’s Americanization/assimilation process. It contextualizes the show within the sitcom genre and the cultural moment in which it was created. Thus, it offers insight into the cultural climate of the 1960s in the U.S. and abroad.

### Research Questions

This interdisciplinary project probes several questions related to the aforementioned areas. It investigates how Orientalist representations functioned and

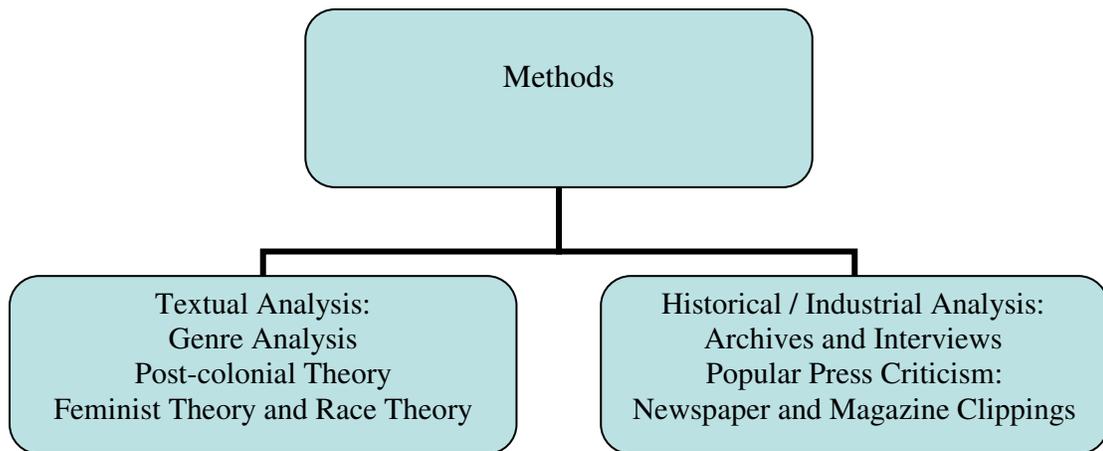
shifted throughout the series' run. The primary questions are: How is Orientalism originally mapped onto Jeannie's character? How does that mapping shift in each season? How is it mapped onto other Middle Eastern characters? It also considers how the tension between Western science and "Oriental" magic is represented; how Tony and Jeannie's sexuality and that of other characters are represented; and how NASA and the U.S. military are represented.

### Methodology

I have employed qualitative methods for this study in order to conduct both a historical and textual analysis of I Dream of Jeannie. (See below for visual summation.) I have relied on post-colonial theory, feminist media theory and critical race theory for textual analysis. Also, I have contextualized the text within a genre analysis, drawing upon scholarship from cultural studies and television criticism.

Furthermore, in order to effectively contextualize the series within the historic and industrial moment that it was created, I have included relevant historical popular press criticism and industry analysis. This includes newspaper and magazine clippings. The Sidney Sheldon Archives, a resource at the University of Southern California, contains memos, scripts, and production notes that have been invaluable to this study.

Finally, central to this study is the show itself. I have watched all 139 episodes in chronological order so that I could note the development and shifts in the show and characters.



### Significance

There has not been a great deal of scholarship produced on Orientalism on television; most of the work that has been done pertains to film. Eric K. W. Ma theorizes why this may be: “Blockbuster films, when compared to television, tend to travel across cultural boundaries more easily, while television, because of its domesticity, tends to be more contextualized and closer to the discursive perspective of the local.” He asks if the domestic medium of television is a discursive site of Orientalist discourse (Ma 124). I believe it is. Thus, this study is an anomaly because it looks at I Dream of Jeannie as a site of Orientalism in 1960s television. Also, it is an interdisciplinary study that applies feminist and critical race theory and engages television studies and genre criticism. Furthermore, it is unique because no other scholar has conducted an in-depth critical and culturalist examination of this text.

A great deal of race and gender analysis in the media and studies of Orientalism in particular have been conducted under the auspices of “stereotype analysis,” documenting “negative” images in order to advocate for “positive” ones. However, these studies frequently assume that portrayals fit nicely into a “good” or “bad” paradigm as if this division were natural, not constructed. Also, stereotype analyses are customarily rooted in neo-Marxist or political economy theories that often critique the media for being an apparatus of the state or industry that serves to control its populations. While this criticism is relevant, it overlooks the potential for resistance in cultural economies and ignores viewers’ abilities to decode a variety of pleasurable, oppositional, and transgressive meanings.

John Nguyet Erni writes, “Social scientific studies of TV stereotypes in the U.S. that have taken on the phraseology ‘images that injure,’ evoke stereotyping as a moral assault to the pragmatist intellect. The images that injure, therefore, are conceived of as the images that caricature, lessen, diminish; in short images that simplify. The demeaning of minorities on TV amounts to the injurious battering of a (presupposed) cerebral American multiculturalism” (56). Typical stereotype analyses overlook the fact that the perception of what is “authentic” or “cliché” is subject to viewers’ differing experiences of race, nation, class, gender, and sexuality. Too often portrayals considered genuine are rooted in white, middle-class ethics. Within this framework some representations are acceptable while others are “stereotypical” and/or offensive. For example, an African American female can be portrayed as a lawyer, but not a sex worker; a Latina can work

as a manager, but not a maid; and a Muslim character can wear tight jeans, but not a burka. Obviously, not all audiences will consider the former portrayals more favorable.

Ellen Seiter echoes the notion that mass-communication researchers often use “stereotype” to describe representations of reality that are false, and, by implication, immoral (19). She exposes the loophole in this logic: “These aesthetic judgments ignore the fact that the novelistic conception of character, with its basis in the nineteenth-century realism, itself reflects a political position” (Seiter 21). Most significantly Seiter outlines the missing components in stereotype analysis:

All stereotypes were not created equal. We cannot afford to see media stereotypes defined primarily in psychological or politically neutral terms, nor can we see them as merely a symptom of our debased cultural life. We must consider carefully the relationship of stereotypes to the legitimation of social power. We must distinguish between their descriptive and evaluative aspects, analyzing their history and content as well as their frequency. Finally, we must ask ourselves how different social groups will understand stereotypes, believe in them, laugh at them, embrace them, or despise them. (25)

This study is significant because it looks at Orientalism and the stereotypes that accompany it in the text I Dream of Jeannie not as an outcry but in order to gain insights into how Orientalism functions in the media. As a cultural studies project it concerns itself with the negotiation between ideology and power and the effects of both on meanings. It analyzes stereotypes not independently but in relation to ideological, social, and economic power structures in the 1960s.

## Implications

This study, which is a comprehensive analysis of one site, fits within the wider body of existing research that deals with layered multiplicities of gender, race, and class. It is my hope that this work will encourage more scholarship of this scope, which values the intersectionality of texts within the fields of media studies as well as area studies. Furthermore, I hope to contribute to the academic movement that is broadening the field of critical analysis of Orientalism in the media that is linked to various (non-academic) communities. Finally, this detailed study is a contribution to cultural studies, a political and intellectual project that continues to expand.

## Limitations

Ethical scholarship contextualizes a site within the historical frameworks within which it was created, and this is my goal. However, the scope of this paper examines the period of 1964 (when pre-production for the show began) to 1970 (when the show ended), a period rife with change. Obviously, I will not be able to go into detailed analysis of the social movements and global events during that time. However, I will refer briefly to those that seem most pertinent, in particular, the civil rights and feminist movements in the U.S., and the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, which had significant influence on the perception of Arabs in the U.S. In addition, I regret that I will not be able to give a detailed historical account of the Hollywood sitcom, particularly looking at shifts from the 1950s to the 1960s. These shifts are significant and certainly influenced I Dream of

Jeannie. Instead, I will rely on the scholarly work on the topic to speak for itself and will refer to it when possible. In addition, throughout the five-year run there were several different writers and directors that worked on I Dream of Jeannie. While this does not devalue my textual analysis, it is relevant to note this production inconsistency because it undoubtedly influenced inconsistencies in representations on the show.

It should be noted that viewers' perceptions that are occasionally referred to in this work were determined through informal conversations with colleagues and friends. They are not meant to substitute or pose as ethnography, which, as Deborah Hanan writes, is possibly the best tool for investigating how groups use cultural texts (19). While I very much enjoy ethnographic methods and recognize that audience reception studies are valuable and could complement my analyses, because of time constraints I have chosen not to engage in a more formalized ethnographic study at this time.

As previously stated, this is not a stereotype analysis in search of "positive" or "negative" portrayals because representation is more complex than these two categories. The interpretation of "good" or "bad" representation is subjective and dependent on many social variables, as is the interpretation of "accuracy." That is not to say that this thesis overlooks stereotypes in the text, but that it does so while noting their origin, purpose, and relationship to socio-economic power structures.

Scholars acknowledge the tension in Jeannie as a "battle of the sexes" while overlooking the evident geographical and cultural contradictions. It is not that I want to privilege the latter over the former, as I know the importance of recognizing multiplicity and interconnectedness. However, because gender has been privileged to

such a great extent in current literature and debate, it seems that I might (over)compensate by addressing cultural, racial, and national elements.

Someone once told me that all scholarship is autobiographical. At the least, it is subjective because of the great influence personal experience has on one's work. Renato Rosaldo opines that a researcher can rarely, if ever, achieve what he calls the "myth of detachment" because it is nearly impossible to detach from one's "passionate concern, prior knowledge and ethical engagement" (168-169). Although some still think of "objectivity" as something that will strengthen an argument, I see it as an archaic concept that is unattainable. Thus, I am compelled to situate myself as a researcher within this study.

As a child I enjoyed watching I Dream of Jeannie reruns on summer vacation, although it was not one of my favorite shows. Decades later, as a graduate student looking at the representation of Arabs, I began to reflect upon my own experience growing up as a consumer of U.S. popular culture. I realized Jeannie was the only Middle Eastern character I remembered seeing on television as a child. Subsequently, I returned to the series, planning to write one simple term paper but instead found myself beginning this in-depth analysis of the show. One hundred and thirty-nine episodes and so many hours later, I can honestly say that while awake and asleep, I have dreamt of Jeannie.

At the risk of identifying with Jeannie's experience, my family lost many of our "Arabian signifiers" as well through the process of assimilation. As a mixed-heritage American of Syrian, Lebanese, Scotch-Irish and English background, I often "pass"

because of my light skin and features, although sometimes I am viewed as “Other.” I understand that race is a constructed category but also recognize its real meaning in the world. The reality of “presence/absence” in my life (and in the lives of many other Arab Americans in my personal and intellectual circles) undeniably influences my outlook. Thus, my personal experience and orientation toward community inevitably influence my scholarship and this study.

#### Definition of Terms

Several terms in this study are contested. For the purposes of this study the following meanings will be employed:

America, American, American-like – Although in most places I try to use “U.S.” to refer to the United States, when I do use these terms I specifically mean the United States, although I understand these terms to refer to “The Americas” – North, Central, and South America.

Arab – Refers to a person born in one of the 22 Arab nations as defined by the League of Arab Nations or descendants thereof. The term “Arab,” depending on context, can refer to a range of identity-related factors, including geography, citizenship, politics, ethnicity, and race.

Arabness – Used to describe attributes that pertain to an Arab

Arab American – A person born in the U.S. who is a descendant of Arabs; also can refer to an Arab immigrant who takes on an American identity and/or becomes a U.S. citizen

Arabia, the Orient, the Middle East, and Persia – These terms are contested because they are purposefully vague and provide a general “somewhere over there” reference. (For this reason they must all be contextualized within Said’s discussion of the problematics of Orientalism.) For the purposes of this paper they will refer to the geographic region commonly known as “the Middle East” located within the boundaries of Syria and Iraq in the north down to Yemen and Oman at the south and as far west as Egypt.

Arabian, Oriental, Middle Eastern/er – Referring to a thing or person from the aforementioned geographic site

The East – Refers to the geographic region of the Middle East and Asia

Hollywood – Refers to film and television produced in the U.S. as well as studios based in the U.S.

Orientalism – A strand of Western colonialist discourse that imagines the colonies and cultures of North Africa and the ‘Middle East’ (and later those of Asia) as one homogenous geographic and cultural space. When applied to the media, it is a distinctive means of representing race, nationality, and “Otherness” based on stereotypes.

Pan-Arabism – A movement for unification among Arab peoples and nations of the Middle East. As a form of cultural nationalism it has tended to be secular and often socialist, and has strongly opposed Western political involvement in the Arab world.

Passing – “Assuming an identity other than the one ‘assigned’ by the dominant society. Passing need not be intentional or permanent; it may also be accidental, situational or intermittent” (Terry 41).

Persia and Persian – Persia and Persian – In today’s context these terms refer to modern-day Iran and its people living there or in the diaspora. Persians’ history, culture, and language (Farsi, often referred to as ‘Persian’) are distinct from Arab, which they are often labeled. In the context of I Dream of Jeannie, because of the Orientalism of the show, these terms conflate with all the terms that refer to “the Orient” including Arab, Arabian, and Middle East/ern/er.

The West – Referring to the U.S. and Europe

White – People who can trace their ancestral roots back to Europe

## Literature Review

John Fiske opens his book Television Culture by asking, “What is television? And, equally problematically, what is culture?” He concludes that television is a “bearer/provoker of meanings and pleasures” and defines culture as “the generation and circulation of this variety of meanings and pleasure within society” (Fiske 1). Fiske is known (and often criticized) for his analyses of television’s cultural economies, which offer the potential for resistance on the part of consumers. Every cultural scholar who deals with this medium must grapple with these opening questions. At the same time, these scholars do not agree on a single set of answers.

In the anthology Television Studies, Toby Miller addresses these primary questions by quoting Horace Newcomb. “In 1974 [he] said of television that ‘Noone [sic] seems to know what the medium is.’ This difficulty arose, he thought, because TV was ‘so much more than art [...] exist[ing] in a perpetual tension between what will sell and what satisfies the multiple needs of producers, actors, writers, directors, and the audience.’” Additionally, Miller suggests, the needs of the state should be added to this list (4).

Clearly, there is a direct relationship between producers and audiences. What connects these two groups is the text, or, the television show itself. In his landmark essay “Encoding and Decoding,” Stuart Hall outlines this relationship and breaks down the process by which meanings are created and understood. He suggests that producers (encoders) attempt to make meanings by putting together the text, but no matter how hard

they try, they will never achieve a uniform understanding of it by audiences (decoders). This is because texts are polysemic – multiple meanings can be made from them. He categorized decoding into three categories of codes: dominant (resembling the professional code); negotiated (a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements); and oppositional (aware of the preferred code, but decoded through an alternative frame of reference) (136-138).

One way producers attempt to achieve a dominant reading on behalf of their audience is by following formulas and technical codes. In “Concept of Formula,” John G. Cawelti asserts that formulas are important because “they represent syntheses of several important cultural functions which, in modern cultures have been taken over by the popular arts.” For example, they offer social or cultural ritual, constitute entertainments with rules known to everyone, and like games, they always get to their goal (388). He believes the game dimension of the formula “is a culture’s way of simultaneously entertaining itself and of creating an acceptable pattern of temporary escape from the serious restrictions and limitations of human life” (Cawelti 389). This is perhaps most true when it comes to the sitcom genre.

There are very specific rules that sitcom production demands. Telling a story within a 22-minute timeframe does not allow for great variation. Fiske breaks up the technical codes of television into three levels: reality, representation, and ideology. Camera work, lighting, editing, music, casting, setting and costume, make-up, action, dialogue, and ideological codes all play a part in the technicality and ideology of a text (5).

Fiske concludes, “The process of making sense involves a constant movement up and down through the [three] levels [...] for sense can only be produced when ‘reality,’ representations, and ideology merge into a coherent, seemingly natural unity. Semiotic or cultural criticism deconstructs this unity and exposes its ‘naturalness’ as a highly ideological construct” (6). Furthermore, he suggests, “Characters on television are not just representations of individual people but are encodings of ideology, ‘embodiments of ideological values’” (Fiske 7). This point is especially pertinent to this study.

In Prime Time Families: Television Culture in Postwar America, Ella Taylor cautions against undercutting the significance of the sitcom because although some texts may be perceived as “escapist” this does not suggest that they are not directly linked to society. She writes, “Comedy is a more flexible form than drama because it can create multiple, conflicting, and oppositional realities within the safe confines of the joke. Beneath the comforting middle-class conformity of 1950s sitcoms lurked tensions not so easily reconciled with prevailing norms” (Taylor 27). The sitcoms of the 1960s also reckoned with societal tensions.

Most scholarship that mentions I Dream of Jeannie critiques the science vs. magic tension in the text as a manifestation of male/female essentialist binaries that were in flux at the time. Television historian Lynn Spigel locates the program in a “fantastic-family genre” (along with shows like Bewitched and The Jetsons) that employed a tension between science and magic and between domestic bliss and the space-race for comic

relief and social criticism. In her essay “From Domestic Space to Outer Space: The 1960s Fantastic Family Sit-Com,” she proposes that their “gender roles, domesticity, and suburban lifestyles [...] laugh tracks, harmonious resolutions, and other structures of denial functioned as safety valves that diffused the ‘trouble’ in the text”; poked fun at the American family discourses of the 1950s; and used camp to offer critical perspectives on the social world (Spigel 205-206).

Stephen Cox has published the lengthiest work on Jeannie in his book Dreaming of Jeannie: TV’s Primetime in a Bottle. However, he writes for aficionados of the show. Thus, while he provides a beneficial resource in terms of historic dates and episodic summaries, he offers no critical analysis. That being said, the book houses Susan J. Douglas’s essay “Feminism and the Jeannie” which names the aforementioned tensions. Douglas suggests that Jeannie can be read for its resistance, while at the same time it should be considered a backlash against the discourse of empowerment found on Bewitched (176):

In I Dream of Jeannie, the ante was upped. Now magic inspired by female desire, jealousy, and possessiveness threatened to disrupt one of the crowning achievements of 1960s male technocracy, the U.S. space program. Even NASA was no match for female power and sexuality run amok. In Bewitched, female power could be accommodated; in Jeannie, it could not. Because of these differences, the central mixed message remains: Female power, when let loose in the public sphere, is often disruptive to male authority, but sometimes it also bolsters that authority. These colliding messages made [the shows] simultaneously cautionary and liberatory. The schizophrenic female persona such shows helped constitute saw female obsequiousness amply rewarded. But the viewer also saw empowering images of a woman physically zapping things – including men – into their proper place. (179)

Lauren Rabinovitz, in her essay “Ms.-Representation: The Politics of Feminist Sitcoms,” chimes in on the debate about sitcoms and their role in challenging and/or reinforcing dominant discourse. She opines that female characters within such shows stay in the “realm of heterosexual feminine excess” so that while they may challenge gender rules more than anyone else in TV Land, they remain safe within the confines of a he/she battle of the sexes. Thus, they bypass the possibility of challenging the rigid gender system that is integral to our patriarchal society (Rabinovitz 147).

In “White Flight,” Spigel names this he/she battle by looking at the scientific-positivist masculinity embodied by Tony and how it is at constant odds against Jeannie’s feminine mysticism. She writes:

I Dream of Jeannie presented anxieties about sex and the single girl. [...] When Tony brings Jeannie back to his suburban home, he has to hide his live-in supernatural girlfriend from the boys at NASA. But while he tries to literally bottle up Jeannie’s powers, she typically escapes the rational logics of masculine science by using her feminine supernatural power to wreak havoc at home and at the space lab. And unlike NASA, which spends billions to get men up to the moon, Jeannie is able to wish her way there in a matter of seconds. The program thus functions as a contradictory mix of contemporary discourses on swinging singles (with Jeannie as the ultimate playmate) and the emerging discourses of women’s liberation (with Jeannie as a superpowerful woman). (59)

Again, we see a historic contextualization of the show and another analysis of the tension between science and magic. This is another manifestation of the West vs. East dichotomy found in Orientalism, as the East is considered emotional mystical and the West is thought of as superior thanks to its scientific knowledge. However, not one scholar that I have found has contextualized the science/magic opposition within this framework.

In Honey, I'm Home!: Sitcoms, Selling the American Dream, Gerard Jones outlines the trajectory of the sitcom genre's history in the U.S., starting from the beginning of American radio up until the late 1980s. He evaluates the cultural meanings of television through a lens of political economy, suggesting that mass media has always been a product of corporate America. He, like Spigel and Einstein, describes Jeannie as "a kiddified male sex fantasy with a dose of Bewitched." Jones locates both within a "fantasy sitcom cycle" which served many purposes:

[It] was largely a demographic product, which was hurt by the aging of the baby boomers and the shrinking of the kid audience. It was a novelty, too, that lost its appeal when new fads came along. Yet it was also an expression of a particular moment of nervousness in the national consciousness, when the American imagination was plagued by fears that popular culture didn't yet have the nerve to confront openly, when social agreements of the late Eisenhower days were being called into question. (180)

David Marc elucidates a similar observation to other scholars in that he bears in mind the socio-economic tensions of the time and television's response to them. He situates Jeannie within the "magic sitcom" along with My Favorite Martian, Mr. Ed, and Bewitched and astutely observes:

In all the magic shows (except The Munsters and The Addams Family, which are about entire families of innocent monsters trying to live their deviant lives among hostile, intolerant "normal" people), an unpretentious middle-class heterosexual white male is miraculously handed a roommate – animal, woman, or alien – whose magical powers turn out to be more trouble than they're worth. Out of sheer magnanimity, however, the SWM adopts the Other and tries to teach it the profound satisfactions of simple, unsupernatural, consumer-oriented bourgeois life in the USA. The message is clear: [...]Supernatural powers are nice, but being nice is nicer." (109)

This bottom line served to establish some sense of “normalcy” for viewers at a time when society was in the midst of civil-rights “chaos.” Normalcy in the context of primetime television refers to white, middle-class standards, and anything that sways from that is considered working class and non-white.

In the book Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer, the program I Dream of Jeannie is summarized in the following manner: “Jeannie (Barbara Eden), a woman with supernatural powers who lives in a bottle, is discovered by an astronaut (Larry Hagman). She subsequently becomes his ‘slave’ and refers to him as ‘master.’ Like Samantha in Bewitched, Jeannie is continually at pains to behave like a normal housewife in spite of her magical abilities” (Einstein 261). Certainly, both women constantly try to control their abilities in order to appease the patriarch of the household who absolutely forbids the use of magic even if he ultimately depends on it and demands its use when in dire straits.

While in '60s television women were constantly sexualized, “seeking a master” connotes colonial undertones that distinguish Jeannie from her primetime counterparts. Again, that Jeannie’s origins and the tropes of colonialism are left out of Einstein’s summary is consistent with most television scholars’ writings of the text. This omission of the program’s racial multiplicity speaks to the need for media-studies literature to offer analyses of Arab characterizations and “Oriental” themes. Most scholars and viewers do not think of Jeannie as Arab per se, although they assume that she is from “Arabia” as all of her signifiers point there.

A thorough definition of Orientalism and how it relates to representation is found in Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film. Bernstein writes:

*Orientalism* describes a strand of colonialist discourse in the ideological arsenal of Western nations – most notably Great Britain, France, and the United States – for representing the colonies and cultures of North Africa and the “Middle East” (and eventually those of Asia). It is a way of perceiving these areas that have been supported, justified, and reinforced by the West’s colonialist and imperialist ventures. More generally, Orientalism is a distinctive means of representing race, nationality, and Otherness.” (2)

While this section will culminate with Said’s work on Orientalism, this definition will be assumed throughout this work.

In the seminal essay “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” Chandra Talpade Mohanty points out that when constructing Third World feminisms one must address two projects: “the internal critique of hegemonic ‘Western’ feminisms, and the formulation of autonomous, geographically, historically, and culturally grounded feminist concerns and strategies.” She notes, “The first project is one of deconstructing and dismantling; the second, one of building and constructing” (Mohanty 51).

Mohanty identifies that a binary exists between Western and Third World women, which categorizes the former as free and the latter as silent, veiled, and powerless. Those caught in this kind of (racist, imperialist, Orientalist) thinking imagine women in Third World countries as one homogenous group. This, in turn, fosters a single image of a “Third World woman.” She notes, “This average Third World woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and her being

‘Third World’ (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc)” (Mohanty 56).<sup>6</sup> She suggests that this imagery is juxtaposed against the “(implicit) self-representation of Western women” who present themselves as educated, modern, in control of their bodies and sexualities, and free to make their own decisions.<sup>7</sup> Mohanty astutely summarizes this comparative dynamic when she writes, “It is not the center that determines the periphery, but the periphery that, in its boundedness, determines the center” (74). This theory becomes particularly valid when looking at the representations of Middle Eastern women and the harem, both in literature and in the moving image.

The harem has long been a site of intrigue in the Western imagination. It is thought of as a place of captivity, where “Arabian” women are helpless and weak; where brutal Muslim men enslave their multiple wives and hold them hostage. However, it is also conceived as a hyper-sexualized space, where erotic women are always available and hungry for more. Either way, as Mohanty puts forward, “Third World women...never rise above the debilitating generality of their ‘object’ status” (71). These paradigms are nothing new.

In Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam put forth several theoretical assertions that are central to my study. In particular, their work on imperial imaginary and the tropes of empire is particularly relevant. They note, as does Mohanty, the ways in which the West has projected onto the Other, asserting that it is more telling to look at the creator of the stereotype rather than

the recipient. They also outline “the colonial rescue fantasy” in which Western representations glorify Europeans as heroes and non-Europeans as victims in need of rescuing from the West:

Dominant cinema has spoken for the ‘winners’ of history, in films which idealized the colonial enterprise as a philanthropic ‘civilizing mission’ motivated by a desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance, disease, and tyranny. Programmatically negative portrayals helped rationalize the human costs of the imperial enterprise.” (Shohat and Stam 109)

These arguments imply that the representation of Arab women and the harem has more to do with the person/culture creating the representation than with the space itself. It seems clear that “the harem,” “the harem girl,” and specifically Hollywood’s harem housewife, Jeannie, were created under Western eyes.

Historically speaking, it is worth mentioning here, that colonial discourse did not invent the harem, nor did Hollywood cinema. “Harem” in Arabic, or *harim* as it is often transliterated, referred to the portion of the house where women and children conducted their daily lives. The word was also used for a man’s wife or wives, and it connoted respect. According to the introduction of Harem Years, written by the book’s translator Margot Badran, “In Egypt, as elsewhere in the cities of the Middle East, among the upper and middle classes in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (and even today in some places) women and men were kept apart. Women lived their lives within the private enclosures of their domestic quarters. When they went out they veiled their faces, thus taking their seclusion with them” (Shaarawi 7). This was true of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim women in Egypt. Veiling and high seclusion had nothing to do with Islam, but

were marks of prestige, sought-after symbols of status, and proof of high economic standing. Male and family honor depended on the sexual innocence of women. Hence, seclusion was a way to guard a woman's purity and thus protect the dignity of the kin.

Well-known stereotypical images of Arabs and the harem date back to the Middle Ages and were strengthened during the times of the Crusades when further political and cultural reasons implanted anti-Arab images in the Western mind. Later, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the stories of "1001 Arabian Nights" were translated into English and French, and the tales of sex, wealth, power, and revenge received great interest and spread rapidly. In reality, "Nights" was originally a series of medieval bawdy stories recited to adult male audiences in the Middle East. In other words, they were peep shows of their time. Unfortunately, European readers and scholars took the stories as accurate representations of contemporary Middle Eastern society (Hamilton 175).

It is not only "Nights" that contributed to this misrepresentation: Literature that misrepresents Arabs abounds. Chandra Mohanty looks at The House of Obedience: Women in Arab Society, by Juliette Minces and suggests that the author mistakenly cites "*the* patriarchal family as the basis for 'an almost identical vision of women' that Arab and Muslim societies have."

Not only is it problematical to speak of a vision of women shared by Arab and Muslim societies (i.e., over twenty different countries) without addressing the particular historical, material, and ideological power structures that construct such images, but to speak of the patriarchal family or the tribal kinship structure as the origin of the socioeconomic status of women is to again assume that women are sexual-political subjects prior to their entry into the family... This singular, coherent kinship system presumably influences another separate and given entity,

‘women.’ Thus, all women, regardless of class and cultural differences, are affected by this system. Not only are *all* Arab and Muslim women seen to constitute a homogeneous oppressed group, but there is no discussion of the specific *practices* within the family which constitute women as mother, wives, sisters, etc. Arabs and Muslims, it appears, don’t change at all. Their patriarchal family is carried over from the times of the prophet Mohammed. They exist, as it were, outside history. (61-62)

Of course, they do not reside outside of history, in spite of the excess of decontextualized analyses that say otherwise.

Taking into account the visual text, filmmakers and media producers have fallen into the same ahistorical Orientalist trap. In recent years scholars have taken up deconstructing Orientalism in the media and popular culture. In The TV Arab, Jack Shaheen writes about television’s “Arab baddies.” He asserts that they are given three roles – “billionaires, bombers and belly dancers.” Later, in Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People, he does an extensive documentation of films and finds that the stereotypes perpetuated on the small screen were the ones on the big screen as well. While his contributions have been invaluable and he is rightfully considered a pioneer in the field of Orientalism in media studies, my work deviates from his in that he specializes in stereotype analysis.

With the advent of the moving image, the stereotype of the harem girl and her two faces – oppressed or exoticized – became normalized. In her essay “The Arab Woman and I,” Mona Fayad describes what this is like for her as an Arab American feminist:

I am haunted by a constant companion, called The Arab Woman. When I shut myself alone in my home, she steps out of the television screen to taunt me. In the movies, she stares down at me just as I am starting to relax...she appears in all her

glory: the Faceless Veiled Woman, silent, passive, helpless in need of rescue by the west. But there's also that other version of her, exotic and seductive, that follows me in the form of the Belly Dancer. (170)

Either way, she asserts, the construct invented by the West continually manages to represent the diverse populations of Arab women as a sensationalized erotic or childlike "two-in-one Arab Woman."

Stereotypical representations of Arab women normalized to such an extent that a viewer could (and would) recognize a veiled woman or a scantily clad one adorned with racy "Arabian garb" regardless of the actor's ethnicity. In fact, in the early days of cinema, producers realized that ticket sales increased for films that featured women who were dressed revealingly. They could get away with such costuming with historical and Biblical temptresses. Marsha J. Hamilton writes, "Even after the Hayes Office implemented the Production Code of the Motion Picture Producers and Directors of America in the 1930s, the most revealing costumes and dances, such as the 'Dance of the Seven Veils,' often involved Middle Eastern women characters. Needless to say, these roles were not played by women of Middle Eastern background" (177).

Shohat and Stam unmask Hollywood's casting practices – white women play Middle Eastern females whereas men of color play Middle Eastern men. (A well-cited example is that of The Sheik (dir. George Melford, 1921), which starred heartthrob Rudolph Valentino as the Sheik who falls for the nomadic dancer Yasmin, played by Vilma Banky.) Consequently, sexual appeal was/is imported and allowed via disguises of ethnic difference. This coincides with their definition of the "dialectics of

presence/absence” in which ethnic heterogeneity is found in the narrative but is simultaneously subverted into the dominant utopist narrative. They assert that the “subaltern presence” of ethnicity through music and dance, props or culture is “largely inferential: it inflects the representation without any literal representations of ‘ethnic/racial’ themes or even characters” (223).

Certainly, the casting of Eden, a “blonde bombshell,” as a Middle Eastern woman served to benefit I Dream of Jeannie: She was a mysterious female protagonist who could be viewed as “Other” due to character traits and signifiers, but who ultimately and easily adhered to Eurocentric notions of beauty. Undoubtedly, the text would have been altered if Jeannie had been played by an actress of color, and it was not an oversight that she was not.

Given that Orientalism, much like racism, relies on stereotypes and power-over dynamics, it is helpful to look at other racialized communities in the media. In Watching Race, Herman Gray examines the history of representation of blacks in America. He writes:

In the early 1950s, programs such as Amos ‘n’ Andy...presented blacks in stereotypical and subservient roles whose origins lay in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century popular forms...Blacks appeared primarily as maids, cooks, ‘mammies,’ and other servants, or as con artists and deadbeats. These stereotypes were necessary for the representation and legitimation of a racial order built on racism and white supremacy. (Gray 74)

Finally, this discussion must be grounded in Edward Said’s decisive work Orientalism as so much of it is relevant to this study. In particular, he points out that

“European imaginative geography” drew a line between two continents so that Europe is powerful, articulate and masculine while Asia is defeated, distant and feminized.

Although his analysis has been highly criticized for being overly static, it nonetheless remains relevant. He also clarifies that the geographic boundary of the region within Asia called “the Orient” was open to the interpretation of the Western imagination. Said summarizes Orientalist representations and imaginations in 1985:

We can now see that Orientalism is a praxis of the same sort, albeit in different territories, as male gender dominance, or patriarchy, in metropolitan societies: the Orient was routinely described as feminine, its riches as fertile, its main symbols the sensual woman, the harem and the despotic – but curiously attractive – ruler. Moreover, Orientals like Victorian housewives were confined to silence and to unlimited enriching production (103.)

As Shohat, Stam, and Mohanty point out, it is more revealing to look at where the representation comes from than who it is about.

This discussion would not be complete without addressing the real ways in which Middle Easterners experience race and Orientalism on a daily basis. Because the label “Middle Easterners,” as stated previously, includes people from over 20 countries, obviously, racial identity and experience differ greatly among them. Persians are a case in point. Although they are often conflated with Arabs, their history and culture is distinct. Furthermore, Persians speak Farsi, commonly referred to as “Persian,” a language spoken in Iran, and parts of Central Asia. Still, because of the way Orientalism operates, their experience of race in the U.S. can be similar to that of Arabs.

When addressing Arab American communities, scholars cite a “not quite white” phenomenon that supports the notion that race is contingent upon historical moments and societal shifts. Michael Omi and Howard Winant’s theory of racial formation suggests that racial projects, large and small, suffuse society and are inescapable. The rules of racial classification and identity are taught, often subtly. Race becomes “common sense” and influences how to comprehend, explain, and act in the world. Summarizing “racial projects” they write:

A vast web of racial projects mediates between the discursive and representational means in which race is identified and signified on the one hand, and the institutional and organizational forms in which it is routinized and standardized on the other. These projects are at the heart of the racial formation process. (Omi and Winant 60)

Of course, the racial formation process is ever changing with shifts in societal power. For this reason, Arab Americans may change their racial identity over their lifetime based on their own experiences, preferences, and demands. These factors are significant when interrogating industry and social perceptions of Jeannie as well as the changes in the way her character was represented.

Many scholars agree there have been two major waves of Arab immigration to North America, one prior to and another following World War II. (Naff 23). Suleiman notes that the first wave lasted from the 1870s to World War II and the second from World War II to the present. The two waves of immigrants faced different challenges in the social and political arena but the two communities came together in the 1960s,

especially after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War in order to combine resources and fight the common enemy – prejudice against Arabs (1).

Americanization became a high priority among the first wave of Arab immigrants. Sarah Gualtieri argues that “Syrians, like other immigrant groups, *became* white only after they had successfully claimed whiteness, and when law and custom confirmed it. This did not happen without considerable debate” [original italics] (30). In short, Syrians wanted to be considered white because it made them eligible for citizenship and its privileges, such as the right to vote and travel more freely. Furthermore, they wanted to distance themselves from blackness in order to avoid being targets of racism (Gualtieri 30-31). After hiring lawyers and waging letter-writing campaigns, they went before numerous judges. They argued that they were Semites, hence Caucasian and therefore white, and that their history and position in the Holy Land and Christian credentials made them eligible for the privilege of citizenship (Gualtieri 42-43).

The naturalization cases were significant because they helped determine the legal definition of whiteness during a period of heightened nativism, and they encouraged Syrians to view themselves as white in relation to other groups (Gualtieri 46). However, the struggle “to be white” came at a great cost. As a result, knowledge of ethnic roots or Arab or Syrian culture was not passed on to American-born and -raised generations. Alixa Naff contends, “If the political events in the post-World War II Arab World had not

reactivated Arab immigration and provoked the descendants of the first wave into an Arab identity, they might have assimilated themselves out of existence” (35).

The 1960s provoked various identity shifts, and many Americans of Arab descent who had previously identified with their country of origin, religious affiliation, or as solely “American” united and took on the label “Arab American.” Expanding on these shifts in Arab American identity, Naber writes:

The development of a pan-Arab American identity in the post 1960s period demonstrates that, whereas pre-1960s’ generations tended to lose their identity to ‘Americanization’, growing numbers of the new generations are leaning towards an ethnically distinct identity. The post 1960s’ unification according to the pan-ethnic label ‘Arab American’ can be understood as a political response to the process by which the state and the media came to group such geographically, culturally and religiously diverse persons according to a singular label ‘Arab’, while attaching to it mythological, derogatory meanings. By building coalition around the label ‘Arab American’, activists redefined the term ‘Arab’ on their own terms and deployed their racial/ethnic identity as a political strategy for claiming their own rights. (41)

Naber outlines four paradoxes that deal with race, ethnicity, and religion that became more apparent after the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 and continue to affect Arab American identity. Although her article was published in 2000, before September 11, 2001, the points she raises continue to be relevant today. The first paradox addresses Orientalism in the media, suggesting that “although Arabs belong to a multiplicity of religious affiliations and emigrate from diverse regions, the idea that Arab can be defined as a monolithic category persists in popular North American images (in TV shows, films and the news media)” (Naber 42). The second paradox states, “Arab Americans are

racially white, but not quite” (Naber 50). Thus, race, when applied to Arab Americans, is more of a political category than one based on phenotype or hair. This is particularly relevant when considering Jeannie and her sister’s character. Although Eden is a white woman, she could feasibly be of Arab descent. Thus, it is a political decision when her racial identification changes.

The third paradox points to ‘a racialization of religion’ and the community based on the belief that all Arab Americans are Muslims which makes them racially inferior to whites (Naber 52). Although categorization in the Arab world is primarily along religious lines, immigrants to the U.S. find they must make some sort of racial/ethnic identity. Which identity to take, however, remains a heated topic (Naber 55). Some Arab Americans continue to be able to “pass” and are invested in their identification with whiteness. Others, in particular many Arab American feminists, “have adopted the term ‘woman of color’, regardless of not being legally ‘racialized’ and even when unacknowledged by other women of color” (Alsultany 3). These contradictions with how Arabness is viewed and experienced are central to the study of the development of Jeannie’s character.

Since September 11, 2001 these paradoxes have only become more defined. Describing the perception of Arab Americans in a post-9/11 world, Evelyn Alsultany asserts:

Arab bodies are marked with pre-assigned meanings in the United States: suspected terrorist, presumed religious fanatic, backwards; Arabs are ‘other’,

existing outside of the ideological scope of ‘belonging’ within the United States. Located within a racial paradox, Arab-Americans are simultaneously racialised as white and non-white. Not legally recognised by the United States government as a minority group, and unable to fit into the racial and ethnic categories used by the United States Census: black, white, Asian, Native, and Latino – Arabs are not legally ‘raced’ and therefore presumably white. However, at the same time, signified as oppositional to U.S. democratic civilization, Arab-Americans are placed outside the boundaries of ‘whiteness’, and paradoxically positioned as ‘not quite white’. (1)

This brings home Omi and Winant’s theory that racial projects are subject to the cultural and political landscapes of a nation and are constantly being recycled and redefined.

### Conclusion

In summary, the criticism that directly addresses the series offers excellent insight to feminine/masculine tensions, which can be interpreted as an expression of the East vs. West binary found in Orientalism, yet previous scholarship does not explore this realm. The scholarship that has been reviewed here summarizes the tropes of Orientalism, how they are represented in the moving image, and their effects on Arab American populations, setting the stage for this in-depth look at I Dream of Jeannie.

## CHAPTER 2

### JEANNIE MEETS THE '60S SPACE RACE

Chapter two historicizes the beginnings of I Dream of Jeannie. It analyzes how exoticization was originally mapped onto the female protagonist Jeannie and illustrates how that mapping was perceived as dangerous by producers and network officials. This chapter also looks at the early steps that were taken to “tone down” Jeannie’s character.

In 1965, just before I Dream of Jeannie hit the air, an NBC press release announced a new story starring “an impish genie who just wants to help her master”; it goes on to state that “the serious young astronaut would rather do it himself. To his dismay, however, he finds that anything he can do for the space effort, Jeannie can do better.”<sup>8</sup> This “behind every good man is a mischievous woman” plot found success in shows such as I Love Lucy and Bewitched and was one that fans and critics picked up on and enjoyed.

One year prior, Bewitched was the number-two show in the Nielsen Ratings, and networks wanted to capitalize on the fantastic action. Many compared Jeannie to the other female magicians on the block. One critic wrote, just after the show premiered, “Screen Gems, having scored strongly with Bewitched last season, makes an attempt to emulate its own success with this new entry.” He went on to give an unfavorable review of the show: “[...T]his time the doll is a genie instead of a witch. Unoriginal in execution ‘Jeannie’ is also unimaginative and unfortunate. It is one of the weaker entries of this new

season” (“Daku” 16). In an era of monsters (The Addams Family, The Munsters), space exploration (Lost in Space, The Jetsons), and special effects (Get Smart, The Flying Nun) the new show was about to get in on the fun. However, Jeannie is distinct from these other shows because of the “ethnic” Orientalist twist made possible by having a lead character who is not only a magician but a Middle Easterner.

A month before premiering, the new series was featured in a TV Guide two-page spread titled, “Look Ma, No Hands—Or Feet.” It gave the reader an “inside view” as to how stuntman Dick Van Sickle would make a car drive without anyone in it. Of course, the viewer would be “in on the joke, which is that genie Eden is driving but has made herself invisible” (“Look Ma” 20-21). That only Eden was photographed and that stunts were highlighted would set a trend for the duration of the series that suggested the show offered little more than a perky female lead and exciting special effects. However, there was a great deal of social commentary and societal influence present in the text.

Societal movements, both on the ground and in orbit, were in part reproduced in television in the 1960s. In August 1965, a month before I Dream of Jeannie premiered, the Los Angeles Times ran an article titled “Television’s Race for Space – and Ratings” that highlighted Lost in Space and Jeannie. The article stated:

“With all the hoopla over space men and their achievements, it was only a matter of time before the television programers [sic] would build a series around astronauts. Now it’s happened. At least two of the new fall shows have astronaut-space themes. On Wednesday nights you can dial CBS and catch Lost in Space, a science-fiction adventure series about a family ‘hopelessly marooned on an unknown planet in outer space.’ [...T]hen on Saturdays, NBC will be telling the story of I Dream of Jeannie. This one not only has an astronaut (played by Larry

Hagman) as the male lead, but a feminine genie (Barbara Eden) as well! TV (and the U.S. space program) may never be the same.” (L3)

Lynn Spigel and Michael Curtin suggest, “[T]he 1960s is most notable for its culture vs. counter-culture, ‘us vs. them’ logic, and within this set of oppositions, mass media – especially television – was almost always *them* [original emphasis]” (2). This tension is certainly seen in the magic sitcom. The “fantasic-family” shows, in particular, played with the tensions of the ’60s while capitalizing on the myths of normalcy from the ’50s. Mr. Ed, My Favorite Martian, and Bewitched brought a great deal of magic to the screen as a way of mocking patriarchy and the hegemonic power structure. At the same time and on the other side of the spectrum, they offered a sort of escapism from the tumultuous cultural climate of the time because while the main character was thrown into the depths of chaos by an animal, alien, or a magical woman, he (usually he) somehow managed to regain control by the end of the episode. This reassured white, middle-class viewers that their values and lifestyle were still “normal” and would win at the end of the day.

At the time, the overemphasis on the endless possibilities of space travel by the government and media served the same purpose – to distract white middle-class families from burgeoning civil-rights movements and to draw attention away from the intense poverty faced by people of color and the simultaneous lack of social services available to them. The colonial endeavor to move beyond the earth to conquer other planets was highly valued by the U.S. government. Thus, the National Aeronautics and Space

Administration (NASA) was founded in 1958. A few years later, John F. Kennedy brought to the 1960s a “New Frontier.” Spigel suggests this drive combined 1950s ideals of consumerism and suburban family life with a new image of citizenship:

Rather than the happy homebody of Eisenhower American, the New Frontiersman was an active hero who took an interest in the traditionally ‘masculine’ world of science, physical fitness, and international intrigue. In turn, he would preserve traditional values by protecting his home (both his family and nation) against threatening outside forces. This reigning symbolism of the New Frontier was, of course, space travel and its presentation of heroic, physically fit young men bound for interplanetary glory. NASA packaged the Mercury and Apollo astronauts as Hollywood packaged stars, with public relations campaigns in all regions of the country and national media coverage. (52)

The race to space had everything to do with the Cold War and was promoted as another way of spreading the American way and stomping out communism (by beating the Soviet Union to the moon). Therefore, the media represented astronauts as family men, portraying them with their wives and children. In this way, as Spigel points out, “ideals of suburban domesticity and the fantastic voyage to outer space were intricately bound together” (53). Thus, the goals of NASA were sentimentalized through family portraits, and the mystery and abstraction of outer space was communicated and negotiated through the familiar, domestic space (Spigel 54-55). This was true of news stories in print and on screen.

This myth of the “family man” inherent in the representations of NASA astronauts at the time is particularly significant to analyses of *I Dream of Jeannie*. Tony’s main impetus is to be in the space program – a fact often-reiterated in his dialogue: “I don’t want anything else in the world but to be an astronaut.” Thus, even though he is

master to a genie who could grant him anything in the world, he does not want material goods. He is devoted to NASA not for financial prosperity but because of his devotion to live an ethical life and to serve his country. This reiterates the media representations of the time that represented astronauts as normal folks, like neighbors who would come over for a barbeque on Sunday afternoon. “If I wanted to be rich I would not have become an astronaut,” he often explains to Jeannie. These statements reinforce his simple goals, pure heart, and his status as national hero.

In contrast, Roger Healy (Bill Daily), Tony’s best friend, possesses very distinct character traits and personal motives; his faults are juxtaposed with and thus underscore Tony’s positive qualities. Roger’s faults are often used as a foil to reiterate Tony’s qualities. In “Richest Astronaut in the Whole Wide World” (15 Jan. 1966), Roger finds out that Jeannie is a genie and manages to take control of her bottle in order to become her new master so that she can materialize his dreams of riches. Roger’s main goal, the episode makes clear, is to achieve status through affluence; his concern for the space program is secondary to his desire for material wealth. This is contrasted throughout the series to Tony’s aversion to greed in order to reiterate that Tony’s loyalty rests with his country and the mission of exploring space.

The characters’ careers as astronauts and military men allowed the show to develop a relationship with NASA and capitalize on the media hype surrounding the race to the moon. Toward the end of the first season Sheldon hosted Walter Whitaker, an official from NASA’s Office of Public Affairs. In a follow-up letter, Whitaker thanked

Sheldon for the meeting and assured him he would send over as much “authentic information” and stock footage for the show. He suggested that a series of audiotapes, referred to as “Their Other World” might be helpful which dealt with “various psychological and physiological problems which man faces during space missions.” He also wanted to reiterate the importance of a “positive” representation of NASA:

Again, I want to assure you that we will appreciate as much authentic information about the manned space flight program as you can inject into the series. We would like to see a decreasing emphasis on military roles, for as I explained, we try very hard to project the image of the program as a peaceful, scientific exploration of space. This is an important aspect of our international relations. Perhaps it would be possible in future scripts to replace ‘sergeants’ with technicians or assistants who are civilian rather than military. We realize that your basic characters are established as military types, but any effort to show the program as a non-military objective will be appreciated.<sup>9</sup>

Sheldon responded in kind, saying that he would de-militarize the films as much as possible. “I will also try to make the show as much ‘Nasa’ [sic] as possible”<sup>10</sup> Ensuring verisimilitude in the text was a priority for the state department and the show’s producers.

Lynn Spigel has documented the ways in which sexism at NASA was so prevalent that the media openly addressed it in the early ’60s. She argues that even though the space program was well known for its open racial and gender-based discrimination, many women nevertheless saw themselves as part of the scientific process and wrote to Kennedy to ask why females were not more involved in the space race. The magazine Look featured a cover story that asked, “Should A Girl Be First in Space?” It

informed readers that “while ‘some 2,000 American women, mostly teenagers, have volunteered for space flight,’ they were subject to sexism at NASA.” At the end of the article, the authors suggest that the first woman in space would be married and perhaps the “scientist-wife of a pilot engineer” (Spigel 57).

Jeannie addressed this debate in “Anybody Here Seen Jeannie?” (30 Oct. 1965), a site of verisimilitude that Whitaker may not have expected. At the end of the episode real NASA footage is interspersed with shots of Tony and Roger taking off for space. When Tony leaves the ship to wander out into what he calls the “wild blue yonder,” great care is taken to make sure he is safe as he communicates by radio every few seconds with Roger who is manning the ship. Within the *mise-en-scène* Tony is floating in space with stars and the moon in the background. He wears a bulky, silver spacesuit and is connected to the spaceship with a tether cord necessary for oxygen flow. Suddenly Jeannie floats freely into the frame – without helmet, suit, or cord, wearing only her harem costume – and the laugh track runs in the background.

The first thing Jeannie does is to make a wish upon a star, then she immediately kisses Tony’s helmet. This reverts to the Orientalist and sexist thinking that while Tony, the white male is focusing on “serious” questions, like expansionism, Jeannie dreams of affection and love. Yet, it would minimize the moment to overlook that this shows a female gracefully accomplishing in a blink of an eye what costs the boys at NASA millions of dollars and countless hours of preparation. This is a prime example of Spigel’s assertion that “fantastic-family sit-coms,” where science-fiction fantasy collided

with domestic comedy, resulted in programs that contested their own form and content. “Fantastic sit-coms were a complex organization of contradictory ideas, values, and meanings concerning the organization of social space and everyday life in suburbia” (Spigel 206). In this scene, the laugh track is supported – the moment is funny – precisely because of the “poke” at the sexism prevalent at the time in the space program and society at large. Thus, the text answers the question “Should a girl be first in space?” with the answer, “Yes – and she should be a genie.”

The representation of a female in space undermines NASA’s position that only males were capable of going beyond earth’s gravity field. That the female in space is a genie, however, suggests that it is a magical fantasy laying beyond realistic possibilities. Additionally, Jeannie calls Tony “master,” goes to great lengths to obey him, and her main impetus is to please him. This reiterates patriarchal norms and invokes the myth that Third World servants want nothing but to serve, which will be addressed in more detail shortly. At the same time, Jeannie is a 2,000-year-old genie who is more powerful than her master could ever be, which the text recognizes as well. Some would place the text within an either/or binary, arguing that one position overrides the other. Instead, it should be recognized for its multiple messages, even though they are contradictory.

### Genie Whereabouts

Genies are not usually found wandering through space, at least, not side-by-side with a U.S. astronaut. The usual stomping ground for the magical being is “Arabia.” Most

scholars trace the West's genie myth back to the stories of "1001 Arabian Nights," which were translated in the eighteenth century into English and French after they had been told for nearly a millennium in Persian and Arabic. Baghdad was founded during the eighth century and was a hub of culture and commerce as merchants from Persia, China, India, Africa, and Europe traveled through and lived there. The stories were originally bawdy folk stories thought to have been collected orally over many years and later compiled into a single book. The nucleus of the stories is formed by a Persian book called Hazâr Afsâna, literally "Thousand Myths" in the eighth century. A century later it was translated into Arabic.

The main story of Scheherazade is thought to have been added in the fourteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Scheherazade knows that her cruel husband is going to kill her after only one night together, as he does all of his wives. So, she uses her keen story-telling skills to stay alive by telling him only one story and escaping at dawn until the next night. She manages to keep his interest for a thousand nights, and by then he decides not to kill her because he has grown accustomed to her and recognizes her humanity. Marsha Hamilton points to Scheherazade as "a perfect example of the harem beauty character in popular culture," upheld because of the West's obsession with the idea of harems, multiple wives, and sexually available women (175). It is from Scheherazade's lips that the myth of the genie, Aladdin, was spoken. Different renditions of a magical, Arabian being coming out of a bottle have been told and retold in various forms. Hollywood has featured genies on-screen in too many films and television shows to name here.

Not surprisingly, the details of genies' pasts vary, as do their geographical origin. However, they often come from Baghdad because many of Scheherazade's stories took place there. Jeannie's origins are consistently inconsistent. In an interview in April 2005, Sheldon wrote that Jeannie was from Baghdad: "I chose Baghdad because of its romantic 'Sinbad the Sailor' sound. But you must remember that I created the show more than 40 years ago, when Baghdad was not the slaughterhouse it is today."<sup>12</sup> Jeannie most consistently refers to Baghdad and Persia when she talks about "back home" and by the fifth season both sites are solidified as one and the same, revealing the collapse between Persian and Arabic cultures and geographic locations. The prospectus script for the series, however, announced that, "Jeannie was born two thousand years ago in what is now Istanbul." (This may explain why Tony once discouraged someone from coming over for dinner because they would just be "eating Turkish leftovers.") In "My Master, the Thief" (2 Apr. 1966). Jeannie finds that her slippers are featured in a museum exhibit showing ancient artifacts from "Bukistan – her old homeland" (and she steals them back). In other episodes she sites her origins as Packawick, Babylon, and Basenji.

Jeannie's mother tongue is another issue in contention. Sheldon claimed that Jeannie was speaking Arabic in the pilot episode.<sup>13</sup> In a later episode in the first year, she makes Tony "speak Arabic" (according to other characters on screen) which makes it seem like Arabic is Jeannie's mother tongue. However, Cox writes, "Emerging from her bottle [in the pilot episode], Barbara Eden actually spoke Persian. The script originally called for her to utter Arabic, but a tutor for that language could not readily be found in

Hollywood” (210). In fact, in this episode she does speak an archaic form of Farsi, or “Persian” as it is commonly referred to in English, with a thick American accent.<sup>14</sup> An early audience survey found that, “Interest developed rapidly at the beginning of the program – softened slightly when Jeannie spoke in Arabic and again when Tony related his experiences to Dr. Bellows, then remained at a high level throughout the remainder of the program.”<sup>15</sup> Given that test results were highly regarded, this may explain why Jeannie really speaks Persian only in the first episode. Later, when Jeannie or other characters speak “Arabic,” it is not an actual language but gibberish with occasional Arabic words interspersed.<sup>16</sup> (The same technique was employed with Ricky Ricardo’s made-up “Spanish” in I Love Lucy.) Additionally, in episodes throughout the five years, Jeannie sings a song under her breath that contains the word “habibi” – Arabic for “beloved” or “sweetheart.”

Did popular critics writing at the time notice these contradictions? They suggested she was from Egypt, Persia, or Arabia. However, none of these authors, evidently, felt perturbed by the vagueness of her origins. Most avoided any controversy – taking the stand that they were everyday viewers free from moral judgment. Two days after its launch, Bill Ornstein noted in the Hollywood Reporter that I Dream of Jeannie was “bound to land in the category of successful ‘gimmick.’” He appreciated the “tricky plot” and the “bounty of humor.” He also described the island where Tony found his genie who came out of an “Aladdin-like bottle” as “mysterious.” All in all, he wrote, he looked forward to “a lot of clean fun involving everybody in the cast.”

Not everybody was so encouraging. A columnist in Variety asserted, “The star of this blithering comedy is Barbara Eden’s cleavage.” He went on to say that after materializing out of “an Egyptian jug” she badgers an astronaut, and teases viewers “with dirty minds with innuendo (like at the climax of the initialer, what was happening behind the camera in astro boy’s bedroom?).” However, even in his great dislike he had to recognize that “the special effects were excellent and could win one of those coveted Emmy Awards” (“Bill.”).

Cultural theorist Edward Said points out that “European imaginative geography” draws a line between two continents so that Europe is powerful and articulate and Asia is defeated and distant. He suggests that the geographic boundary of the region called “the Orient” is open to the interpretation of the Western imagination. “We must learn to accept enormous, indiscriminate size plus an almost infinite capacity for subdivision as one of the chief characteristics of Orientalism – one that is evidenced in its confusing amalgam of imperial vagueness and precise detail” (Said 50). This translates into Persian, Turkish, Afghan, and Muslim all falling under the categories of “Arab” or “Middle Eastern” when really there are great differences between them. Omi and Winant describe this as “the consolidation of oppositional consciousness” of those being “othered” in the discourse, which they refer to as a process whereby distinctions are collapsed into a larger category. This can certainly be considered a symptom of Eurocentrism. Hence, this blurring of culture and language by the creators and critics of the Jeannie suggests a general exoticization of the whole region, indicative of an Orientalist gaze, which is

satisfied with knowing that she is from “over there.” This is not surprising given that the text is a situation comedy and critics are not focused on in-depth character or textual analyses. Furthermore, trying to confirm a specific location would interrupt the mystery inherent in the imaginings of “the Orient.”

I find that viewers recognize a simultaneous manifestation of whiteness and “Otherness” in Jeannie because while Barbara Eden looks white, genies are understood to be from “the Middle East somewhere.”<sup>17</sup> Thus, ethnic difference is concurrently present and absent in the text. This racial complexity is consistent with the treatment of race in Hollywood. Pertinent to this dynamic is Ella Shohat and Robert Stam’s definition of the “dialectics of presence/absence” in which cultural diversity is found in the narrative but concurrently subdued by the dominant utopist storyline and casting (223-230). An excellent example they cite deals with the exploitation of African American cultural products: “In musicals, the African-American voice was suppressed both historically and musically, since Black musical idioms became more associated on the screen with ‘White’ stars, authorizing a Euro-American signature on what were basically African-American cultural products” (224).

In a similar way, Jeannie imported sexuality via ethnicity and was able to push the envelope because its female lead was “Arabian” even though she was played by a “blonde bombshell” – or as NBC put it, “the world’s most famous ‘bottle blonde.’”<sup>18</sup> The panic that NBC officials endured about Jeannie, which I will explain in more detail shortly, would have undoubtedly been worse if an actress of color had been cast for the

role. The text would have been dramatically altered if Jeannie had “looked” Arab. Of course, “looking Arab” is problematic and rooted in preconceived notions of race and “authenticity.”<sup>19</sup> Given the history of colonialism in the Middle East, there are Arabs and Persians who are light-skinned and blue-eyed. Eden’s fair features alone, then, don’t rule her out as Arab or Persian. Additionally, although a white woman plays the character, all of her signifiers – costume, props, language, history, and relationships – locate her in the Middle East.

Although the details of her “homeland” vary from episode to episode, the first season underscores Jeannie’s status as a foreigner. Again, her signifiers point to “Arabia.” Although the colors are not interpretable on-screen in the first season, she wears a hot pink “harem costume” complete with chiffon pants, a red bra, a pom-pom-trimmed bolero jacket, and a chiffon-draped headpiece. Her midriff is bare though the network forbade exposure of her belly button.<sup>20</sup> Her idiosyncratic speech patterns and made-up Arabic remind viewers that she is not from the U.S. and that English is not her mother tongue. She rarely, if ever, uses contractions and often employs archaic words such as “thou” in conversation. This points back to the Orientalist representation that imports the presence of the “exotic” by having the Other signified, while simultaneously subverting her through Eurocentric casting choices.

#### Genie Gendered

I Dream of Jeannie was approved and moved forward very quickly compared to most projects in Hollywood. In his autobiography The Other Side of Me, Sidney Sheldon

gives an account of how Jeannie got started and highlights from the show. He recalls that on a Friday, near the end of the first year of The Patty Duke Show, he received a call from Screen Gems (a subsidiary of Columbia Pictures) with an offer to create a television series for them. He was producing Patty and living in New York, where it was being filmed. Over the weekend he wrote a script for I Dream of Jeannie, and on Monday he was in Hollywood for a meeting with one of Screen Gems' top executives, Jerry Hyams. By the end of the meeting, Hyams had offered Sheldon his own company to produce the show in Los Angeles. Hence, Sidney Sheldon Productions and Jeannie were born (Sheldon 326-327).

Sheldon boasted about how easily the script came to him:

I'd had an idea about doing a show with a genie. I knew that genie projects had been done, but they had always consisted of a giant man, like Burl Ives, coming out of a bottle saying, 'What can I do for you, Master?' [...] I thought it would be intriguing to make the genie a beautiful young nubile girl, saying, 'What can I do for you, Master?' That was the project I decided to create for Screen Gems. (326)

The "genie project" with a "giant man, like Burl Ives" refers to the 1963 movie The Brass Bottle (dir. Harry Keller, 1963), whose influence on the early scripts of Jeannie is obvious. The film is a comedy about a proverbial genie named Fakrash, played by Burl Ives, who comes out of a bottle (a table lamp in this case) to serve his new master, the architect Harold Ventimore (Tony Randall). However, rather than aiding his master he makes life more difficult for him. There are many special effects and plot details from the film found in the television series, most notably in the pilot episode.

The Western representation of a genie can in itself be contestable because of its investment in the illusion of the Orient. Comparing Brass Bottle to Jeannie illuminates that not all Orientalist fantasies are the same. In particular, Orientalism manifests itself differently in and around the two genie characters because of their genders. One primary example involves communication and interaction between master and servant. Fakrash does not understand the “modern” American way of life and is especially confused by its restrictions. Fakrash discovers gold is no longer used as currency after he turns two trunks of gold bricks into money and his master does not approve. The genie ponders, “Why can’t I make my own money?” Harold has to explain that only the U.S. Department of Treasury can and that in the U.S. one must be honest or face grave consequences. In other words, the film implies, scheming – as Fakrash and his Third World society are used to doing – will not fly under “American democracy.” Jeannie’s gender adds an extra layer to the power dynamic between master and servant. However, here, because master and servant are both male, the national differences become more lucid. This evokes the cinematic trope of Orientalism in which the character from the West embodies traits that are considered noble, while the “Oriental” is portrayed as not only naïve but capricious.

This is a consistent theme in I Dream of Jeannie too. Jeannie, like Fakrash, becomes increasingly frustrated by her master’s refusal to accept her deeds and complains that serving a master who does not wish for any grandiose schemes is a waste of her talents. At the outset of “Permanent House Guest” (5 Mar. 1966), Jeannie begs

Tony to let her do more extravagant things for him. “I gave my last master a fleet of ships, a villa on the Nile, a diamond mine in South Africa,” she boasts. Tony refuses. All he asks is that she take care of him by making breakfast and cleaning the house. (This dynamic is similar to the one employed in I Love Lucy, except whereas Lucy wants to be the star of the show, Jeannie wants to use her powers to put Tony at the center of attention.)

The genies’ complaints about not being able to do relevant work offer the potential for a rich post-colonial deconstruction: The portrayal perpetuates the myth that all Third World servants want to do is serve, but at the same time, it exposes the power of the Third World servant, who is powerful enough to grant every wish for his helpless master. Observably, when Jeannie expresses the desire to do more, it implies a slew of added components absent in Fakrash’s grievance because she is female. Couched in 1960s television and coming from a female servant, her complaint offers a satirical poke at the tension between the women’s movement and the role of the housewife.

The climactic scene in which Fakrash takes matters into his own hands and begins to grant wishes before his master asks for them is of particular interest when discussing Jeannie. Fakrash transforms Harold’s apartment into a stereotypical Arabian tent – complete with tapestries hanging from the ceiling, pillows on the floor to sit on (instead of chairs), and male slaves – in order to impress Harry’s fiancé, Sylvia (played by Barbara Eden), and her parents (who disapprove of the engagement). By the time Harold finds out, it is too late, and his guests have arrived. They put up with the oddities (like

being served lambs' eyes as an appetizer) until a female belly dancer emerges, gyrating in close proximity to the men's faces. The parents storm off, and Sylvia asks how Harold could have put on such an imprudent display, to which he responds, "I didn't, *he* did." Of course, Harold cannot explain who "he" is lest Sylvia consider him crazy. Thus he (temporarily) loses the girl.

This predicament is virtually repeated in the pilot episode of Jeannie, except that the Orientalist trope of exoticization is mapped onto Jeannie in a way that it is not with Fakrash. The heteronormativity of the text assumes that Fakrash is interested in serving Harold only because it is his duty to serve his master, without any other motivation. While a homoerotic reading is possible, Fakrash is most interested in the female genie in the film (Kamala Devi) who in the end becomes his business and life partner. However, Jeannie, being the sexually available and experienced Middle Eastern female that she is assumed to be, wants to please Tony beyond the call of duty because of her sexual motivations. However, Sheldon suggested she behaved like "any woman in love." Either way, heterosexist notions expect her to go after Tony, which, among other factors, opens her up to be targeted for exoticization. This is most clear in the pilot episode in a virtual recreation of the predicament described in Brass Bottle.

The average viewer does not know that in the pilot episode Tony is originally engaged to marry the general's daughter, Melissa (Karen Sharpe), a central figure in the promotion of the series. In the pilot episode, Tony momentarily loses Melissa, not Jeannie. The prospectus script offers the following description of Melissa:

A beautiful woman, who has been raised by her father [General Stone, played by Philip Ober,] from Army post to Army post. Because of the discrimination of Army life, Melissa is a bit of a snob. However, this chink in her armor only shows on occasion. She is aware of her physical charms, always dressing in the height of fashion. She is in love with Tony and feels she has picked the top man to be her husband. She is anxiously waiting for her wedding day. (2)

It is clear that Melissa's main impetus, like Jeannie's, is to nab Tony. Melissa, however, wants to go through the appropriate channels and marry him. When the producers realized Tony could not be married to Melissa and simultaneously develop a relationship with Jeannie, they decided to do away with Melissa. Because her character had not been developed past nuptials it was an easy transition. As Sidney Sheldon wrote, "I no longer had a use for them [Melissa and her father]." <sup>21</sup>

In The Brass Bottle Barbara Eden plays Harold's fiancé, the "proper" girl who is going to get married. She wears classic dresses and pearl necklaces and wants to be a wife. At dinner she is extremely uncomfortable and threatened by the belly dancer, the scantily dressed "Arabian" girl. In Jeannie, however, Eden herself plays that girl. This is made clear when Melissa and Jeannie encounter each other in the pilot episode. Tony has just returned from his launch run amok (in which he lands on the exotic island and finds Jeannie, who blinks him a rescue helicopter to take him back to Cocoa Beach). He thinks he has left his "exotic genie" back on the island and is set to marry Melissa soon. The engaged couple stands in Tony's living room, chatting. Melissa hears water running. "Tony, is there someone in your shower?" she asks, making her way toward the bathroom. Tony answers, "No, don't be ridiculous. Who would be ...?" Suddenly he sees

Jeannie's bottle in the corner and begins to panic. "Melissa, you've got to go," he says, trying to prevent the two from meeting. However, his attempts prove futile. The camera slowly pans Jeannie's body, from feet to face, as she struts out of Tony's bedroom wearing nothing but one of his white dress shirts. This pronounced shot of her bare legs was rare and risqué for 1965 prime time and called attention to the character's bold sexuality. Jeannie opens the bedroom door and appears before them in such a way that within the *mise en scène* Jeannie is smack-dab in the middle of Tony and Melissa. This shot foreshadows that the "impish" genie will come between them.

The women look each other up and down, Melissa, in a dress cut below the knees and Jeannie in only a shirt. Melissa is obviously shocked and upset. The exchange that ensues is reminiscent of the scene in Brass Bottle in which "master" cannot sufficiently explain the presence of "servant," except that here the servant is a sexually assertive female:

**Melissa:** Tony, I've always prided myself on being tolerant, but, would you explain to me what that girl is doing here?

**Tony:** Well, that's just it; she's not a girl. (*Jeannie, offended, puts her arms up in her wish-granting pose as if she is about to zap him into his proper place. Melissa makes her way to leave.*)

**Tony:** No, wait, you don't understand.

**Melissa:** Oh, I'm afraid I do understand. Tony, I may be tolerant, but that's a girl. It's a girl! (*Jeannie nods her head in agreement. Melissa leaves. Jeannie and Tony begin to argue.*)

**Jeannie:** What was 'that one' doing here, master? (*Jeannie walks away angrily. Tony follows her.*)

**Tony:** 'That one' happens to be my fiancé.

Melissa prides herself on being “tolerant.” She is woman who understands “men’s needs” and expects Tony’s eyes to wander but trusts that he will be faithful to her. This reiterates her responsible-housewife-to-be status. Jeannie disapproves and goes on to call Melissa a “black-haired devil.”<sup>22</sup> Jeannie suggests that she could please him much more than Melissa ever could and throws her arms around him. “Stop that, we don’t do that in America,” he says. Here, Tony underlines the national differences pronounced between master and servant in Brass Bottle. When Jeannie looks at him quizzically, he clarifies, “Not when you’re engaged to General Stone’s daughter, you don’t do that in America.” “That” refers to her arms’ being around him, her touch, the implication of sex. His comment implies that although other men might be doing it and while the viewer might be expecting or imagining it, because he is a man of the highest caliber, Tony is not. While an extra layer of sexual tension and gendered interaction is added to the encounter that was not seen in Brass Bottle, the national and cultural differences should not be overlooked. His word choice “in America” reiterates this obvious Othering of her.

Shortly afterward, Jeannie turns Tony’s living room into a stereotypical desert tent (à la Brass Bottle) in order to “please him” with a taste of what life was like “back home.” She and her belly-dancer friends begin to dance around Tony, who has a moment of guilty pleasure – “in America” national heroes are not supposed to look at such things. Jeannie, frustrated like Fakrash, declares, “Thou art the most ungrateful master I have ever served!” and disappears in a cloud of smoke. Tony, wearing an Arabian costume that Jeannie has dressed him in, goes outside to look for her but instead finds General Stone

and Melissa who have come over to get to the bottom of things. Again, Tony finds himself cornered between trying to hide Jeannie to appease his future wife and wanting to make things right with his newfound houseguest and lady friend.

Harold's dilemma with Fakrash is not nearly as layered or tricky. He is an architect so he has a respectable middle-class career. On the other hand, Major Nelson is an astronaut so although is not a scientist *per se*, he is invested in a profession rooted in logic and science. This fact intensifies the tension between the two leads because Jeannie's mysticism is considered oppositional within a Western paradigm. Astronauts are watched closely under medical eyes because if they should get sick in space the repercussions for the program could be disastrous. So, added to the tension of the science vs. mysticism model is Dr. Bellows (Hayden Rorke), a psychiatrist, embodying, as the Screen Gems executive put it, "the third point of the triangle." Tony often finds himself negotiating between the science and magic as he has seen the power of both. Dr. Bellows, the hawk eye that watches Tony, tells him that "clinically speaking" he is the "most interesting case" he has ever seen: "One minute you're calm, the next your hysterical. You can pass the most difficult tests the Air Force has devised and yet you hear voices. You're a top scientist and yet you suffer from delusions." Also, Tony must keep Jeannie a secret from his fiancé and her father, lest they think he is a pervert or adulterous. Furthermore, because he is a high-profile officer for the U.S. space program, hiding Jeannie is not only about protecting his relationships but a question of national security.

Although this tension is always there, the question of adultery is eliminated when Melissa is written out of the series.

Melissa and her father set things straight by moving up the wedding and extending the honeymoon. “And I don’t want to see that girl around here anymore,” Melissa cheerfully reprimands him on her way out. She kisses her pointer finger and then touches his lips with it as she and her father exit. Immediately afterward, Tony tries to make Jeannie leave for good, but instead, she intrigues him into an intense kiss on the lips. At first, Tony struggles to get away but then clearly decides to embrace and enjoy the encounter. Accordingly, Jeannie’s aggressive attire and actions make it clear that she is sexually foreign and excessive and an uncompromising threat to “proper girls” like Melissa whose embodiment of appropriateness is underscored not only by her conservative clothing and body language but by the fact that she is the general’s daughter.

In TV Arab, Jack Shaheen identifies three basic roles for Arabs on television – billionaire, bomber, and belly dancer. Later, in Reel Bad Arabs, he names five basic Arab types – villain, sheikh, maiden, Egyptian, and Palestinian. Amira Jarmakani has looked specifically at U.S. representations of Arab women. She asserts three roles as well – harem girl, belly dancer and veiled woman. Jeannie embodies all of these. She represents the veiled, oppressed Arab woman in the sense that she sees her man as her master and faithfully serves him. Also, in the culmination of the series, she further veils herself by assimilating to U.S. culture and performing as a NASA housewife. Prior to marriage,

living with Tony and openly desiring him reinforces the latter two stereotypical roles. She is commonly referred to as a harem girl in the dialogue on the show and in popular press criticisms. She speaks of her past experiences as a belly dancer with enthusiasm. Conversely, as a male genie, Fakrash does not easily occupy any of these categories. This further reiterates the different tropes of Orientalism and how exoticization is mapped onto Jeannie in part due to her gender.

Trying to explain to a fiancé and father-in-law why a beautiful woman from Arabia is walking around his house is nearly impossible for Tony. Certainly, balancing the two women was challenging for the creators of the show as well. In Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism Mari Yoshihara explores the very specific role white women have in Orientalizing women. She uses the example of Madame Butterfly, which posits the elegant American wife against Cho-Cho-San, Mr. Pinkerton's Japanese lover and mother of his "love-child." It is clear that Mrs. Pinkerton stands for upper-class U.S. nationalism, while Cho-Cho-San is an objectified temptress who threatens sanctity and security (Yoshihara 6). Orientalism depends on structuralist oppositions for definition, posing the West against the East, and relies on the belief that there are essential disparities between the two. In Orientalist texts, female characters often embody these differences.

In the pilot of I Dream of Jeannie, although both actresses are white and American, the characters are not, and the binary between white/American and other/non-American is readily apparent. When Melissa and Jeannie come face to face, Melissa

wears respectable attire while Jeannie does not. Jeannie is an uninvited (sexually available) houseguest while Melissa is a “proper” bride-to-be. The juxtaposition of the two suggests that Jeannie, although blond, is exotic, Other, sexually transgressive, and a threat to normalcy. Here, usually audience sympathy would side with Melissa, the general’s daughter, a character who personifies national loyalty. This presented a problem because the show needed audience allegiance to rest with Jeannie instead. It seems as though the pickle created between Melissa and Jeannie, with Tony running back and forth between them, had more to do with copying the plot from Brass Bottle than with conjuring up an ongoing dynamic for the TV screen. Apparently, the producers of Jeannie realized this after the pilot episode was shot but long before the show premiered because early on it was communicated in writing that Melissa and the General would be eliminated after three or four weeks.<sup>23</sup> Actually, they appear in only the first and fourth episodes.<sup>24</sup>

The producers felt that in order for the show to be a success, Jeannie needed to be well-liked by audiences. They took advantage of Melissa’s exit to boost Jeannie’s amicableness. NBC executive Thomas McAvity hoped that “[...] in time [Sheldon] will prove that Melissa is not the girl for Tony and that while Jeannie has a hand in proving this, she will not be malicious but merely feminine, which may, of course, be the same thing.”<sup>25</sup> “Not malicious” is seen as an inherent quality of femininity reiterating the essentialist gender norms in the eyes of the producers. A month earlier, Sheldon met with

another executive in which they decided that Jeannie would open Tony's eyes as to "what Melissa's really like."<sup>26</sup>

The episode that bids Melissa farewell, titled "Jeannie and the Marriage Caper" (9 Oct 1965) opens with Melissa's joy over the fact that her father has been named a diplomat and that she and Tony will go with him to Europe because Tony will be his attaché. Of course, Tony refuses because his top priority is the space program. Still, Melissa insists throughout the episode that he will change his mind and she will get her way. When he does not, she starts to control what she can. For example, she has Roger shipped off to "an important mission" in Australia, so that her childhood friend (and sweetheart) Grover Caulfield (John Hudson) must stand in as Tony's best man. She also modifies their honeymoon plans from Jamaica to Honolulu without consulting Tony, who finds out from Grover.

Although Jeannie often goes against Tony's will, in this episode she is represented as helpful and obedient while Melissa is controlling and defiant. At the outset of this episode the genie accepts that Tony is in love with "that dark-haired one" and resolves that she will please them both. "Oh no!" Tony asserts, "On a honeymoon two is company and three is ... out of the question." Here the threat moves from Jeannie breaking up a marriage to joining it (allowing the viewer to imagine a threesome) – from adultery to polygamy. Given that Jeannie is from the Middle East, it can be assumed that she is used to men having multiple wives. Perhaps she resolves to serve them both with the hopes of gaining second-wife stature.

Jeannie does not make her desires known straightforwardly as she assumes Melissa will not accept her. So she blinks into the body of an Asian “houseboy.” Where the man came from, viewers do not know. However, as he bows and speaks to Melissa, they recognize him as Jeannie because they hear Jeannie’s voice. When Melissa insists that “Jeannie Kato” accompany them to Europe Tony absolutely refuses. That Jeannie is simultaneously a woman and a man makes the trouble with her traveling (and sleeping) with Melissa and Tony all the more concentrated because she could potentially please them both sexually. This gender-bending “camp” dynamic offered by Jeannie popping into a man’s body is transgressive as she redefines what it means to be a “veiled woman” by masking herself in an Asian male body. It suggests that she is comfortable with masculine power and “the Oriental.”<sup>27</sup>

In the end, Jeannie fixes it so that Melissa and Grover realize they still love each other, and they run off together. Tony is not upset because he has come to realize that Jeannie is more to his liking – she fixes things for him before he even asks and would never change his plans without consulting him. As he realizes this, there is a moment between the two, and, for the first time, it seems, Tony is going to kiss Jeannie. They stare into each other’s faces longingly while romantic music swells in the background. However, the doorbell rings and interrupts them. It will take several seasons for that kiss to come to fruition.

## From Sexy to Sweet

With Melissa's character out of the picture, the creators realized that there was no longer reasons for Tony to hold himself back, no stop signs Jeannie had to pass in order to attract his attention. It did not take long for NBC executives then to realize that the exoticism mapped onto her character posed significant morality questions that they did not want to introduce to prime-time audiences. As a result, they made her character more "likeable." By middle-class norms this translated into less sexually assertive and more innocent, and eventually would mean more "American-like."

Intense discussion about the series – and specifically Jeannie's character – was constant even before the show hit the air. On March 5, 1969, Dave Kaufman reported an interview with Sidney Sheldon in which he talked about NBC's early resistance to Jeannie:

I think when they realized this after buying the property, they became nervous, and they would say 'have the guy looking away from her.' They sent me long memos, but after awhile the memos started getting shorter and shorter as they realized I wasn't trying to get away with anything and it was being done in good taste. I don't get those memos anymore. The climate five years ago was not as permissive as it is today." (Kaufman 14)

In his autobiography, written over forty years later, Sheldon recalls the panic that ensued shortly after the deal was closed. He writes, "The network had awakened to the fact that in those closely censored days, they had bought a show that was about a nubile, half-naked young woman, living alone with a bachelor, constantly asking, 'What can I do

for you, Master?’ They had panicked. The memo was eighteen pages long” (Sheldon 328).

Although it seems that initial memo has been lost, there are records that document this ongoing struggle about Jeannie’s character and the series.<sup>28</sup> In November 1964, an inter-office communication was sent to Sheldon from NBC’s management about broadcast standards that would need to be adhered to in the pilot episode, including:

- Page 2: Standard caution against any open-mouth kissing between Tony and Melissa.
- Page 34: Take care to keep Jeannie’s dance within the bounds of good taste.
- Page 39a: It will be unacceptable in scene #56 to see Jeannie’s smoke disappearing under Tony’s bedroom door.<sup>29</sup>

About three weeks later, Sheldon received another:

- Page 22: Here and throughout the script, please avoid any sexual inferences when Jeannie delivers such lines as ‘I can do much more for thee than she can,’ and walks over to him putting her arms around him.
- Page 23: Again, avoid the seductive and sexual innuendos when Jeannie says ‘And I am going to please thee very much,’ and moves toward Tony. It would be helpful here to have her mention some specific pleasure such as jewels or money.<sup>30</sup>

Clearly, the network was afraid of receiving moral criticism about sex and cohabitation sans nuptials. Just as producers bypassed strict codes of the early ’30s by employing white women to play Middle Eastern characters (see literature review),

Jeannie likewise attempted things considered otherwise unacceptable. Eden's role as the fiancé in Brass Bottle may explain why she was the only one auditioned for the role of Jeannie. Perhaps Sheldon associated her with the theme and called her directly for the part. Also in Bottle there is a female "Princess of the Djinn" genie named Tezra, played by Kamala Devi, who could have been cast as Jeannie. However, she "looked" Arab, (although originally from Bombay, India) because of her golden skin and dark brown hair and eyes.<sup>31</sup> That Eden was called and not Devi restates that exoticism was imported via an "ethnic" character while maintaining Eurocentric ideas of beauty.

Eden is a "white girl" from Arizona; however, Jeannie is from another place and an ancient time – that nebulous space known as "the Orient." This worked for the series, and critics noticed. The week that Jeannie premiered, television critic Hal Humphrey wrote a satirical piece that poked fun at Mr. Typical Viewer. He stated, "I Dream of Jeannie has the sexy Barbara Eden running around half-clothed and trying to lure an astronaut, but it's OK for our over-grown beer-drinking prototype viewer because Jeannie only looks real. She's really a spirit genie from an old Arabian bottle" (Humphrey C20).

Nevertheless, while Jeannie's Otherness may have allowed for some liberties, it did not guarantee ratings, and network officials were worried on both accounts. They kept reiterating that raciness would not be tolerated, and that appropriate norms needed to be enforced. In February 1965, Sheldon sent a memo summarizing a conference he had with Mort Werner, another executive at NBC, which outlined directions for the show:

- Make sure that Tony is kept as a dedicated, bright astronaut.

- Establish controls. Tony can control Jeannie by putting the cork on the bottle so that she cannot get out. We should find some other controls that he has over her.
- In one of the early scripts – perhaps the second one we eliminate the ‘Thees’ and ‘Thous.’ Tony wants her to speak like the girls of today.<sup>32</sup>

Intense debate between Sheldon and NBC and Screen Gems continued throughout the year. In a lengthy letter, Thomas McAvity, an NBC executive, suggested that Jeannie was a pest and that the audience did not have any reason to root for her. But they needed to, or else, as he put it, “we’re dead.” He argued that, in essence, the show was a triangle with Jeannie on one point, Tony on another, and “anyone,” he suggested, on the third, “as Melissa was in the pilot.” “The point is,” he explained, “since you can’t ever get these two creatures married or even into the same bed, you have to do something to create situations where we are rooting for her.” He was insistent that audience allegiance must rest with Jeannie because he felt it would make or break the series:

The most important thing is that we like Jeannie and root for her. In effect, she should be Tony’s keeper, his mother image, etc. The fact that Jeannie has other ideas, which can not ever be consummated, is too bad ... for Jeannie. Certainly Tony can’t go through life without seeking a real girl to love. ... But it will, in my opinion, be what Jeannie does to protect and steer Tony though [sic] his very public and sometimes private life, that will make the audience like her. And if they like her, the show will be a hit. And if they don’t, then no matter how funny the jokes are, the task becomes that much tougher.<sup>33</sup>

In a meeting in April, McAvity reiterated these sentiments, insisting that Jeannie be “cute and sympathetic.”<sup>34</sup> That network officials wanted to move away from

“seductive” toward “maternal,” from “jealous” to “cute,” suggests that Jeannie’s sexuality was deemed dangerous on several levels and needed to be controlled.

Sheldon responded to the initial accusation that Jeannie was a nuisance with, “We should both have such a pest in our lives!” He went on to list all of the good deeds in various episodes that Jeannie does for Tony, “which is what,” he suggested, “any woman in love would do.” Sheldon agreed with McAvity’s ideas that Tony’s career as an astronaut should be capitalized on and that Jeannie should make mistakes because “a genie who goofs is an amusing concept.”

Most significant were Sheldon’s suggestions about the “emotional relationship between Tony and Jeannie”:

I agree that there should be a very strong attraction on Tony’s part, and this will be expanded. Tony is laboring under the problem that no astronaut can have a girl genie and still remain in the space program, but in each script we will have a warm moment between the two of them, instead of Tony constantly telling her to get out. By doing this we can deepen the emotional content of the stories so that the audience is more strongly rooting for Tony and Jeannie to get together.<sup>35</sup>

As a result of this directive, Jeannie becomes less of an insistent sex object and more humanized. Tony’s morality was established from the beginning, so for him to assert a “warm moment” was not problematic. With Jeannie, on the other hand, it was made clear that she not only wanted to please her master, she desired him as well. In order for this emotional development to function, she had to be made more innocent, so her motivation with Tony shifted from sexual conquest to “forever after.” This is not to say that Orientalism was mapped off of her character. Rather, its representation shifted

from exoticization to infantilization. “The trope of infantilization [...] projects the colonized as embodying an earlier stage of individual human or broad cultural development” (Shohat and Stam 139). The colonized are represented as politically immature and in need of the more “adult” and “advanced” Western societies. The adult is conceived as powerless, with the mind of a child, and dependent on her master for his clarity of thought. Jeannie’s naiveté and acquiescence and Tony’s frequent insistence that she “be a good girl” reinforced this point.

In August (a month before the show premiered) Mort Werner expressed grave concern about the audience tests that showed that “the people who look at the pictures are not at all excited about the relationship between our boy and girl.” He wrote, “If that factor doesn’t improve and improve quickly, I think we have a problem.”<sup>36</sup> Network officials said that the special effects would be too expensive in color. So, although almost all shows converted to color in 1965, Jeannie remained in black and white. Sheldon offered to pay the difference out of his own pocket but was told to save his money. He then realized that I Dream of Jeannie was not expected to go into a second year (Sheldon 331). However, because entertainment is not a predictable industry, the network took a chance. Given that it had a major producer like Screen Gems, who had the financiers to take risks, it could afford to produce series in a variety of genres knowing that some would flop (Spigel and Curtin 4).

In order to please NBC and to try to implement success, the network directives were implemented into the scripts. The mandate that Jeannie should not enter Tony’s

bedroom was adhered to in the pilot episode. At the end of the episode, Tony shouts at Jeannie, demanding that she leave by the time he wakes up and then storms into his bedroom to retire for the evening. Jeannie, unperturbed by his demand, knows just how to “please him” and follows him to bed by turning into smoke and going under his door. However, Tony yells at her to get out, and her smoke immediately returns to the living room, showing that she will not be pleasing her master that way. But, the mischievous smile she gives the camera in the last shot of the show implies that he may have rejected her this time but she will persevere and eventually get her way.

However, as soon as Tony’s fiancé is out of the picture, Jeannie loses this playful naughtiness. Tony’s availability is all the more pronounced, and the threat of the ardent Arabian sleeping in the living room is all the more present. In order to downplay these dynamics in “G.I. Jeannie” (16 Oct. 1965), the episode immediately following Melissa’s departure, Tony attempts to enforce clearer, stricter boundaries with Jeannie. As he makes his way to leave for work the following exchange takes place:

**Jeannie:** Are you not going to kiss me goodbye?

**Tony:** Now, remember our bargain? This is purely a platonic relationship.

**Jeannie:** Yes, purely platonic.

**Tony:** And you agreed to keep it on that basis because you knew it was the best way right?

**Jeannie:** No, I agreed because I did not know what platonic meant.

**Tony:** It’s another name for friendship...

**Jeannie:** (*looking down, hesitantly*) Oh.

**Tony:** Pals, good buddies.

**Jeannie:** Then, uh, what about a friendly kiss? (*Jeannie puckers up and waits to be kissed with her eyes closed.*)

**Tony:** I don't suppose there's any harm in that. (*Tony gives Jeannie a quick kiss on the lips and begins to pull away but Jeannie puts her arms around his neck continuing the kiss. He struggles to get away momentarily, but then his body relaxes as he gives into her. Romantic background music plays adding to the moment. Tony opens his eyes and looks startled.*) You're the best buddy a buddy ever had. (*Tony leaves rapidly, somewhat disoriented and scared. Jeannie smiles and walks toward the living room contently.*)

Although Tony's boundaries seem like lip service because Jeannie manages to get a kiss against the better judgment of her master, this is actually one of the last physical encounters of this kind that the couple has until season four as they inch closer to marriage. It is the last time Jeannie aggressively advocates for a lover's response because with Melissa gone, she cools down sexually. Her desire for Tony becomes less physically assertive, especially when she touches him. Long kisses on the lips cease. After episode five, even pecks on the lips become rarer. Mostly, Jeannie wraps her arms around Tony's neck, hugging him and hopping up and down as a little girl jumps for joy. Also, a central precept – the indication of a wish granted – is altered from fluttering eyelashes to a determined, bouncy nod and single blink, representative of her sultry eroticism being replaced by a childlike peppiness. A more resolute sound effect accompanied the head-bounce of the wish-grant as well. Altering this main staple gave the program a more lighthearted ambiance. This shift is further pronounced in the second season with a more upbeat theme song and an animated opening.

Attempts to reiterate their platonic relationship continued. Most of the thirty episodes in the first season start with some variation of the following scenario: Tony gets ready for work and walks out to the living room to open Jeannie's bottle; she emerges and perkily says, "Good morning, Master." Tony wishes her a good morning and makes lighthearted conversation. This short opening became ritualized as the producers hoped that through repetition, viewers would understand that even though the couple lived together, there was no "funny business" going on.

In "Is There an Extra Genie in the House?" (15 Jan. 1966) Roger stumbles into his kitchen in the middle of the night to find Jeannie's bottle there. He rubs it, and Tony comes out. There is a moment of nervousness as Roger probes what Tony is doing in Jeannie's bottle at 3 a.m. However, Tony clarifies immediately that nothing is going on. "I sent Jeannie home," he explains, and then they move on. This explanation reinforces the "ellipticalness" of the show and television in general, and reveals how writers would account for large gaps of time with a line or two of dialogue. In the case of Jeannie, dialogue was used to purify the relationship between Tony and Jeannie, both when the camera was and was not watching. They hoped viewers would understand that the genie may have had the body of exotic harem dancer but really had the mind of an innocent girl.

#### From the Middle East to America

Jeannie enthusiastically attempts to "pass" as what she calls "an American woman." Although in later years of the show she is successful, in the first season her

outsider status functions as a wall that blocks her from achieving this goal. This is obvious in many episodes, and I will name a few here. In the eighth episode, “The Americanization of Jeannie” (6 Nov. 1965), Jeannie attempts to emanate American femininity but fails miserably. She reads a magazine article called “How to be a Modern Woman” that outlines the “emancipation of the American woman.”<sup>37</sup> Jeannie initiates the prescribed “American” female behavior – skipping chores and ordering very expensive clothing with a credit card – in an attempt to become a modern American woman, believing this will please her master. However, Major Nelson is far from pleased and, in fact, describes the magazine as “subversive literature.” He wants her to stay home and take care of his house and explains that she does not need to worry about him taking advantage of her because she is not like other women – she can do everything in the blink of an eye.

When Tony is ready for dinner Jeannie refuses to blink so that he has to take her out. Once there she tries to follow the article’s advice by insisting on ordering the opposite of what Tony suggests. When the entertainment starts – a belly-dance show – Jeannie bumps up against the limits of her desire to act like an American woman who is composed and in control. First of all, she becomes nostalgic for the days when she used to “dance for the sultan.” Then she notices that Tony is enticed by the performance and she begins to insult the dancer, suggesting that she is not fit to perform for an audience of “camel drivers.” Finally, she interrupts the show by trying to “show her how it is done” and gets thrown out of the restaurant. This plot is reminiscent of a typical scene in I Love

Lucy in which Lucy would try to upstage Ricky or one of his dancers, which suggests that “female jealousy” transcends national differences. However, Jeannie’s unique past with camels, sultans and erotic dances sets her off as irrevocably from somewhere else and as not American.

Douglas suggests the advice from the magazine about female emancipation is represented negatively because it “undermines the woman’s femininity, makes her appear ridiculous, and alienates the man’s affections. The advice, of course, is a parody of feminism, for it urges women to be deliberately unattractive and completely self-indulgent, and to make men do the housework while women do nothing at all” (Douglas 178). The text demonstrates that Jeannie is too sweet to be an American feminist for as much as she tries to boss Tony around, really, she prefers to please him. This invokes the Orientalist imagining of the veiled woman who knows her place. Given the time, this fantasy would comfort many because of their uneasiness with the developing women’s movements.

In “Get Me to Mecca On Time” (8 Jan. 1966), Jeannie begins to disappear, starting with her feet. The only way to save her is by going to Mecca and “facing the Minaret of the Rising Sun.” This ritual obviously plays on Islamic traditions, as Mecca is the center of the obligatory pilgrimage *hajj* and a focal point for all Muslims. Daily prayer requires Muslims to face the Ka’ba, the holiest structure in Mecca. Thus, although many viewers consider Jeannie “American,” time and again the texts in the first season reiterate that she is not.

In “Never Try to Outsmart a Genie” (29 Jan. 1966), Jeannie attempts to get a passport so that she can accompany Tony out of the country legitimately like “an American woman.” Tony tells her not to be ridiculous – that it is impossible, because he says, she would “never get away with it.” Insistent, she goes to the immigration office and tells the man at the counter that her birthplace is Babylon and that her father’s name is “Mustafa, The Camel Driver.” When the worker asks for his last name, Jeannie explains that he did not need one because everyone knew him as “the camel driver.” Although these details function as comic relief in the text, Jeannie comes up against the roadblock that many immigrants encounter – her own life story. She cannot be traced on paper nor explain her entry into the U.S.: she is an “illegal alien” without papers.

Camels, the stereotypical mascot of Arabia, are frequently mentioned in the context of Jeannie’s culture and used as a signifier of her Otherness. Orientalism imagines that “the Orient” consists of a golden desert where no streets or cars exist, only camels. Certainly, “camel jockey” is a derogatory term used to describe Arabs and Arab Americans. However, many Arab Americans have affection for the animal and collect camel statuettes or even have camel tattoos on their bodies because they see the animal as a link to their homeland.<sup>38</sup> This link is reinforced in Jeannie. Jeannie’s father “the camel driver,” reiterates this connection. Later, in “Guess What Happened on the Way to the Moon?” (2 Oct. 1965), Jeannie saves Tony by blinking up a camel to ride him to safety. She claims, “It’s the only way to travel.”

Likewise, Jeannie's relationship to her parents is particularly revealing. In the second episode, "My Hero?" (25 Sept. 1965), Jeannie takes Tony "back home" to Baghdad (in "ancient Persia") to the marketplace where a towering, seven-foot-tall man (played by Richard Kiel) has threatened Jeannie two thousand years earlier. Tony has no choice but to fight him; knowing that Jeannie is behind him, he does not foresee a problem. However, excitement overwhelms Jeannie when she sees Tony defending her honor – because in her country that is a proposal for marriage – and she goes immediately to tell her parents.

Tony is left to fend for himself and finds himself at a slave auction where women are being sold for shekels. He too finds himself being sold in spite of his threats that "this could mean war with the United States of America." He quickly realizes his powerlessness when the auctioneer asks, "What is this United States of America?" The use of "shekels," the currency in Israel, reinforces the blurring of cultures and the notion that Jeannie is from "somewhere over there." Not to mention that they communicate in English despite the fact that they are in a country that does not use English and that they are in a time before even Old English was in existence. Shohat and Stam call this "ventriloquizing the world" whereby Hollywood "proposed to tell not only its own stories but also those of other nations [...] always in English" (191). Also, that women are being sold into bondage conjures Mohanty's point that all Arab and Muslim women seem to constitute a homogeneous oppressed group (61-62).

Jeannie introduces Tony to her father and mother – “Papa” and “Mama.” They are dressed in stereotypical Middle Eastern costumes, and are delighted to know their future son-in-law as “Nelson, Flyer Through the Moons of Space.” Jeannie’s reaction to immediately involve her family suggests that her character is very much identified with “life back home” and her familial ties. Her parents are ready to make wedding plans immediately. Her father confides in Tony how difficult it has been since “the tragedy” – when the Blue Djinn turned Jeannie into a genie because she refused to marry him. It is clear that the family is very close. However, her father never reappears in the series. The episode concludes with Tony and Jeannie returning to Cocoa Beach – unmarried because Tony refuses her – which implies that everything is back to “normal.” Masculine dominance reiterates that Tony’s place is “home” and that his, not Jeannie’s, surroundings are “normal.”

In “Djinn and Water” (20 Nov. 1965), Jeannie blinks her great-grandfather Bilejik (J. Carrol Naish) into Tony’s living room. Although she calls him the “black sheep” of the family and admits that he “spent most of his time in jail” she believes that he can tell Tony the secret to turning salt water into fresh water. Bilejik wears a patch over his eye, and when he is not speaking, he is stealing Tony’s belongings and hiding them in his robe. When Bilejik refuses to cooperate, Jeannie threatens to tell her great-grandmother about the affair he has been having with another woman that Jeannie has known about for years. The characterization relies on stereotypical representations of Arabs as immoral, thieves, and womanizers.

Not another one of Jeannie's male family members is seen until the fifth season when her uncles visit – they speak with British accents and wear suits. Early on, producers planned to bring many of Jeannie's relatives on. However, her distancing from the homeland seemed to manifest itself in her losing contact with the men in her family. It may have been easier for Screen Gems to avoid having to represent Arab men – something that becomes increasingly complicated after 1967.

Jeannie's character begins to assimilate in the U.S. society. The history of assimilation in the U.S. has been documented by numerous historians. Dominant notions of assimilation have represented assimilation as something to strive for by the communities and individuals who immigrate into this country. Theodore Roosevelt summarized U.S. assimilation when he addressed the American Defense Society in 1919:

In the first place we should insist that if the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else, for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, or birthplace, or origin. But this is predicated upon the man's becoming in very fact an American, and nothing but an American...There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American, but something else also, isn't an American at all. We have room for but one flag, the American flag, and this excludes the red flag, which symbolizes all wars against liberty and civilization, just as much as it excludes any foreign flag of a nation to which we are hostile...We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language...and we have room for but one sole loyalty and that is a loyalty to the American people.

Jeannie, in an attempt to prove her loyalty “to the American people” begins to renounce her former relations. This is particularly poignant with Jeannie's relationship to her mother. In “What House Across the Street?” (18 Dec. 1965), mother (Lurene Tuttle)

and daughter devise a plan to arouse Tony's emotions by having Jeannie get engaged to Roger in the hope that it will spur Tony to propose. Roger, upon meeting Jeannie, dressed as an ordinary woman, falls madly in love with her and proposes marriage. Jeannie accepts and invites him over to her house to meet her parents. However, this poses two significant problems: First of all, she lives at Tony's house. Roger and Jeannie have been meeting in front of the library so he does not know that she is a genie or that she lives with Tony. Secondly, although Jeannie says she would be proud to introduce her mother to Roger, her mother refuses. She asserts, "He cannot meet us – we are peasants from the old country." Her mother fears that if Roger meets her it will expose that Jeannie's true identity.

In order to solve the problem, Jeannie not only blinks up a house across the street from Tony's but also manifests faux parents named "Mummy" and "Daddy." Jeannie explains that they are "like the ones on television." Her new parents sing jingles for every product that is mentioned in conversation as if they literally walked off a commercial set. Meanwhile Jeannie's real mother poses as a maid and serves them tea. Her new mother is glorified for her synthetic perfection while her blood relation is demoted to the status of a servant. She does this with the goal of a wedding in mind. Marriage for Jeannie, who is an immigrant and basically a glorified maid, would provide: the coveted U.S. passport she failed to acquire on her own and the ability to move about "legitimately"; economic security; and the cultural capital of being legally tied to an astronaut. Furthermore, she would move up the ladder from housekeeper to housewife – two positions with great

differences in terms of economic and cultural status. This solution indicates the direction that Jeannie's character is moving in – away from her origins and blood relations toward assimilation into the U.S. society and economic and power-dependence on a man.

Another example of this is seen in “This is Murder” (9 Apr. 1966), when Princess Tarji, daughter of the Sultan of “Packawick,” takes her first trip to America. Tony has been chosen to accompany her around Cocoa Beach, and Dr. Bellows stresses that he had better do a good job because the United States is interested in having a satellite-tracking station in her country. Jeannie offers to help entertain her until she realizes her past with the princess. “I have taken an oath to kill her,” Jeannie asserts, because 3,000 years ago “her ancestor cheated my ancestor out of his business and stole his camels and wives.” After pondering which murder weapon to use – blinking up a gun, poison, and a knife and noose – she decides on “a death of 1,000 knives.”

Obviously, Tony cannot allow Jeannie to kill the princess so he devises a plan to keep Jeannie busy for three days by having her make him a ski slope in Bermuda, a yacht in the Kobi Desert, and a pineapple plantation in Alaska. However, she manages to do all three in one day. Upon her return, she is livid to find the princess in Tony's living room, and she expresses rage that while she is out working to please him, he is at home with another woman. Typically the wife works “inside” the home while the man is “out” with another woman. Here, Jeannie is the worldly one, but still the object of exploitation. This certainly plays on the tensions between “feminists” and “traditionalists.” Lynn Spigel's claim that the series “pokes fun” at patriarchy is illustrated with Jeannie's outrage at

Tony's male privilege and power. Her reaction is absurd given that her own power is so great that she is causing natural disasters such as a snow storm in Bermuda and a flood in the desert.

In the end, Jeannie restores harmony by playing on the "sisterhood is powerful" paradigm, realizing that she and the princess have more in common than just, as Tony says, "the Middle East." In fact, they share a mutual affection for Tony, and Jeannie takes advantage of that to ensure that the U.S. will have the satellite station in Princess Tarji's country. This episode is unique, like many in the first year, because it directly links Jeannie to her familial ties in her homeland. In the beginning, Jeannie declares loyalty to the bonds of her former nation, going against the laws of the U.S. and the wishes of her master. Ultimately, though, she serves her master's expansionist cause by ensuring a new territory for NASA. In the end her loyalty shifts to support her master, which represents the overall schema of the series and foreshadows the years to come.

## CHAPTER 3

### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, MASTER

Chapter three summarizes significant shifts in the show's representation of Jeannie's character and relations and documents the marketing scheme behind the show. It explores the introduction of Jeannie's twin sister and her role in emphasizing Jeannie's innocence. It also outlines how the series becomes increasingly invested in the cultural trends of the 1960s.

In September 1966, the cover of TV Guide featured Eden, dressed as Jeannie, smiling in a cloud of smoke. The inside story reported, "As the platitude goes, 'Where there's smoke, there's fire.' On television, there's also liable to be Barbara Eden emerging from the billowing smoke as the blithe spirit of I Dream of Jeannie. Providing a new gimmick, in an already gimmick-laden TV season, Miss Eden now comes equipped with a smoke screen in living color to match her genie moods" ("Watch Jeannie's Smoke" 7). The article went on to explain how the effects worked, letting readers in on Jeannie's magic. The media's emphasis on de-mystifying Jeannie's magic highlights scientific techniques that made the magical fantasy possible, pointing to the Western notion that magic is not necessary because technique can do it all.

A few months earlier, in a SHOWTIME article titled "Durable Bottled Product – the Appealing Genie, Known as 'Jeannie,'" Edgar Penton advised readers as to what to expect in Jeannie's second season, describing the smoke as "a new kind of 'puff.'" He

illuminated the process: “The effect was created by Screen Gems special effects man, Dick Albain, who says his ‘puffs’ require 1,500 parts of carbon dioxide, 10,000 watts of colored lights and a few revisions in the ‘Jeannie’ production budget.” Aside from letting readers in on Jeannie’s gimmicks, the article also suggested that Tony’s bachelor life was interrupted by a jealous genie who smolders at the most inopportune times. He gave a word of advice to “the millions of men who dream about having a beautiful blonde genie who would pop out of a bottle at their beck and call. [...] In the words of Sidney Sheldon, [the] moral is: ‘Be careful what you dream about. You might get it’” (Penton).

While viewers may have been dreaming about their own genie, NBC dreamt of scoring high in the ratings. Lynn Spigel asserts, “Kennedy’s promise to land on the moon before the end of the decade became television’s promise as well. The space race gave television something to shoot for. It presented a whole new repertoire of images and created a whole new reason for looking at the living room console” (212). Thus, with regard to Jeannie, NBC planned to focus on “capitalizing on the NASA background” by preparing Tony for a moon shot and sending capsules into space because, as an NBC executive speculated, “The public is very interested in space adventures.”<sup>39</sup> In the second season, Sheldon hoped to use even more “Air Force and NASA footage in the show to give it an air of verisimilitude, and a feeling of being current.”<sup>40</sup> Upon viewing the season opener “Happy Anniversary” (12 Sept. 1966), “Edwa.,” in Daily Variety, picked up on this directive. The critic opined, “Addition of color made all the difference in the world – whoever saw an Arabian Nights story in black-and-white?” He argued:

Use of tinted film also gave NBC a chance to re-showoff its technique of live coverage of real space launchings by employing clips from previous actual flights. Because of the series' debut coming coincidentally on [the] day of [the] Gemini II launching, which was, of course, completely documented by the network, the fictional launching might have seemed more than somewhat incredible, but viewers could easily turn on their 'suspension of disbelief' and enjoy the story." ("Edwa." 14)

The episode opens with Jeannie coming out of her bottle first thing in the morning, reminding viewers that in this new season Tony and Jeannie are still separated while sleeping. Jeannie cannot believe her master is up so early, and he apologizes for waking her. He explains that he is up at 4 a.m. because he is going into space. Jeannie, hurt that he has forgotten that it has been one year to the day since he rescued her, asks if the day has no other significance. "Well, I'd say that's quite a bit. Unless the Russians have something up their sleeve, I'm the only man in the world who's going in to orbit today," he explains. This commentary reveals the societal influence on the text – in public discourse, the race to the moon was linked to the Red Scare and perceived as a democratic approach to combating communism. Furthermore, Tony's forgetting the day's significance to Jeannie represents his "maleness" as he is too caught up with work to consider such minute details. This also reinforces Tony's outlook that their relationship is strictly platonic even if Jeannie wants to put more on to it.

Still, even though he has forgotten, Jeannie thinks it would be "most romantic" if they went back to the desert island where they met to reenact the rescue. Tony, however, has no time for such drama. He promises that when he gets back from orbit he will take

her to dinner and the theater instead. Jeannie probes, “What’s more important? Going on some silly ride or celebrating our anniversary?” Jeannie’s word choice – “some silly ride” – infantilizes her by revealing that she does not acknowledge the significance of going into space. At the same time, however, it exposes her power: while Tony and the boys at NASA spend countless hours preparing for a space expedition, Jeannie can blink there straight away.

“You be a good girl. Amuse yourself around the house, and when I come back I will phone you,” he tells her. A few hours later he successfully leaves the launch pad. Real footage from NASA stock showing an astronaut getting into a capsule, the staff and monitors in the control room, and the launching of the rocket is interspersed with Jeannie actors and sets. This adds to the verisimilitude of the text and falls in line with Sheldon’s promise to make NASA portrayals in the series as “authentic” as possible. However, Jeannie, determined to get her way, throws his capsule off course and forces it to land on “their” island. Tony, outraged, rubs a bottle that he believes Jeannie is in but instead releases the Blue Djinn (Michael Ansara), who punished Jeannie 2,000 years prior by turning her into a genie and imprisoning her in a bottle when she refused his hand in marriage. As if that were not enough, he has taken an oath to kill instead of serve his new master due to resentment built up over the centuries that he has spent in a bottle.

Tony and Jeannie are in for trouble because her power is no match for the Blue Djinn’s, the most powerful of all genies. Jeannie manages to blink Tony and herself back into Tony’s living room. It seems they have escaped until the Djinn pops in too. Tony,

who believes he is smarter than genies, hides the remote control behind his back and begins to change the television stations and begins this exchange:

**Tony:** I have more magic in my little finger than you have in your whole body.

**Blue Djinn:** Thou has no magic.

**Tony:** Oh yeah? I can command a whole army out of thin air. (*Footage of army men shooting and a tank driving is shown on the television. Tony changes the channel and flood footage is shown. Blue Djinn stares at the screen mesmerized and fearful.*) How would you like me to throw you into a raging flood, huh?

**Blue Djinn:** I've never seen such magic. You are a greater magician than I. (*Tony changes the channel to show a raging fire, and then a plane dropping bombs. Blue Djinn falls to his knees.*) Please, master, I didn't mean any harm.

Tony makes the genie promise to leave Jeannie alone forever. But just as he is about to leave, Roger comes in, grabs the remote, and turns off the TV. Then he turns to the genie and says of Tony, "Half the world is looking for him, and he's watching television." When Roger finds out that the TV has rattled Blue Djinn he explains, "That's television. That's just pictures; that's not real." Thus, he subtly reinforces the scientific notion that magic does not exist and everything has an explanation while simultaneously recharging Blue Djinn's anger and confidence. This dialogue also reinforces Spigel's point that the magic sitcom made it a point to make fun of its own form.

Eventually Tony tricks the evil genie into the vacuum cleaner, and Jeannie disappears to put him in the middle of the ocean. Tony, too anxious to wait for her return, decides that he has no choice but to explain to his superior officers what has happened. He marches into Bellows's office, and the Dr. is shocked to see him. As usual, he immediately tells Tony to stay put, puts a guard at the door and goes to get General

Peterson. Tony practices his explanation repeating, “You see I have this little genie . . .” With that, Jeannie “pops into” Dr. Bellows’s chair with her feet up on the table, clearly proud of her work. Tony asks her to undo what she has done so that the Blue Djinn can put Tony in a raging volcano. Jeannie does not understand. Tony has to explain, yet again, that genies and NASA do not mix, and that when Peterson walks through the door he will be out of a job. Luckily, in the nick of time, she “pops out” of the room with Tony. Tony’s capsule is then found back on track, and the NASA staff explains away the problem as a malfunction of the monitor. The Blue Djinn never appears nor is mentioned in any subsequent episodes.

In the aforementioned SHOWBIX article, Sheldon explained what he saw as the heart of Jeannie. “It is in some ways symbolic of the relationship between masterful man and his supposedly servile woman that exists in real life. They may both claim that he’s the boss, but in practice it doesn’t work that way.” The season opener, in which Jeannie ultimately controls Tony’s capsule and, as such, NASA’s success, supports Sheldon’s assertion. This is oppositional to the dominant notion that women serve and speaks to the contradicting messages in the text.

#### Djinni Dresses and Gender Bending

At the end of the aforementioned episode, Tony returns from orbit and is going to take Jeannie out to dinner as he promised. He is dressed in his white tuxedo jacket with black pants while Jeannie wears a black sequined flowing gown. “Do you like my new

dress?” she asks. Tony’s mesmerized stare confirms that he does. She continues, basking in his gaze, “I could not decide whether to wear this one or this one.” She blinks and is wearing a glamorous white dress.<sup>41</sup> As the episodes continue, Jeannie has multitudinous wardrobe changes while Tony wears basically four outfits: a blue U.S. Air Force uniform, an orange space jumper, a blue bathrobe with blue pajamas, and this white tuxedo. The producers seemed to have no intention of marketing men’s clothing.

They were, however, attempting to launch a woman’s line, which makes this last scene particularly interesting because of the behind-the-scenes economical motivations. Sheldon did everything in his power to make certain Jeannie would receive good ratings. Ensuring its export was one aspect of building a fan base, and, by January 1966, just four months after the show premiered, it was showing in 18 other countries or territories outside the United States.<sup>42</sup> There was also a great effort put forth on the merchandising front. Nearly a year before the show premiered, Sheldon met with Ed Justin from the promotions department at Columbia Pictures, about marketing the series. Justin’s business savvy clearly affected the show (he liked to refer to himself in print as “Hone\$ Ed”). In a memo to Sheldon dated November 2, 1964, Justin wrote:

During a moment of insomnia last night, it occurred to me that it would be great if you could work out a trick shot showing our heroine inside of a fancifully shaped bottle. I hope to be able to license a toy which will be a doll inside a curiously shaped bottle. I hope that it (the doll) will turn when the cork is pulled (or some such).<sup>43</sup>

This suggestion would have a great effect on the show, as scenes that showed Jeannie inside her bottle started as early as the second episode and continued for the entire five years. Many viewers of Jeannie reminisce fondly about seeing the main character in her own space, suggesting that when they saw her inside her bottle they wished they could have their own.

In late February of 1966, five months after the show premiered, Sheldon received the good news that Jeannie had been picked up for another season. The next month, Justin alerted Sheldon to the licensees he had secured for the series, including, but not limited to, a board game, comic books, and a paperback novel.<sup>44</sup> The 18-inch Jeannie doll that Justin had foreseen would make its appearance on screen (sans the “curiously shaped bottle”) in the second season’s “My Master, the Author” (26 Dec. 1966) when Jeannie pops the doll into Tony’s hand in order to aid him in a sticky babysitting situation.

Sheldon worked with Justin to find a designer for the show and a line of ladies’ dresses to sell in department stores. Bewitched had a brand of ladies’ clothing called “Samantha” (named after the female lead played by Elizabeth Montgomery), and they wanted the same for Jeannie. However, there were several challenges before them. First, many potential companies stated that Jeannie wore only her “harem costume” and thus had no need for designs. According to a memo Justin sent Sheldon in February 1965, they asked, “How do we know what she will want to wear?”<sup>45</sup> Indeed, in the first episodes she rarely wore anything else.

In response, Sheldon assured him that Jeannie would wear her harem costume only when with Tony. He wrote, “At all other times – and that will be the majority of the time – I want her dressed in beautiful, modern clothes. I hope that this will clarify the situation for the dress people you are dealing with.”<sup>46</sup> Clearly, it did not. A year later, a manufacturer still had not been found, and Sheldon sent another memo that emphasized that in the second season, Jeannie would be wearing “modern and very beautiful clothes of all types.”<sup>47</sup> He also asserted that he could “guarantee three wardrobe changes for [the] show in every sequence during [the] coming season.”<sup>48</sup>

Finding a name for the line was a case in point. While Sheldon suggested “Arabian Nighties,” “Astro Naughtyies,” and “Nauty Nites” as potential names for a line of sleepwear, for the dress line some of the names he proposed were “Djinn Dandies,” “Shah Girls,” and “Pasha-Net.” In response Justin wrote, “Here we have a problem: We need a manufacturer who makes good dresses [original underlining]. Such a guy probably would be reluctant to use [such] names.” He thought “Djinn Janes” and “Star Dream” might be fine if Jeannie could use those words “to describe the beautiful things” she was about to wear, though he suggested “Janes” might not be appropriate for the type of dress label they wanted for the show. His favorite was “Star Dream” – especially if, he suggested, “you can make it sound Arabian or Persian.”<sup>49</sup> However, Sheldon was not crazy about any of them and wanted to keep brainstorming possible names.<sup>50</sup>

As it turned out, not any of the potential buyers liked them either. What middle-class housewife would want to wear an “Arabian nighty” or “astro naughtyies”? Justin’s

suggestion that her dresses “sound Arabian or Persian” affirms Jeannie’s Otherness – an assertion that would prove problematic when it came to marketing her clothing as evidenced by the fact that Justin screened Jeannie more times than any other subject he had ever licensed but had no sale. Those interested wanted to call the line “Jeannie,” a name that immediately referenced the character and was “accessible” to the target audience. However, Blue Bell, Inc. who already had a line called “Jeanie” (with one “n”), threatened to “take extreme action” to protect their exclusive rights.<sup>51</sup> This proved very problematic. Even though there were four or five times that a contract came very close, Justin kept running into what he called the “same damned snag” – the manufacturers wanted to use “Jeannie” but it could not be cleared with Blue Bell, Inc.<sup>52</sup>

Clearly dissatisfied with the situation, Hone\$t Ed communicated to Sheldon:

It is unbelievably frustrating to be in a situation in which we have a good show, one that I believe in, one that has good merchandising potential and yet, one which has been schlepping along with no meaningful impact in the merchandising area. We have advertised, we have mailed, we have phoned, we have called in person. We have done everything, but point guns at the heads of potential licensees (and even a little of that). Sid, I want you to know that we shall continue trying, as hard as ever, even harder. I am hopeful that the switch to color will create some new, additional excitement. Then if the MONKEES come through, perhaps we can accomplish next season what I had certainly hoped to accomplish last season.<sup>53</sup>

“The Monkees [coming] through” refers to the plan to bring onto the show guest stars and to put Jeannie in hip, modern situations, which I will discuss further at the end of this chapter. More than difficulty with the name, Jeannie’s character was perhaps not white enough to successfully appeal to American women who would be buying the clothes.

Thus, the great push to make Jeannie more “likeable” was also about constructing her, and a potential brand of her clothing, as more marketable and mainstream.

Another problem Sheldon and Justin came up against was that NBC would not allow the designer to have his or her name in the closing credits. They thought they could compensate for this by writing dialogue into the text, and in many episodes this technique is found. The attempt to ensure garment interest is seen in many episodes. “Jeannie Breaks the Bank” (19 Dec. 1966) is a rich example because of the creative way in which Jeannie’s wardrobe is highlighted. The text also offers a doorway into transgressive gender representations in the text.

Tony wants to buy a sailboat, but Jeannie blinks one into his living room instead. While Roger enthusiastically asks if he can have it, Tony tells her to remove it and gently scolds, “The fun of having something like that is working for it.” This reflects Harold’s reaction to Fakrash who emphasized that one must earn his own money; he cannot counterfeit it. Also, this portrays Roger as greedy and Tony as a model U.S. citizen, having to enlighten not only his genie but also his best friend about how to do things ethically rather than capriciously. This falls in line with Marc’s analysis of the message of “magicoms”: “Though on the surface the Other seems capable of simplifying life with its magical powers, the heroic ‘normal’ persona knows that achievement is only truly worthwhile if it comes as the result of self-repression; he prefers to do it the hard way” (109). Also, this outlook supports the post-war ideal of going for the American Dream –

working hard in the suburbs for one's own – and middle-class notions of “following the rules.”

Jeannie, determined to shop for instead of blink up food, has gone overboard and spent almost a thousand dollars on groceries. Tony does not castigate her for this because he too wants her to cook the normal way. He states he will take a loan out at the bank to buy the boat. However, Jeannie is set against it because of what “the Bank of Pompeii” did to “Earless Abdul”: when he did not repay the loan they cut off his ears. From the U.S. democratic point of view, banks should be trusted even if in Jeannie's experience they did things backwards. Her reference to a city that is not located in the Middle East is a phenomenon that begins in the second and third seasons and continues throughout the series' run. This new trend, in which Jeannie mentions her experience with international friends such as Napoleon and Marco Polo, is used for comic purposes while also functioning to de-mystify her character as her past becomes more Euro-centric and not located solely in “Arabia.”

Dr. Bellows interrupts their bank discussion by suddenly walking into Tony's living room. Jeannie does not have time to disappear altogether so she turns into an old sailor named Pedro Sven (Torben Meyer). As seen in episode four when Jeannie pops into the body of the “houseboy,” when the sailor speaks it is with her voice. Bellows looks for an explanation but knows it is just another one of Nelson's mysterious musings. He ponders more to himself than to Tony, “It's just going to be another one of those weeks, isn't it, Major?”

Tony's living space is worthy of special recognition. That Tony embodies the ideal American male and Roger does not is reiterated by their respective living spaces. Tony owns his own home, while Roger rents an apartment. Marc points out that bourgeois gentility promoted by suburban domesticoms became "the 'normal' point of view from which the world was viewed on American TV." Anything that deviated from this, whether a rural farmhouse or city apartment, was increasingly depicted as "the habitat of emphatically exotic persons grouped in abnormal living arrangements" (Marc 64-65). Although Tony and Roger are both bachelors, Tony is a property owner and thus, a more responsible, "normal" man. It makes sense then that Jeannie lives with him. If she had lived in an apartment, the "indecent" of their living together outside of wedlock would have been more pronounced because, as Marc suggest, the apartment is viewed as a transient, unstable, working-class space in Sitcomland where middle-class mores are the norm. Despite the multitude of sets used in Jeannie, the viewer is always returned to Tony's living room, reinforcing Marc's notion that the suburban house is the solid foundation of the country.

Later in this episode, Jeannie blinks into Tony's office wearing a sailing outfit that consists of a blue-and-white-striped tee with a red collar and a blue skirt. Tony is impressed and says, "Hey, that's a nice outfit." This is part of the marketing strategy of drawing viewer attention to Jeannie's clothing. Jeannie, who always wants to please her master, takes the compliment to heart and without delay blinks him into the same clothing so that they are dressed identically. Most dress designers would not want the

show's male lead to wear their gowns, yet this scenario re-emphasizes to potential designers the possibilities of drawing audience attention their fashions.

Subsequently, Dr. Bellows comes in and sees that his bizarre major is also a cross-dresser. He leaves immediately to find General Peterson to report that Nelson has three million dollars in his savings account (that Jeannie put there) and is dressed in women's clothing. Before Bellows returns, Jeannie changes Nelson back into his uniform, justifying the change by explaining that Greek men wore skirts and Scottish men wore kilts. Order is restored when Jeannie blinks the three million dollars into Bellows's account instead. When the doctor realizes Tony "has done it again" he says to the general, "I can start the [psycho] analysis in the morning." Again, the triangle of tension involves Jeannie, Tony, and Bellows. In the end, magic wins over science, and doctor becomes patient.

Jeannie also gets Tony into gender trouble in "My Master, the Great Caruso" (5 Dec. 1966). Tony has to perform for a TV talent contest, and she blinks him both male and female operatic voices. She is thrilled while everyone else looks baffled. Clearly, Jeannie does not understand the intricacies of gender performance in the U.S. context. These encounters underline the ongoing theme of gender bending in the series, particularly in the second and third seasons when Jeannie poses as male characters.

Tony makes the mistake of wishing a man were going to the moon instead of the NASA monkey in the third season's opener "Fly Me to the Moon" (12 Sept. 1967). Thus, Jeannie blinks Sam the Space Chimp into a human male (Larry Storch). A critic,

describing the episode in Daily Variety, wrote, “The show has lost little of the piquancy that kept it in connection last season. Barbara Eden is charming and sexy in her harem costume, the latter a not inconsiderable factor among adult males who might otherwise be watching ‘Garrison.’ Larry Hagman is just right as the perplexed ‘master’ of the shapely genie.” Describing the monkey dilemma he wrote, “Always an excellent mugger, Storch found comedic catnip in the wild role (“Mor.”).

Most pertinent to this discussion is what happens when Jeannie momentarily changes out of her harem costume when Dr. Bellows walks in. Because Jeannie cannot get out of the room in time, she poses as a man with a dark mustache wearing sunglasses and a white robe. Her blonde ponytail protrudes from the back of her white head cloth. She holds a large water bottle and says “Inshallah”<sup>54</sup> to the doctor and then exits. When Bellows looks confused, Tony explains that he is a “new water boy.” He looks skeptical but does not say more. After he leaves, Jeannie blinks back into the room, completely pleased with her disguise. “Was that not brilliant, Master?” she asks. Tony plays along, saying that Bellows probably thought she was “one of the regular, run-of-the-mill NASA Arabs.” The joke is funny because there were no Arabs, except for Jeannie, at NASA.

Television historian Lynn Spigel points out, “Jeannie and Bewitched revolved around super-powerful women who tried to efface their potential in return for the ‘rewards’ of family life” (224). However, their transition from career to housewife – from supernatural powers to electronic appliances – was not an easy one. As a result they “became super-feminine.”

Jeannie referred to Tony as Master and scampered around the house in pink harem girl garb, while Samantha took the more conservative route of mini-skirts and aprons. In either case, they were perfect examples of Joan Rivière's seminal 1929 study 'Womanliness as a Masquerade,' which showed how successful female professionals felt compelled to adopt a heightened veneer of femininity as a strategy for coping with their 'transgression' of normative gender roles. By posing as super-feminine types, these women were able to minimize anxiety about the negative reactions they anticipated from male associates. In the 1960s television version, powerful female characters were shown to threaten gender expectations of the patriarchal world; their masquerade as ideal housewives might well have alleviated audience tensions about the changing role of women at the time. (Spigel 224)

Within this framework, when Jeannie becomes male, it temporarily alleviates her feminine excess and momentarily challenges audience tension. As Spigel asserts, "Although this basic situation was less than revolutionary, it did provide a premise for a more subversive kind of comedy that poked fun at social expectations about gender roles" (224).

Jeannie's decision to occupy male bodies is significant. Had she "popped" into female characters in these two situations (in Tony's living room and at NASA) it may have been harder for Nelson to come up with an explanation for Bellows, especially given how few women worked at the Space Center. It is also believable that given how jealous and territorial Jeannie's character gets with other women, she would not want to

take the risk that Tony might be more drawn to her inside another woman's body. Motives aside, this functions as a provoking critique of gender norms and power dynamics.

### Fantastically Normal

Jeannie is not a static character – even while she reinforces gender roles she challenges them. In “My Master, the Author” (26 Dec. 1966), Tony and Jeannie see a mother yelling at her child so she momentarily turns her into a goose as a punishment. Later Jeannie declares, “I know everything there is to know about children. Some day I am going to write a book about it.” Why Jeannie knows everything about children is never addressed; it is assumed she would know because she is a woman. When Tony asks how long it would take her to write the manuscript she replies three or four weeks. Nelson, who is busy preparing for a lunar-landing project, wants Jeannie to keep busy and out of his hair, so he encourages her to get to work on it right away.

Jeannie surfaces from her bottle three weeks later and shows Tony her manuscript, “How to Be a Fantastic Parent.” He suggests “mother” instead of “parent” and Jeannie willingly changes the title. She knows that she cannot publish under her own name, because she has finally learned that something like that might endanger Tony's job at NASA. Tony explains to her she can make up a penname and use any name she would like. When she hears this she blinks, and suddenly the title page of the manuscript reads: “How to Be a Fantastic Mother by Major Anthony Nelson.”

Jeannie mails the manuscript to a publishing company in New York, which wastes no time publishing it, and the book is an immediate success. Tony, aside from breaking the NASA rule that every astronaut must have anything he authors be cleared first, becomes known as “Mother Nelson.” Both Bellows and Peterson bring over a “problem child” from their respective families for him to look after as a way of making him prove that he wrote the book. Tony goes back and forth between the children, who are in separate rooms in his house, but fails to calm down Dr. Bellows’s nephew, Richard (Butch Patrick), a rebellious troublemaker, or to bring General Peterson’s granddaughter (Kimberly Peck) out of her shyness.

The producers used this plot as an opportunity to bring the Jeannie doll, which was retailing in stores for \$5.98, into the text.<sup>55</sup> Jeannie manifests the doll for Tony in the hopes that it will bring the girl out of her shell. However, not even the doll can get her to speak. Luckily, at the last minute, Jeannie introduces the two, and the boy suddenly transforms into a kind gentleman and the girl into a peppy young lady. Jeannie tells Tony his mistake was not reading the last chapter about boys and girls. Apparently, it explained how heterosexual love could save young people from social anxieties.

This text drew from two phenomena of the time: Dennis and Dr. Spock. Richard was an obvious imitation of the well-known Dennis (Jay North) featured on the CBS hit Dennis the Menace that ran from 1959 to 1963. Henry Jenkins posits Dennis as “the all-American handful” of the 1950s and 1960s, a period of transition in the history of the American family as many young couples moved to the suburbs and began raising

children without extended family for the first time. Given that information from traditional sources of childrearing was becoming scarce (such as advice from mothers and grandmothers), women became more dependent on written guides. Benjamin Spock's Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care became an overnight success with many mothers referring to it as "the Bible" and paperback sales reaching one million within the first three years. Against this backdrop in which millions of parents were dialoging about "permissive" children, Jenkins contends, "Dennis embodied a particular conception of American nationhood based on exploration and democracy, and he became a spokesman for America's space mission and for the new focus on science education" (133).

Thus, in this episode, Jeannie attempts to turn Tony into a quasi-Dr. Spock by writing a childrearing manual and attributing it to him. However, Tony fails miserably at applying her theories, so she blinks and instantaneously deactivates even America's biggest troublemaker. Of course, she is pleased that her master gets credit for the transformation. Still, the text reveals that her power is too great to be integrated into patriarchal norms and mocks the observable fact that while Dr. Spock may have written the book, mothers were the ones putting it into practice.

This theme of striving for "a beautiful day in the neighborhood"<sup>56</sup> was accentuated throughout Jeannie's five years and played out in many storylines on prime time, especially in the magic shows. Marc reads the magicom as an escapist fantasy that reinforces patriarchal notions and promotes "the status quo as platonic ideal" (112).

Addressing this dynamic in such shows as Bewitched, My Favorite Martian, and Jeannie, he argues:

Though struggling to stay fresh during a decade that had self-consciously characterized itself as a period of change, the sitcom was not ready quite yet for the comprehensive reconfiguration of the American family that would take place under Norman Lear's tutelage [in the 1970s]. The result was a head of the household who maintained the 'eternal' values of the American Celebration, but who was now faced with an absurd supernatural circumstance (the sixties?) that prevented him from ruling the roost with impunity. (Marc 116)

Marc suggests that the 1960s sitcom as a television genre was the "most thoroughly isolated from current events" (104). Yet, at the same time, he acknowledges that the trouble in the text reflects societal anxieties taking place at the time. He identifies the single white male character surrounded by the chaos brought on by his supernatural sidekick as a metaphor for the changing social climate that was challenging white, middle-class norms. This assertion is helpful in historically contextualizing the series.

Spigel, on the other hand, recognizes the same tensions but believes that they are purposefully connected to current events. She maintains that they offer a satirical poke at social norms, while undermining their power and offering viewers seditious alternatives to the status quo. That two historians can recognize the same elements but interpret them so differently supports Hall's notion that texts have polysemic meanings.

I second Spigel's assertion that the fantastic-family genre of 1960s television is intrinsically linked to broader societal movements and should not be dismissed as eye candy. When looking specifically at I Dream of Jeannie, the "normal" versus the "fantastic" formula becomes another manifestation of Orientalism. "The Orient" as

viewed through the Orientalist lens, is a fabulously rich and mysterious world filled with “the Sphinx, Cleopatra, [...] Babylon, the Genii, the Magi, [...] settings, in some cases names only, half-imagined, half-known; monsters, devils, heroes; terrors, pleasures desires” (Said 63). Thus, while Jeannie must be viewed as part of the magic-sitcom genre because the show should not be divorced from the context in which it was created, it is imperative that, at the same time, Jeannie’s magic be noted as an exception to the rule because in the U.S. context, her power becomes distinctly Othered because of its “Oriental” origins.<sup>57</sup>

“Meet My Master’s Mother” (14 Nov. 1967) offers another noteworthy story that reveals how Jeannie is different than other magicians on the block. Tony’s mother (Spring Byington) comes to visit and is appalled at how dirty Tony’s house is, insulting Jeannie who must keep out of sight. Jeannie does everything in her power to get Tony’s mother out of her domestic domain, including playing a bugle while she sleeps, but nothing works; she stays steadfastly by her son’s side. When Dr. Bellows meets Mother he cannot believe that she is not eccentric. “Oh no,” Mother says, “I’m just an average mother of an average man.” This represents astronauts and their kin as average folk. Of course, the irony is that nothing about Major Nelson’s life, at least since discovering Jeannie’s bottle, spells average.

Accordingly, Mother decides that her son needs a good old-fashioned girl. Jeannie believes she is the only girl for Tony but knows she must prove it to her potential mother-in-law. So, when Mother sleeps Jeannie blinks into her dreams. The next day, Anthony

and his mom are on the beach having a picnic. When Jeannie suddenly appears laboring behind a sewing machine on the sand, the elder is so thrilled to have found the girl that she saw in her dreams that she does not realize the absurdity of the situation.

Correspondingly, Mother believes, Tony too will dream of Jeannie, the very situation a play on the show's title. Mother then departs because she trusts Jeannie will take care of her baby. Thus, whereas Jeannie's attempts in the first season to pass as an "American woman" were futile, by the third season she does so successfully. But not without several blinks, that call on her ancient, Eastern magic. The normal is accessible to Jeannie only through manipulation and the masking of her true self.

Jeannie's attempts to achieve normalcy in Tony's household involve learning to fit in with white, middle-class America, epitomized by the environment of an astronaut. NASA's white hiring policies and prejudice against people of color were no secret even at the time and have been highly documented. Furthermore, the race to space captured the attention of the white middle class, while the working class and poor (mostly people of color) struggled to survive. Jeannie's astronaut-master environment thus connotes an especially white, First World outlook and social circle.

Part of Jeannie's uniqueness is that she is not bothered by the fact that she does not fit into a mold. Of course, she has episodes of becoming overrun by feelings that she will never be the ideal wife for Tony, and she consistently wants to please her master, particularly by doing things the way they are done in his country. However, she does not feel inferior because she is not from his culture. In effect, internalized oppression does

not weigh her down. Most of the time it seems that the thought that she is not normal has never crossed her mind.

Yet, at times, her sense of alienation is all too apparent. In “The Girl Who Never Had a Birthday (Part I)” (14 Nov. 1966), Tony asks Jeannie when her birthday is, and she does not know. He is shocked that she has never celebrated her birthday, and, for the first time, she experiences the sense of shame associated with Otherness. This shame often spurs the desire to assimilate, and it does for Jeannie. Chaos breaks loose as she suddenly cannot go on living without knowing the date of her birth. Tony sends her home to ask her family if they know the date. Meanwhile, he and Roger get to work on Eric, a NASA computer with the “greatest mechanical brain in the world,” which can calculate anything. Jeannie comes back from home with no news about her birthday; none of her family members know. Her hopelessness continues to increase, and the situation becomes all the more serious when her feet disappear. (Special effects show her standing up without any feet.) “Hurry Master!” she pleads, distraught that the depression from not knowing her birthday (read: from not being American) will erase her completely. To make matters worse, her powers weaken such that her once almighty blinks are now in vain. Tony begins to work faster in order to fix things for his genie – though not fast enough for one episode.

Although Jeannie regains her power in the next episode she does not find out her birthday because a contest for viewers to guess the date stretched out over four weeks in order to encourage audience participation. This proved to be a great success in terms of

ratings. Colgate, the sponsor, tied in three or four of its major products, and planned huge in-store promotions to involve most of the major supermarket chains. In the contest's developmental stages a Screen Gems executive commented, "This is fast developing into the biggest contest we or even NBC has ever been a part of."<sup>58</sup>

In the second part of the birthday series, Tony and Roger successfully get Jeannie's birthday out of the machine, proving that technology wins out over astrology. Jeannie is thrilled and declares, "From now on I am going to have a birthday – just like everybody else." This emphasizes her great desire to fit in and be normal "like everybody else." Unfortunately, Dr. Bellows catches Tony sneaking around the computer and thinks he has finally nabbed him. "Amazing," Bellows says, "It took a \$5 million computer to catch Major Nelson." Of course, Tony does not get "caught" and finally reveals Jeannie's birthday two episodes later in "My Master, the Great Caruso" as April 1st.<sup>59</sup> It is fitting that April Fool's Day was chosen as her birthday to spawn audience participation – April Fool's is not just any calendar day but signifies the fantastic illusions and jokes created by Jeannie's magic.

This theme is visited again in "Divorce, Genie Style" (27 Feb. 1968) when Jeannie begs Haji to make her a mortal for a week so she can prove that she can "be the best housewife ever." When Amanda Bellows meets her, she believes Jeannie is being abused and arranges a meeting with a divorce lawyer because she thinks Tony "treats her like a slave and dresses her like one too." Mrs. Bellows tells her husband that Nelson "keeps her running around the house in a flimsy Arabian Nights thing" and makes her

sleep on the couch. When Jeannie admits that she is a genie in order to protect Tony, Amanda writes her off as a crazy and believes Tony is the victim to his “maid’s [Jeannie’s] delusions.”

Toward the end of the second season, the “normal” yet again challenges the “fantastic” in “The Birds and the Bees Bit” (10 Apr. 1967). When Tony reads that a genie will lose all her power if she marries a mortal, he summons Jeannie from her bottle and asks if it is true. When she confirms, he declares, “Don’t make any plans for tomorrow; we’re getting married!” When Roger thinks Tony is under one of Jeannie’s spells, Tony tells him not to worry and says, “Once Jeannie and I get married, she’ll be an average ordinary housewife.”

Later Haji, the chief djinni (Abraham Sofaer), comes over and finds out that Jeannie is going to marry. He is at first excited and asks who the groom will be, hopeful the groom might be “Ali the Tentmaker” or “Sharif, the Camel King.” When he finds out she will wed “that dog of a master” he asks, “You know what this will do to your mother and father, don’t you?” suggesting they will be heartbroken to have their daughter become a mortal. “I will not tell them you married a mortal. I will tell them you were killed, in a chariot accident.” Jeannie is very pleased with this explanation and thanks him immensely. That Jeannie rapidly accepts that she will be dead to her family shows a shift in her orientation from her life in the Middle East to her life in Cocoa Beach. Is this not the essence of assimilation? In its most extreme form, the person must “become dead” to her former relations (and vice versa) because they are thought of as “dead weight”

anyway, holding her back from acclimating to in the new social sphere she is striving to fit into. Maintaining relationships can be problematic in that they reveal the person's true identity. In the first season, Jeannie's real mother warned her about their status as "peasants from the Old Country." However, Jeannie did not understand. Now, she does.

Later, Haji shows the couple's future in a crystal ball: Jeannie and their future son are mortals, but their daughter is not. When the Bellowses bring over a fire truck for little Anthony he declares, "I want an airplane." When the grown-ups go inside the house, his little sister blinks, and he flies around the backyard in his truck; she then turns her stuffed lamb into a real animal. Dr. Bellows sees, and, of course, there is no explanation. Gendering the children in this way presents a "mini-version" of Jeannie and Tony. Jeannie has to admit to Tony that their children will potentially be genies, and all wedding plans are canceled.

This plot raises two very significant points. First of all, as soon as Tony discovers that Jeannie will no longer be a genie if they marry and being with her will not cost him his career as an astronaut, he immediately commits to her. What does this say about his no-romance policy in the household? Does he really view this relationship as platonic? Clearly, he does not. He seems to greatly desire more given how quickly he acts once he finds that he can be with her – in essence, have his cake and eat it too.

Secondly, this shows a shift in the basic storyline of the series. The original explanation for how Jeannie became a genie was that the Blue Djinn turned her into a genie, which, in episode two, her father calls a "tragedy." In the first season her parents are "peasants from the old country," not genies. However, suddenly this has been done away with, as all of her kin are immortal. This redirecting of her past will

be consistent throughout the rest of the series. That Jeannie comes from a family of genies increases the sense of Tony being surrounded by chaos, reinforcing his dependability and normalness. Also, it simultaneously accentuates a sense of normalness in Jeannie because, while she may not be human, she at least is not the only genie in the family.

### Jeannie Squared

The effects of the 1961 “vast wasteland” speech given by FCC chairman Newton Minow in which he attacked the television industry for the atrocious programming it produced were long lasting.<sup>60</sup> It sent a wave of worry throughout Hollywood as networks became concerned with winning ratings and avoiding regulations. In September 1968, the President’s Commission on Violence asked NBC for a number of programs telecast in the first week of October 1967, including Jeannie’s “My Turned-On Master.” Screen Gems executive Jackie Cooper confidently asserted, “Obviously they won’t find too much violence [in this episode].”<sup>61</sup>

Still, there was cause for concern, and the debate between NBC executives and Sidney Sheldon about Jeannie’s character continued well into the second and third seasons. James S. Seaborne summarized the points Sheldon and he had discussed at a meeting: “So many scripts pivot on Jeannie’s magic. Maybe it should be de-emphasized, and we should play up the warmth and attractiveness of the two leads the way BEWITCHED does.” He also suggested that Jeannie disappear a little when she is unhappy. “Maybe we could devise some other obstacle so she can’t solve everything quite so neatly. For example, perhaps she could get penalized by the Genie Guild for

some infraction or other so she's limited to one blink a day."<sup>62</sup> This desire to "de-emphasize" Jeannie's power suggests that her power continued to be a threat to the network and needed to be tamed.

Sheldon confirmed the suggestion, writing, "Several of the new scripts are the reverse of Jeannie getting Tony into trouble, and then bailing him out. I firmly believe that that basic formula works very well, but I also agree that it is a good idea to vary the formula."<sup>63</sup> Thus, Tony starts to get Jeannie into difficult situations and then must scramble to rescue her. In addition to negating Jeannie's influence this was an attempt to highlight Tony's. This trend appeared to be influenced by Larry Hagman's documented disgruntlement on the set. Sheldon explained, "He wanted to be a star, but when you're in a show with a half-naked actress saying, 'What would you like, Master?' the audience isn't looking at you. So I tried to write scripts that would build him up" (Cox 25).

Another element that was introduced in order to point to Jeannie's vulnerability was her Jeannie's foil and evil twin sister, also played by Eden and named Jeannie, who will be referred to as Jeannie2. She plays a significant part in setting off Jeannie's innocence by filling the role of the unconventional bad girl. A draft press release titled "'I Dream of Jeannie' – Third Season" summarizes Jeannie2 in the following manner:

She is out to destroy Jeannie, Tony, Roger, Nasa [sic] – and anything else she can get her magic little hands on. Since she is more powerful than Jeannie, both Jeannie and Tony are constantly in trouble. Tony's difficulties are compounded by the fact that he has a hard time telling the difference between the two girls. The introduction of this character will give the thrust of the show a fresh direction and vitality.<sup>64</sup>

By this point in the series, Jeannie changes out of her harem garb and into civilian clothes often. She begins to identify more with Cocoa Beach than with Baghdad. Although she still wants to marry Tony, she no longer tries to seduce him. The Orientalism mapped onto her character has shifted from the trope of exoticization to that of infantilization. Looking at the juxtaposition between Jeannie and other female characters can illuminate this shift from temptress to sweetheart, from powerful to vulnerable. Whereas in the pilot episode Jeannie was represented as racy and Melissa as proper, in the third season, Jeannie's evil ways are juxtaposed with Jeannie's vulnerability and properness. Her sister's body language is more erotic; she sways her hips when she walks and uses sultry speech patterns.

The directive to curtail Jeannie's power is most obvious in the four-part contest in the third season, "Genie, Genie, Who's Got the Genie," Parts I through IV (16 Jan. 1968 to 6 Feb. 1968). Tony accidentally closes Jeannie in a moon safe, and she spends four episodes locked in a box. Her magical abilities are defunct because being in a closed container is like being trapped in her corked bottle; she can do nothing but wait to be let out. There is no way to open the safe except with the correct combination – it will explode if broken into. Thus, Tony and Roger do all they can to find the correct combination before Jeannie is shipped off to the moon.

Jeannie sits around the inside of the safe, hungry, bored, and worried. "Master? Will you get me out of here now?" she begs. To make matters worse, in the third part of the series, her sister shows up to kidnap Major Nelson, with the intention of holding him

captive on what she calls her “home turf – Baghdad.” Although Jeannie<sup>2</sup> possesses the power to blink her sister out of the safe, she does not. Instead, she switches Major Nelson’s assignment from South America to the Middle East. When Jeannie finds out that her sister has hijacked her master, she throws a tantrum, jumping up and down like a child, screaming, “He’s not your master! He’s my master!” – a scene that employs the imagery of the Third World servant battling one of her own in order protect her captor. The representation of Jeannie’s twin as naughty and ruled by her libidinal desire for Tony reflects the technique employed in the first season, when Jeannie’s behavior was similar. Although the two characters are twin sisters, indeed, played by the same actress, great differences make it seem like they are from disparate worlds.

In The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre, Tzvetan Todorov demonstrates how the fantastic “permits us to cross certain frontiers that are [otherwise] inaccessible” (158). He explores “themes of self” and “themes of the other” and elucidates how the double represents a censored or prohibited other in one’s self, a way to deal with taboo subjects, interrupt social accord, and address “a transgression of the law” (Todorov 166).

Twins, in fact, were sprinkled throughout 1960s television. Moya Lockett has applied Todorov’s analysis to The Patty Duke Show.<sup>65</sup> Patty Duke played both herself, a modern American teenager, and Cathy Lane, her identical cousin, who was a traditional young lady from Scotland. Lockett asserts, “Using the same actress to play both Patty and Cathy implied the extreme mutability of the teenage girl’s identity. At the same time, this

strategy suggested that both [characters] were extremes, neither of which could be fully assimilated within mainstream adult society.” She concludes that the double functioned “to represent the ‘unrepresentable’ 1960s teenager while multiplying the show’s appeal by offering viewers not one but two Patty Dukes” (101).

Luckett notes that the first season of Patty traced the “increasing modernization (or Americanization) of Cathy” (110). Patty taught her the latest dances, gave her beauty and dating tips, and updated her clothes and hairstyle. In the final episode of the first season the girls reminisce about their first year together. “Flashbacks reveal that she has become more fashionable and assured as a result of her exposure to Patty and U.S. culture. When Cathy sees a frumpish photo taken shortly after her arrival, she denies its likeness, stating, ‘Why I look so – so foreign’” (110). However, instead of continuing in this direction, in the second season, Cathy returns to her traditional, timid state. Otherwise, the characters would have collapsed into each other, deflating the narrative tension between them, and the purpose of the double.

According to Todorov’s analysis, while Jeannie<sup>2</sup> represents that which is absent in Tony’s proper genie, she is also a manifestation of Jeannie’s muted self. In this way, the double goes against the grain set up by social conventions – they are two parts of a whole. As Luckett asserts, “both [characters] were extremes, neither of which could be fully assimilated within mainstream adult society” (101). By the third season, Jeannie’s character has become more modernized and Americanized so Jeannie<sup>2</sup> serves to remind viewers of Jeannie’s foreign past. Another one of her functions is to offer Jeannie not one

but two genies – their likeness overt down to their very names. While Jeannie wears pink, strives to be the ultimate loyal servant, and desires to wed Major Nelson, Jeannie2, dressed in green, thinks her sister is a boring square. Jeannie2 has married 47 times; she lives to “swing,” manipulate, and enjoy. She could not have been introduced in the first season because her character traits were still too similar to Jeannie’s at that time; there would not have been enough tension between them. Jeannie had to become “Americanized” in behavior and thought in order for the juxtaposition to be possible.

The introduction of Jeannie2 in September 1967 was extremely timely, as it followed in the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War fought between Israel and its Arab neighbors Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The war started on June 5, 1967, and “ended” six days later with Israel having captured the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Although the period of fighting was extremely short, the effects have been long lasting. Michael Oren speaks to the ongoing results:

The War of Attrition, the Yom Kippur War, the Munich massacre and Black September, the Lebanon War, the controversy over Jewish settlements and the future of Jerusalem, the Camp David Accords, the Oslo Accords, the Intifada – all were the result of six intense days in the Middle East in June 1967. Rarely in modern times has so short and localized a conflict had such prolonged, global consequences. (xiii)

Many scholars cite it as a pivotal moment in the representation of Arabs in the U.S. media in which increasingly Arabs were depicted in “negative” stereotypical roles that framed them as violent, anti-American, and dangerous.

This period [of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War] also entailed the beginning of a war, waged by the U.S. media, against Arabs at home and in the diaspora which has distorted the meaning of the term Arab and further complicated Arab American identity. Following World War II and the declaration of Israel's independence, Arab Americans came to share in the experiences of other racialized U.S. communities who have been marked as being different from and inferior to whites/Caucasians. The media began to portray Arabs, Middle Easterners and Muslims as a monolithic category and as one of the pre-eminent enemies of the West. This anti-Western anti-American portrayal underlies the support of the American public for U.S. cultural and economic domination and military intervention in the Arab world. (Naber 41)

That Jeannie2 appears in 1967 may or may not be coincidental. However, it seems to have an interesting correlation that she appeared during a period in which the U.S. was experiencing a heightened anti-Arab sentiment. It is not surprising then that Jeannie's American-ness begins to be re-emphasized during this period.

Said spelled out one of the fundamental tenets of Orientalism when he wrote, "There are good Arabs (the ones who do as they are told) and bad Arabs (who do not, and are therefore terrorists)" (306). The doubling of Jeannie employs this basic binary. Thus, as the highly sexualized tropes of Orientalism were mapped off of Jeannie's character, they show up in the third season mapped onto her sister. In this way, Jeannie2 functions to distance her sister from the Middle East, asserting her budding American-ness, and "de-Othering" her. Jeannie is framed as the "good Arab," while Jeannie2, although not a terrorist, represents the forbidden and exotic Other, the "bad Arab" who challenges not only her sister but also other good (Western) girls.

Without Jeannie, Jeannie2 would not exist, her threat perceived as too great for prime time, as Jeannie's was in the first season. According to Said, the Orient "vacillates between the West's contempt for what is familiar and its shivers of delight in – or fear of – novelty" (59). The twins, embody these two extremes and are products of the Orientalist imagination. Jeannie2 appeared on-screen in September 1967, three months after the June War. She functioned to separate Jeannie from the perceived "negative" threat of Arabs so that the series' female lead could be illuminated in a "positive" light. Given the chilling effect on prime time from the moral critics who were looking to attack its "vast wasteland," and the increasing "negative" images of Arabs in the U.S. media it behooved the network to reinforce that Jeannie was the "good Arab," faithful to her U.S. astronaut. The evil tricks of her sister Jeannie2, the "bad Arab," are a tool that recapitulates the female lead's sweet innocence, potentially distancing her – and the show – from the negative press and chaos tied to the Middle East.

### Shooting from the "Hip"

In the midst of the genie's efforts to "be normal" there is a simultaneous thrust to exert "hip-ness" and modernity beginning in the second season and especially prominent in the third. This functions to further identify Jeannie as American and modern. For example, the producers felt very enthusiastic about redecorating the primary set, Tony's house, with an "up-to-date look." This, again, is in line with the post-war emphasis on consumerism and newness.

The network promoted “Jeannie’s New Look” as “the Space Age look.” A draft press release declared:

There is tremendous interest in the exploits of astronauts, and we intend to take full advantage of this in future shows. Both Nasa [sic] and the Air Force will give us full cooperation. They have agreed to send space capsules here for our use and will let us shoot any other facilities of theirs that we may require. This means that in the future we will be able to play scenes against the background of missiles, testing chambers, and all the latest space hardware, instead of in ‘office’ sets, as well as do stories that involve Space Shots.<sup>66</sup>

Sheldon actually visited Cape Kennedy and the Spacecraft Center in Houston and met with NASA officials in order to keep up good relations and have a better understanding of the space program. He described it as a “thrill” to meet astronauts Alan Shepard and Gordon Cooper who were national celebrities because of their space explorations. Sheldon planned to have some of the Jeannie cast make the trip as well, and eventually they did.<sup>67</sup>

Moreover, guest stars, considered a great audience attracter, were promoted heavily. “It is our plan,” Screen Gems wrote, “during the coming season, to greatly expand the use of Names and use important Guest Stars as often as they can be worked into the framework of a script. Not only is this effective in terms of the show itself, but the exploitation potential of the Series is obviously enormously increased.”<sup>68</sup> Thus, in the second season, Groucho Marx appears briefly in the last scene of “The Greatest Invention in the World” (9 Jan. 1967). A month later, Sammy Davis Jr. plays himself in “The Greatest Entertainer in the World” (27 Feb. 1967). When he is asked to perform for

General Peterson's tenth anniversary party, he declines because he already has a gig. When Jeannie materializes a Sammy clone so he can be in two places at one time, and he finds out, even the great performer thinks he is cracking up.

In the third season, a slew of entertainers were supposed to be on the show such as Soupy Sales, Mary Martin, Jerry Lewis, Kirk Douglas, and Caterina Valente. However, out of the thirteen names promoted by the NBC Sales Planning Department, only two made it to the screen: Don Ho and Milton Berle.<sup>69</sup> In "Jeannie Goes to Honolulu" (26 Dec. 1967), Jeannie and Tony meet Ho and watch him perform two songs, "Ain't No Big Thing" and "Days of Our Youth." The second song is interspersed with almost the entirety of a music video of Ho walking along the beach with and singing to his young son. This was a novelty for pre-MTV times and recognition of the up-and-coming role music was playing in popular culture.<sup>70</sup>

In August 1967, Sheldon received a memo from Richard Wookey, the manager of film programs at NBC, that stated, "Dear Sidney: This is to inform you that I DREAM OF JEANNIE will not be broadcast on October 24, 1967 in order that NBC may present the movie HARD DAY'S NIGHT in its entirety."<sup>71</sup> Hard Day's Night (dir. Richard Lester, 1964) is a film that captures a "typical day" in the life of the Beatles, complete with music, drugs, and girls. Some suggest it was an extended music video. Either way, it was official – Beatlemania had hit prime time.

Luckett identifies that when the British pop stars' influence hit Patty Duke, the show's focus shifted from "'traditional' girls' pursuits as slumber parties, boy trouble,

and school plays” to “Patty’s engagement with the latest fads” (109). In Jeannie, a coinciding shift is found – from formula to fad. The last episode of the second season, titled “The Mod Party” (24 Apr. 1967), kicks off this trend. Major Healy hosts a “mod” party at his apartment. When Dr. Bellows calls an unexpected meeting at the same time, Tony and Roger make up a story that they already have plans to go hunting. The plot revolves around Bellows and his wife trying to catch the two in a lie. When the Bellowses walk in, Tony and Roger ask Jeannie to blink them into hunting outfits. As a result, they sport white togas (cut above the knee) and bows and arrows for the rest of the episode. However, this episode seems to want to indicate that Jeannie is up to date with the times. Several minutes in the last sequence is devoted to showing partygoers dancing away in their mod costumes. They mostly do not speak, but when they do, they say words like “groovy.” Dr. Bellows and his wife have a field day psychoanalyzing them.

Sheldon hoped to bring in members of Jeannie’s and Tony’s families, but began with Amanda, Dr. Bellows’s wife (Emmaline Henry).<sup>72</sup> Ultimately, Amanda complements Alfred and the triangle of tension so that Jeannie is on one point, Roger and Tony on another, and Dr. and Mrs. Bellows on the third. As the seasons go on she becomes more intrigued – and obsessed – with “proving” Tony’s trouble (until the last season when she becomes Jeannie’s pal). Her husband’s casual approval of her intentions reveals that he is content to not be the only one who wants to nab Major Nelson but instead ends up looking loony.

In “Jeannie, the Hip Hippie” (17 Oct. 1967) Jeannie tells her master she cannot go on a vacation with him because she must work as she has taken on managing the musical act Boyce & Hart Group. Boyce and Hart, a songwriting duo that penned many pop hits in the 1960s, had begun performing their songs by 1967. In the episode they have not yet been discovered, and Jeannie dedicates herself to their promotion.<sup>73</sup> Here, Jeannie temporarily suspends her devotion to her master because she is so drawn to the music. This supports the popular belief about the Beatles’ female fans – once they heard their music, nothing else mattered. As Science News Letter reported in February 1964:

“Psychologists are just as puzzled as parents over the explosive effect the Beatles are having on American teenagers [. . .] there has not been enough study on mass adolescent reaction to explain the impact of these four mop-headed British youths on the hearts – and the vocal chords – of a good segment of the younger generation.” (qtd. in Lockett, 109)

Jeannie’s having caught Beatle Fever also served to show her adapting to American culture and moving away from Otherness. By wearing hip, modern fashions her character became more accessible, likeable, and marketable. This trend continues into the fourth and fifth seasons. Acknowledgements of drug culture, out-of-body experiences, and hippies take place as well. Finally, tensions between Jeannie and Tony begin to dissolve as they begin to move toward saying “I do.”

## CHAPTER 4

### STEAL THIS PLOT

By its third season, I Dream of Jeannie shifted plots to reflect what was happening nationally: Jeannie's life in the U.S. was squarely established, so less time was devoted to her reminiscing about the Middle East. This was part of the overall Americanization of the character but also reflected a trend in prime time to address and subdue the turbulent changes of the social sphere in the U.S. and abroad. Part of Jeannie's Americanization is that she is not only diffused but diffuses other social problems outside of herself in order to reinforce dominant ideology. This trend continues throughout the last two years. This chapter will outline this continuation and explain the culminating steps toward Jeannie's assimilation.

"The Sixties" brought with them a great deal of change at a relatively swift speed (compared to other times) both nationally and globally. Cuba, China, and Vietnam were seeing great transformations in governmental control and societal power. The Middle East was rapidly shifting as well. In the U.S., the civil-rights movements were heating up and building on momentum so that by the end of the decade a variety of sectors were nationally organized, including the Black Panthers, SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), Brown Berets, AIM (American Indian Movement), and the Young Lords. Additionally, feminist movements were burgeoning as many females – both women of color and white women – were organizing themselves on local levels,

including in their living rooms. The momentum spawned by these groups could not be ignored. Consequently, in 1968, J. Edgar Hoover implemented the counterintelligence program COINTELPRO in hopes of breaking unity among and within revolutionary parties and movements. The history of the manner in which the program's agents (the FBI and the police) fabricated evidence in order to imprison possible suspects, and murdered many "potential threats," most of whom were people of color, has been well documented.<sup>74</sup>

These societal forces affected the small screen as well. However, it was too difficult to integrate nationalist and militant movements into the text. Hippies, on the other hand, were more accessible to the white, middle-class audiences watching the show. The hippie movement offered an alternative to (mostly middle-class and white) youth in the '60s, challenging them to "live outside the establishment." The media managed to undercut the ideological forces driving the movement by feeding audiences images of stoned hippies "making love not war" and by highlighting drug use and sexual experimentation instead of political consciousness.

Subcultures can never fully resist the process by which they are absorbed and renegotiated into the dominant culture. As asserted by Dick Hebdige:

The media, as Stuart Hall (1977) has argued, not only record resistance, they 'situate it within the dominant framework of meanings' and those young people who choose to inhabit a spectacular youth culture are simultaneously returned, as they are represented on T.V. and in the newspapers, to the place where common sense would have them fit [...]. (94)

Hebdige explains that there are two characteristic forms by which the process of recuperation happens. “The commodity form” takes place when subcultural signs (i.e. dress, music, etc.) are converted into mass-produced objects thus becoming “codified, made comprehensible, rendered at once public property and profitable merchandise” (Hebdige 96). In short, symbols that start out challenging the status quo quickly become the “latest fad” and lose some, if not most, of their semiotic power. For example, the peace sign, once painted on the sides of governmental buildings in protest of U.S. militarization abroad, lost its charge and became commodified when mass-produced in the form of stickers and play-tattoos for children.

“The ideological form” involves the “labeling” and “re-definition of deviant behaviour by dominant groups” (i.e. the police, media, and judiciary) (Hebdige 94).

There are two basic strategies within this form:

First, the Other can be trivialized, naturalized, domesticated. Here, the difference is simply denied (‘Otherness is reduced to sameness’). Alternatively, the Other can be transformed into meaningless exotica, a ‘pure object, a spectacle, a clown’ (Barthes, 1972). (Hebdige 97)

This ideological absorption of the drug and hippie subcultures is seen throughout the fourth season of Jeannie.

In “Jeannie and the Wild Pipchicks” (23 Sept. 1968) Jeannie’s mother sends her a care package on a flying carpet filled with her favorite homemade candy called “pipchicks.” Jeannie does not notice the effects of the sweets because she is already exceedingly powerful. Yet, according to Dr. Bellows, the effects are “extraordinary,” for

after consuming one he lifts a 300-pound coffee maker. He reports the phenomenon to a visiting Colonel Finch, who is the only female high-ranking officer the show has ever seen. She is played by Reta Shaw, a stocky, brazen, elderly woman. After eating a pipchick, she walks into Tony's office and no one stands she yells, "Attention!" to whip them into shape. She then complains, "The problem with you men is that you're not used to women in positions of authority." She orders Tony to pick her up, which he cannot do because she weighs so much. Then she lifts up Healy gracefully and carries him around the room. She realizes that the effects are not long lasting. Both colonels are fascinated and order Tony to supply them with more. Jeannie goes to visit her mother to get the secret recipe. For the first time since the first season, Jeannie is shown on screen visiting her mother in Baghdad. The difference is that this time Mama is played by Eden, thus providing another foil to Jeannie.

By mid-1969 there was "a concerted effort to get minority writers, directors, actors and actresses into the operation of [Screen Gems'] shows."<sup>75</sup> The few people of color on Jeannie were usually African Americans who played officers at NASA and had one line of dialogue. Those from the Middle East were characters of color played by white actors and almost always some sort of ancient, magical being. In writing there was the intention of hiring "minorities" but by employing Eden in the role for another Middle Eastern female, the production sidestepped the hiring of a "minority," or another white woman to play Jeannie's mother. Mama has dark brown hair that she wears in a bun, and she speaks with an accent. She worries for her daughter who spends so much time with

“that man” who flutters around in space. Viewing Tony as her archenemy, she purposefully gives Jeannie the wrong recipe.

Finally, after Tony and Roger finish cooking the candies, Colonel Finch and Colonel Bellows, Major Healy, and General Peterson all consume it. Tony runs around like wild trying to contain them as he realizes that the candy causes them to release their inhibition and become whatever they are deep down inside. This plays on the language used to promote drug use at the time. Finch incites her subverted sexual side and yells at Tony: “Kiss me Major. That’s a butterfly giving an order.” Then to Roger and Tony, who try to restrain her, she demands, “That’s right, dominate me – I’ve always wanted to be dominated.” This restores the notion that even assertive, powerful women dream of being subservient to their male counterparts. Dr. Bellows sings sailing songs at the top of his lungs, because he believes he has become the captain of a ship on its way to Alaska. Roger yells, “You’re sloppy soldier! If there’s one thing I can’t stand it’s a sloppy soldier!” General Peterson tries to defend Custard’s last stand. In the end, Jeannie accidentally makes Tony eat one too, and he becomes a rescuing fireman. Here, the Other, in this case a recreational drug user, is “transformed into meaningless exotica” – a spectacle and clown. Thus, Jeannie’s mother is responsible for infiltrating NASA and has its top officers tripping.

“Jeannie My Guru” (30 Dec. 1968) “trivializes, naturalizes, and domesticates” the hippie movement. General Schaeffer (Vinton Hayworth) moves in next door and assigns Major Nelson to the task of keeping his teenage daughter, Suzie (Hilarie Tompson) away

from Harold (Michael Margotta), a despicable “hippie” who is after her. When Jeannie accidentally appears in front of Suzie, she threatens to tell her dad about Tony’s own “housekeeper” and “girlfriend hippie,” and blackmails him into keeping her love affair with Harold under wraps. In order to hide Harold from Schaeffer Jeannie must blink him into the closet. Harold then exclaims, “You are my guru, I will worship at your feet forever.” Tony plays down the encounter, explaining that Jeannie is a student of Oriental mysticism. Another party scene ensues, much like the one in “The Mod Party.” This time the Lewis and Clarke Expedition plays in Tony’s living room, hippies dance around like maniacs, and Harold hallucinates from a hunger strike he has begun for no particular reason except, as he says, “No bread, man, no bread.”

In the end, Tony must introduce Harold to Schaefer as Suzie’s fiancé, and Jeannie fixes it so that he is clean-shaven and asserts to his future father-in-law, “It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance.” Suzie is disgusted by his manners, immediately dumps him, and finds another guy with long hair. Jeannie tells Tony she doesn’t understand Suzie’s actions and Tony comments that no one can understand women, especially teenagers. By representing Suzie as “in love” with her man’s appearance of rebellion the text undermines hippies in general, and young female hippies in particular, for being shallow and completely divorced from any deeper political orientation.

This representation is also found on Bewitched in the episode “Hippie, Hippie, Hooray” (1 Feb. 1968) when Samantha’s identical cousin Serena, yet another example of

doubling in '60s television, appears. Serena underscores Marc's description of the "sitcom's [typical] treatment of 'counterculture types' during the sixties":

Like the 'hippies' who occasionally show up on The Beverly Hillbillies or Gilligan's Island, Cousin Serena is portrayed as silly and impractical, rather than malevolent or evil, thus depoliticizing the 'alternative lifestyle' issue from satire to farce. (Marc 115)

Although political activist Abbie Hoffman's influential work Steal This Book, a practical guide for the aspiring hippie, did not come out until 1970, his presence – and that of his peers – surfaced in Jeannie as early as 1968. Hoffman founded the Youth International Party, known as the Yippies, which was dedicated to protesting the Vietnam War and the U.S. economic and political systems. The Anti-Riot Act of 1968 was passed in April as the threat of growing numbers protesting the Vietnam War increased. In August, thousands of young people mobilized in Chicago during the Democratic National Convention to protest the Vietnam War and U.S. economic exploitation. The city refused to grant permits for protestors to sleep in the parks and at the last minute posted signs in park trees that announced an 11 p.m. curfew. Needless to say, police attacked various events and arrested several people throughout the week. A year later, Hoffman gained widespread media attention for his courtroom antics as a defendant in the trial of the "Chicago Eight" – the case that tried a group of men who were accused of crossing state lines to incite a riot and thus violating the Anti-Riot Act.<sup>76</sup>

A week before the federal grand jury indicted the Chicago Eight, Jeannie invoked its own interpretation of the controversial events in Chicago. In "Jeannie for the Defense"

(10 Mar. 1969), Major Anthony Nelson comes face to face with the law when a police officer (William Bramley) pulls him over on a small street in a small town:

**Officer:** May I see your license please? (Tony *reaches for his wallet.*)

**Tony:** What seems to be the problem, Officer? (Tony *hands his license to Officer.*)

**Officer:** Oh, no problem, except that you're going 30 miles per hour in a 20-mile zone.

**Roger:** (*sitting in the passenger seat*) Twenty-mile zone? We didn't see any sign.

**Officer:** It's right on that "Welcome to Clarkston" sign, plain as the nose on your face.

**Roger:** Where is the "Welcome to Clarkston" sign?

**Officer:** Oh, right behind that big oak tree. (Tony and Roger *turn around to look and see the sign hidden behind limbs of the tree. The laugh track sounds in the background.*) The fine will be \$25.

**Tony:** Wouldn't it be easier just to put up a tollgate?

**Officer:** Oh, we couldn't do that son; that wouldn't be legal. (*The laugh track runs again.*)

Although the officer is earnest, the hidden sign that has "Welcome to Clarkson" in bold letters and "Speed Limit 20 mph" in tiny ones along with the supportive laugh track point to the hypocrisy of the law that he is dutifully upholding. The situation was understood as funny because of the societal references that were already brewing in the mainstream media in regard to makeshift laws, false charges, and police brutality. On one hand, the text reveals the injustice present in a system in which a law can be made with the prime intent of incriminating people and portrays the cop as a crooked idiot. On the other, the absurdity of the situation undercuts the real situations that were taking place at the time.

Later, as Tony is put in jail for being accused of hurting someone in an attempted hit-and-run, he pleads with the officer, "Don't you see? I'm being railroaded!" Roger

demands a writ of *habeas corpus*, a plea commonly used in the attempt to free political prisoners. When that gets nowhere, he suggests calling Jeannie. “I don’t want Jeannie, I want justice!” Tony yells. Here, again, the text puts at the center that which is usually marginalized from the mainstream, employing phrases commonly left out of the middle-class experience, but that were becoming familiar because of the times. While the text mocks the corruption of the system, it also absorbs the societal movements and co-opts their language so that it is no longer as politically charged. Again, this is a result of Jeannie participating in the trends of its genre, as well as a symptom of the female lead’s Americanization process.

#### Climbing the Ladder: Invisible to Maid to Girlfriend

In the fourth season of I Dream of Jeannie, Jeannie is seen by others more often and referred to as Tony’s housekeeper or maid and occasionally as his girlfriend. Jeannie’s status as girlfriend and maid is both confirmed and negated in “The Case of My Vanishing Master” Parts I (6 Jan. 1969) and II (13 Jan. 1969). Given that contests were big draws for viewership in the 1960s, Jeannie hosted its third contest in the fourth season with the idea that Nelson was going to take a vacation and contest participants would have to guess the locale. However, Sheldon felt this was “pure guess work.”<sup>77</sup> In the end, Tony did not travel for leisure but was sent to a “secret hiding place,” and viewers had to guess which Mediterranean island he was stationed on.<sup>78</sup> TWA offered two tickets around

the world plus \$1,000 expense money for the winner, for both this contest and another one with Screen Gems' The Flying Nun.<sup>79</sup>

Results for the show were incredible: 225,000 entries were received, and, according to the National Nielsen estimates, over a million additional homes tuned in to Jeannie. A Screen Gems executive exclaimed, "We are already laying the groundwork with NBC for still another 'Jeannie' promotion for next year – and beyond that!"<sup>80</sup> The winner was just as enthusiastic. In a letter to NBC she wrote, "We have just returned from six weeks in London, Madrid, Paris, Rome, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Expo '70, Tokyo and Hawaii and had a fantastic time!" (original underlining).<sup>81</sup> Given Jeannie's role in the fantastic-family genre, the winner's adjective choice could not have been more appropriate.

In the two episodes of the contest, Jeannie employs the double technique again, only this time with Tony's character. Because there is a "security leak" at NASA, Tony must go to a secret hideaway to finish plans for Apollo 12. He is sent away before he can notify Roger or Jeannie about the trip. Dr. Bellows has trained a secret agent to stand in for Tony while he is gone so no one will know Tony is missing. Tony's double – played by Hagman – turns out to be the enemy agent, but before that is revealed, he nearly loses his mind while living with Jeannie.

First, the agent thinks Jeannie is "Major Nelson's maid" and tries to pay her for her services. Jeannie weeps, and Roger attempts to console by her saying that it is about time Tony put her on the payroll: "He's been receiving free maid service for a long time."

When the double sees Healy hugging Jeannie he understands her to be Roger's girlfriend. However, when she does not go home with him, he concludes that she is Tony's wife. Jeannie (mis)understands that he has proposed to her and calls in the Arabian reverend (Benny Rubin) who married her parents (who speaks English with an Indian accent and a gibberish-Arabic). The wedding is unsuccessful because when the double does not know where he and Jeannie met, she realizes he is an "imposter."

This imposter is scared to death of Jeannie; he tries to avoid her physically and can barely stand to be in the same room with her. He thinks he is going out of his mind, drunk off the "Baghdad Camels," the glasses of milk Jeannie has prepared.<sup>82</sup> When he tells Bellows about her, almost repulsed, he explains, "She's wearing a funny little outfit as if she came out of an Arabian harem." When Bellows enters the house Jeannie blinks into a maid costume just in the nick of time. She smacks on a piece of gum and abruptly says to Tony's double in front of the doctor, "Of course I know who you are. You're Major Anthony Nelson. You pay me two lousy bucks an hour to cook and clean house for you." Read as Tony's opposite, the double serves to make Tony more comfortable with and loving toward Jeannie. However, revisiting the analysis of the role of the double in the fantastic, this "imposter" reveals that which is thought to be absent in Tony, but is actually merely subdued. This represents Jeannie at best as Tony's in-house girlfriend, and at worst as his domestic slave.

However, by the end of the season she is referred to as his "girlfriend" in several episodes. In "Jeannie, the Governor's Wife" (10 Feb. 1969), Tony asserts himself

physically for the first time. In the closing shot of the episode, after having gotten her master into another pickle she begs, “What can I do to make it up to you?” Tony says that he “will think of something” and immediately puts his arms around her and kisses her. This reveals that Tony’s desire for Jeannie is no longer absent, something with which network executives were not at all comfortable.

### The Most Daring Show on TV

“‘Jeannie’ is no longer a dream but a reality. Moving into its fourth year, a fifth seems certain on the trade premise that a show crossing the third is good for five. Like that cigaret [sic] ad says, the taste for these fantasies never quits,” Daily Variety reported, in fall 1968, after the fourth year opener (“Helm”).<sup>83</sup>

Just a few months earlier, Barbara Eden was featured on the cover of TV Guide, this time sans harem garb, in a short-sleeved sweater. The caption on the cover read “Barbara Eden of ‘I Dream of Jeannie.’” In the accompanying article, “When the Genie Comes Out of the Bottle,” Dwight Whitney mused:

I Dream of Jeannie is actually one of the most daring shows on TV. It is the only show, for example, in which an attractive unmarried girl has the free run of a bachelor’s apartment. Jeannie may be a creature of fantasy, live in a bottle and hence be exempt from some of the more rigid social conventions, yet her attitude toward her ‘lover’ – if that is what he is – is quite sophisticated. He is her ‘master’ and she his ‘slave’, a relationship which, comic as it is, seems better suited to the Marquis de Sade than all those folks back in the Midwest who, the ratings tell us, constitute some of Jeannie’s most enthusiastic fans. (17)

The article quoted Sheldon's admission of the danger of the plot: "We have to be careful. We could bring down the Bible Belt on our hands with one line. Suppose we let Jeannie say, 'We're going out tonight, master,' and he replies, 'Oh no we're not, we're staying home.' Millions of people would say, 'Oho, monkey business!' But that doesn't happen" (Whitney 18).

According to the editorial, "that doesn't happen" – Jeannie and Tony are not perceived as having sex – because of Eden's personal conservatism: "her sex appeal comes packaged in propriety. Then there is the purity of her self-doubt, a quality which filters through her performances and helps make Jeannie's peccadillos acceptable to conservative viewers" (Whitney 18). This reaffirms that the importation of unacceptable behavior through a Middle Eastern female character is justified because of the white actress playing her.

Claudio Guzman, who directed many episodes, seconded this notion. "The network did everything to avoid the terrifying idea that Jeannie was cohabitating. But they hadn't counted on Barbara, her basic conservatism, her enormous good humor and self-discipline." Reinforcing traditional values, the article went into Eden's personal life and marriage to the Lebanese actor Michael Ansara suggesting, "She – like Jeannie – believes that the man should be the dominant figure" (Whitney 20).

The producers of Jeannie attempted to preserve Jeannie's modesty, along with Eden's navel, when it came to Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In as well. During the fourth year of Jeannie, Laugh-In was at the top of the charts, and the producers struck a deal for

the actors to make guest-star appearances on either show. NBC planned to air both comedy programs on the same evening in order to pack a considerable cross-promotional event. Laugh-In was known for its scantily dressed females who often had flowers painted on their limbs and stomachs. The producers envisioned opening the show by exposing Eden's belly button on prime time for the first time. However, when the network censors and Sheldon got wind of it, they canceled the deal. Sheldon explained, "The Laugh-In script called for the shot to open on a close-up of Jeannie's navel, and I didn't think it was in the best of taste, and I said no" (Cox 112). Whether Eden was going to appear as herself or as Jeannie is unclear. Still, it is obvious that a certain feminine mystique with regards to NBC's genie – and her tummy – was trying to be preserved. Ultimately, Laugh-In stars Judy Carne, Arte Johnson, and Gary Owens did appear on Jeannie in "The Biggest Star in Hollywood" (24 Feb. 1969).

NBC promoted the fourth season of I Dream of Jeannie as one in which the romantic relationship between Jeannie and Tony would be strengthened. In addition, they planned on doing "several stories involving a rural training base where Jeannie, Tony and Roger will find themselves up against the backwoods population."<sup>84</sup> Bonanza had been number one in the Nielsen Ratings for three straight years, and the The Beverly Hillbillies had landed in the top twelve (Brooks and Marsh 1248-1249). As a result, Jeannie wanted to raise some ranch-style fun as well.

In "U-F-Oh Jeannie," the fourth season's opener, which premiered on September 16, 1968, Roger and Tony crash in to a mountain region in an experimental plane that

looks like a flying spaceship. The family members that find them show up with rifles because, having mistaken them for Martians, they are intent on killing them. Jeannie tries to save her master but is delayed by the eldest son who continues to make advances at her against her will. After she blinks him into his place, it seems that she will rescue the astronauts but she gets knocked out. The majors try and revive her but accidentally do so with a bucket of “moonshine.” Realizing she is drunk, Roger cries out, “Just what we need – a stoned genie.” In the finale, a violin plays the Jeannie theme to reiterate to viewers that their magical genie and scientific astronaut have come in contact with “Paw” and “Maw” and their hillbilly family.

Variety described the episode as “a witlessly amiable story.” The writer stated: “Miss Eden is still very pretty, and in a highly stylized way, competent to her comedic chores. Larry Hagman has never gotten over a certain starchiness. The production values appear to be have [sic] declined from last year. It’s still basically a show for the kids and the very tired older folk looking for lightweight escapism.” (“DeP.”)

Not everybody considered it lighthearted play. A fan of the show sent a fuming letter to Screen Gems describing the episode and the show as “vulgar.” She opined that “besides the mediocre script” Jeannie’s costume had shrunk to expose “two bouncing balloons.” She asked, “What is the matter with Barbara Eden to approve of this inflation of her bosom?” Closing the letter with “Disgusted!” she threatened, “If this continues, you will have lost my family of watchers!”<sup>85</sup>

Sheldon responded in a letter that Barbara Eden was wearing the same costume as last season. “It has not been cut down to expose more of her bosom.” He further justified the plot in a manner reminiscent of dealing with NBC executives:

If you and your family have been regular watchers of ‘JEANNIE,’ I should not have to tell you that the show does not deal in vulgarity, leering innuendo, or cheap sex. This is one of the reasons why ‘JEANNIE’ is now in its fourth year. I have always insisted that the show be tailored as family fare that would be wholesome for children, as well as entertaining for adults.<sup>86</sup>

Thus, the debate about Jeannie, sex, and the censors continued in spite of efforts put forth by the show’s cast and creators, as well as NBC, to de-exoticize Jeannie by presenting her as a nice, wholesome girl. Most noteworthy is not the fan’s response because letters of complaint were and continue to be common, but the manner in which Sheldon responded which points to how sensitive the producers were to audience perceptions. The Orientalism mapped onto her shifted to present her as childlike instead of erotic. Still, dressed in her harem costume – her Arabian signifier – she and the show were still perceived as risqué, inappropriate and “vulgar” in at least one living room in America.

Accordingly, after the fourth season “the network” called and told Sidney Sheldon that in order for the show to go into a fifth season the couple needed to be married. Sheldon and the cast contested it but the NBC executive Mort Werner was adamant: “I want them to get married.” Sheldon described the situation as “blackmail” and believes, as many do, that the wedding interrupted the sexual tension between the leads and subsequently “destroyed” the show (Sheldon 346).

James Henerson, author of the wedding script, in an interview in 1992 echoed Sheldon's sentiments:

It was a terrible idea in my opinion. Everybody connected with the show fought [the marriage concept] bitterly. Especially Larry. For the rest of us, there came a point when we knew we couldn't win anymore. The network was determined to marry them off. We had many, many conferences. But the network was adamant: We think it's going to be terrific and you have to do it. (Cox 262)

As Jeannie walks down the aisle she also takes the final steps toward assimilation into U.S. culture, which leads to the culmination of the series.

#### "I Do" + Americanization

A week after Jeannie's fifth season opener, Variety reported:

This will be the season that Hagman makes an honest genie out of Miss Eden by marrying her. While the event is not expected to create the kind of stir brewed when Lucille Ball wrote her impending delivery into the script, it should put to rest the concern of those who might worry about the pair living together for four years. ("Mor.")

When a heterosexual couple gets engaged, the saying goes, "She's finally going to make an honest man of him." This plays on gender essentialist notions that men are animalistic and that their carnal desire keeps them sexually promiscuous. As the show's creators put it: "What sound is it that melts the heart of the average woman and strikes terror into the soul of the average man? Right! The peal of wedding bells." A man is thought to dread marriage because his "wanderer's instinct" must be negated, or at the least, temporarily subdued, for that special woman for whom he will "settle down" – or

so the myth goes. Here, the dynamic has been inverted: “Hagman makes an honest genie out of Miss Eden by marrying her.” It is rare that an engagement is framed so that the woman is the wanderer finally being roped in by a stable man. This points to Jeannie’s unrestricted sexual promiscuity that, in spite of all efforts, is still viewed as being in need of being tamed.

TV Guide also made a tongue-in-cheek reference to what was taking place in the Nelson home. “It’s going to be a mixed marriage – a genie getting hitched to a mortal. It’s scheduled to happen next week (Dec. 2) on NBC’s I Dream of Jeannie. This means, of course, that the bride will be Jeannie and the groom Maj. Tony Nelson, the astronaut with whom she has been – uh – residing for the past four TV seasons” (“Jeannie” 29).

Of course, the results of the marriage on the show are predictable: Tony no longer resists Jeannie’s magic in the same way. He gives in more frequently and is pleased where before he would have fumed. Her jealousy becomes more under control because of the established trust between them. This functions to diminish the tension between them, as anticipated. More characters are brought into the triangle in order to ignite areas of tension – the Bellowses and officers’ wives.

The implications of marriage for Jeannie are enormous. She stops calling Tony “master” and begins to refer to him as “Anthony,” expressing the maturity of their relationship – and her improved status from servant. She can finally interact with other people, no longer confined to secrecy or the private sphere. Her cultural and socio-economic capital increases greatly. She is not only a wife; she is an astronaut’s wife – a

highly coveted space in the white, middle-class imagination. As an immigrant, she finally is able to move around freely, and as she puts it “legitimately,” because it gives her an American passport. In various ways the marriage solidifies Jeannie’s steps toward assimilation – summarized in the following three steps: costume changes, familial ties, and social status.

### Harem Garb to WAF

The wedding sparked the dialogue about Jeannie’s wardrobe that the producers had initially hoped to foster. TV Guide featured Eden on the cover dressed in the wedding costume as well as in a three-picture layout on the inside: “in her harem togs, in her wedding outfit and in part of her new wardrobe, which includes lots of miniskirts.”

The accompanying captions spelled out:

The wedding gown – like all Jeannie’s clothes – was created by Joie Hutchinson, the series’ costume designer. She adapted the genie motif into a divided-skirt gown and topped it off with a literal translation of the genie hat, using white satin and lots of tulle. For those wondering what’s in store for Jeannie, we can report that Miss Hutchinson has not yet been asked to design any maternity outfits. (“Jeannie” 30)

Expanding on the notion of her “new wardrobe” Eden said, “I do think it’ll be fun to be able to wear cute clothes on the show” (“Jeannie” 30). Eden’s suggestion that she had not been wearing “cute clothes” is a misrepresentation of the show because she had been changing her outfits more frequently since the second season as advised by Sheldon

and “Hone\$ Ed” in the attempt to market a clothing line. However, it seems that this was being emphasized as a new and exciting post-nuptial change in the series.

One example of a particularly poignant wardrobe change came a year before the engagement. In the fourth season’s “Nobody Loves a Fat Astronaut” (17 Mar. 1969), Jeannie debuts the new U.S. Air Force’s WAF (Women in Air Force) uniform and accessory beret, which was designed by Harry Gilbert of the M. Born Company of Chicago and set to project a “forward look.” According to an NBC press release, the new WAF outfit was authorized for wear in the spring of 1969 (Cox 256). Shortly after this episode, Sheldon received a letter from General J. P. McConnell, U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff that read:

The recent ‘I Dream Of [sic] Jeannie’ television series in which Miss Barbara Eden appeared as a member of the WAF has contributed materially in bringing the Air Force image to the young American public in a positive manner. We in the Air Force appreciate this outstanding public service contribution and hope you, Producer Claudio Guzman, and the ‘Jeannie’ cast remain members of the ‘Air Force Team’ for many years to come.<sup>87</sup>

It is no mistake that the U.S. Armed Forces noticed the wardrobe change. Evidently, Jeannie had been working closely with the Air Force as the cast was nominated to receive a special citation award from the Air Force Association.<sup>88</sup> This is a key example of the way the text reinforces dominant ideology by functioning as a “positive” site for the Air Force. It also directly speaks to Jeannie’s Americanization process. The military is high on the list of institutions that enforce U.S. assimilation. For many, joining the ranks is a primary way to attempt to prove one’s “allegiance” to the

country. A genie wearing a new uniform for the Women in Air Force represents not only a loss of her primary Middle Eastern signifier, her costume, but also represents her newfound loyalty to the United States.

In September of the final season, Sheldon asked Claudio Guzman, a frequent director of the show, to “please see that Jeannie is in her costume when she is alone with Tony, or with Tony and Roger, so that we can keep the identity going.”<sup>89</sup> This reiterates the essentiality of her harem garb to her Arab identity. In the last year, there is a fundamental shift in the representation of her costume – it goes from being her regular clothes to her bedtime garments. Eden, in the aforementioned TV Guide article, said, “After all, she [Jeannie] couldn’t go traipsing around in her nightie all the time” (“Jeannie” 30). This is a misrepresentation because, starting in the second season and continuing until the fifth, Jeannie is shown wearing a silk pajama top and pants that appear to be from China. However, in “Jeannie and the Curious Kid” (10 Feb. 1970) Jeannie accidentally emerges from her bottle in front of the Bellowses young nephew, Melvin (Michael Barbera). Instead of blinking out immediately, she gasps, attempts to cover her body with her arms because she is ashamed, and then blinks out. This modification of the perception of Jeannie’s costume is another example of the “Westernization” of Jeannie’s identity – she no longer feels comfortable in her “harem garb” because she understands it as inappropriate. At the same time, it plays on the stereotype of the “veiled Arab woman” who must cover herself outside the house and can unveil only inside in view of men in the family.

## Genealogy

Screen Gems planned to make the wedding “spectacular” and “the big television event of the year.”<sup>90</sup> The gag of the wedding script is that genies cannot be photographed (this is inconsistent throughout the series’ run as Jeannie appears in pictures sometimes), and because Tony is a high-profile astronaut, many members of the press are there. After much chaos, Jeannie pops in a “dummy” mannequin to walk down the aisle for her when the photographers are taking pictures. Hiding in the back, she is so swept away with watching her own wedding, more excited about watching it than being present in it, that she forgets to pop in when it is time for her to say her vows. Roger wakes her out of her daydream, and the couple is married.

Noticeably, not one of Jeannie’s acquaintances or kin is at the ceremony. Jeannie’s friends – Shakespeare, Columbus, Omar Khyam – were supposed to attend but did not.<sup>91</sup> When she and Tony go into her bottle to momentarily escape the stress of the day, she tells him to see the bright side of things – her mother could have come. While this plays on the invented tension between Tony and his mother-in-law, it nonetheless reveals a great shift in her familial orientation. Going back to the second episode, when she thinks that Tony has proposed to her the first thing she does is tell her parents and begin making wedding plans with them. Here she is pleased to be rid of the burden of having to deal with them. Dr. Bellows walks Jeannie down the aisle, and Mrs. Bellows is her maid of honor. Jeannie has let go of the relationships she had prior to meeting her

master, and the relationships she has developed in their stead are in his social circle. She has not only become a NASA wife, she has (gladly) left her family behind to do so.

Jeannie's mother, sister and "crooked Uncle Asmire" were supposed to appear in many episodes and cook up obstacles for the newlyweds. While her mother and sister appear in a few, her uncles show up only once, in "Uncles a Go-Go" (25 Nov. 1969). Uncle Asmire (Ronald Long) appears with Uncle Vasemir (Arthur Malet) to meet Jeannie's fiancé, but neither of them are crooked, nor are they represented like Jeannie's great-grandfather was in the first season – when not talking, he was stealing – although the draft plans called for such a representation. Instead, they are both English. One speaks with a "proper" British accent, wears a tuxedo, and hopes her husband will be a "gentleman." The other's language and clothing is clearly working class and he wants Tony to be more like a racecar driver. Perhaps for the first time, class differences are acknowledged in the show, which is an anomaly. In the previous episode, "The Mad Homewrecker" (18 Nov. 1969), Jeannie mentions her family for the first time since the engagement when her "Uncle Yak Mir" sends a wedding gift, though, he never appears on screen. The presence of Uncle Asmire and Uncle Vasemir on screen begs the question of why Jeannie's relatives are represented as British. Compared to the earlier representations of the male family members, this representation reinforces the shift in her character from an identity rooted in the Middle East to one that is based in the U.S. Thus, her European ancestry and kin is to be upheld. It is no wonder then that her Euro uncles pay a visit while her Arab one (who sends a bed of nails for a wedding gift) does not.

### Harem Girl to Officers' Wives Association

After Tony and Jeannie are wed they spend a great deal of time double-dating with the Bellowses. In "Please Don't Give My Jeannie No More Wine" (6 Jan. 1970) Jeannie brings the couple a bottle of wine in gratitude for hosting a dinner. When Jeannie reads the label that is written in Persian, Dr. Bellows is shocked and asks, "You read Persian?" She excitedly answers "Oh yes!" but before she can explain, Tony cuts her off, dismissing the situation by explaining that she loves to study the history of the Middle East. Before marriage, Jeannie interacted only with her master and his best friend, so she never had to obscure her history. Now, in a social setting with Tony's relations, she must keep it under wraps. When she forgets, Tony lies to hide it. This is the essence of assimilation – hiding one's past in order to "pass" in one's present.

In "Jeannie, the Recording Secretary" (24 Feb. 1970) Jeannie attends a meeting of the Officers' Wives Association for the first time. She is nervous about attending but Mrs. Bellows assures her not to worry. She becomes the elected secretary. When there is a contest for the Husband of the Year Award, Jeannie wants "Anthony" to win. The problem, however, is that he is in orbit. Jeannie is eating a TV dinner when the wives stop by to interview him. He is not there, but Jeannie pops him out of space and into the living room. However, he has taken a sleeping pill and is asleep. The interview is conducted by way of Jeannie acting as Tony's ventriloquist. At the end of the day, Tony receives the award (although no one can explain how he was in two places at once). Of course, his receiving the award improves her status as a wife in the prestigious club. The

irony is that she wins only because she utilizes her magic, underlining the need for her to pose in order to do so.

### The End

The excitement that the early '60s brought with them, with Kennedy's promises about "the New Frontier" began to die out by the end of the decade. Spigel asserts that even the astronauts had to admit their disappointment with space:

Reflecting on their journeys in Apollo 8, astronauts Frank Borman, Jim Lovell, and Bill Anders were clearly at a loss for the kind of poetic language upon which high culture thrived. Borman admitted that while the moon was beautiful it was also 'so desolate, so completely devoid of life.... Nothing but this great pockmarked lump of gray pumice.' And while he hoped to find 'secrets of creation,' Lovell confided, 'the moon was void....' Anders apologized for making 'a few poets angry' with his banal descriptions of the lunar landscape, but admitted nonetheless that 'the long ride out to the moon was, frankly, a bit of a drag.' (67)

The decade culminated when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked on the moon on July 20, 1969. They took pictures and planted a U.S. flag in its surface. After this event, highly documented by the media at the time, the U.S. government could no longer justify funneling millions of dollars into the space program: the Americans had beaten the Russians to the moon, and in doing so they had supposedly stomped out communism. Of course, not everyone at the time was enchanted by the democratic propaganda tied to the moon landing and increasing dissent from African Americans and those marginalized by NASA's funding and agendas was being represented as seen in an article in Ebony published at the end of the decade. The author stated, "From Harlem to

Watts, the first moon landing in July of last year was cynically viewed as one small step for 'The Man,' and probably a giant step in the wrong direction for mankind" (qtd. in Spigel 64-65). Either way, "by 1970, the era of the space race was officially in decline, and the Nixon administration's budget cuts would cap off the process" (Spigel 67).

The 1970 space catastrophe that took place with the Apollo 13 mission is symbolic of the end of an era. Some suspect it had to do with the unlucky number 13, because of the ship's name and the fact that it was launched, for unexplained reasons, on April 13th at 13:13 Central Standard Time. The box-office success Apollo 13 (dir. Ron Howard, 1995) told the story of the spaceship known for its famous quote, "Houston, we have a problem." The problem occurred two days after launch, when, during a routine check of the oxygen tanks there was a small explosion that caused the ship to lose oxygen and electrical power. Although they did not land on the moon, the crew used the Lunar Module as a lifeboat in space and miraculously managed to make it back home alive. The networks were supposed to show coverage of the astronauts in space but opted not to due to waning interest in space exploration. However, when there was a grave malfunction they picked up the emergency. Jeannie was one of the shows pre-empted by the "Astronaut Special program."

The last episode of I Dream of Jeannie recorded was "Hurricane Jeannie" (28 Apr. 1970). (It was meant to be the last episode aired for the season but because of the preemption "My Master the Chili King" (26 May 1970) ended up running two weeks after "Hurricane.") "Hurricane Jeannie" was filmed before anyone with Screen Gems

knew about the fate of the show, although they all had a feeling it would not be renewed. It would have been difficult to continue the storyline for another season afterward as the episode is a culmination of the series as a whole.

A hurricane strikes Cocoa Beach and Roger, Dr. Bellows, Tony, and Jeannie are confined to the Nelsons' home. (Notice that, as a result of her marriage to Tony, Jeannie becomes a property owner also.) Jeannie blinks several times with Tony in the room, not realizing that Dr. Bellows is watching everything. Tony admits to him that Jeannie is a genie, and she blinks her time-viewing machine to point out several times where Dr. Bellows thought he was going mad. Tony exposes a fundamental transformation in his motivation: "I'd rather be married to Jeannie than be an astronaut." Whereas before he wanted nothing more than to be an astronaut, and Jeannie could not get in the way of that, by the last episode the opposite is true. This is excellent character development and in a film would function exceptionally well. However, in a sitcom where the tension must be ongoing week after week, and plots must be developed from characters' simple motivations, it seemed there was nowhere else to go. The creators left an out, in case the show was renewed, by implying at the end that it was all a dream.

Most noticeable in this episode is when Jeannie's bottle crashes to the ground. Her scream indicates the great loss that she feels. "Don't worry," Tony consoles her, "We're married now. We don't need the bottle." As a married woman she no longer needs separate sleeping quarters because it is acceptable now to sleep with her master. Furthermore, she should no longer need her own space, nor long for a link to her past

because of the “new life” she is going to build with her husband. The bottle breaking represents the final stripping of her Arabian signifiers – her harem costume, her relatives, and now, her bottle. Her home has literally been shattered. What she is left with is her husband, his white middle-class friends, and a home in the suburbs, with the long road ahead of living an assimilated life in America.

While Bewitched hung on for two more seasons, Jeannie was not renewed. Thus, the end of the '60s brought a culmination to the fantastic-family genre as well, and in the '70s, representations of the family began to differ. The independent-female sitcom emerged with the Mary Tyler Moore Show. This show also kicked off a “work family” trend seen later in the decade with sitcoms like WKRP in Cincinnati and Alice. Also, societal tensions were rising along with the divorce rate, and this phenomenon was represented on screen with the “broken family” or the divorced-(or widowed)-but-happy-anyway family, epitomized by The Brady Bunch. And, civil-rights movements penetrated primetime in that African American families started to appear on screen, although mostly in formulaic roles created by white liberals, found in Good Times, What's Happening!!, and Diff'rent Strokes.

In February 1970, NBC executive John Mitchell wrote Sidney Sheldon to address the termination of Jeannie:

Now that it's official that JEANNIE will not be picked up for the 1970-71 season on NBC, I want you to know that I, too, have the crying towel out. [...] While I cannot delineate the specific air future of JEANNIE episodes at the moment, I can tell you that its memorable theme song, good comedic stories and the Sidney

Sheldon credit will be on the air some place for many years to come. Each time we see the above it's bound to give us a happy feeling about a job well done.<sup>92</sup>

On 1 Apr. 1970, one of the final Screen Gems memos for the show was sent. It stated, "This is to confirm that since we have no further use for the large JEANNIE bottle set, it will be removed from Stage #1 and destroyed."<sup>93</sup> Still, Mitchell was correct in his assertion: thanks to syndication, I Dream of Jeannie would be seen for many years to come.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The main question in this thesis has asked how Orientalism was mapped onto the female protagonist Jeannie in the 1960s sitcom I Dream of Jeannie. I have found that the Orientalism was initially represented through exoticization; however, the show's producers, network executives, and social critics perceived her sexuality as too dangerous on multiple levels. Thus, the Orientalism shifts and begins to manifest itself instead through the trope of infantilization, wherein Jeannie is represented as naïve and peppy instead of sexually experienced and aggressive. This change coincides with a shift in her national allegiance, as each season she becomes less reminiscent and attached to her homeland and people in the Middle East and more identified and loyal to her master and his American way of life.

This shift toward Americanization is seen with all of her Arabian signifiers – costume, language, relationships, memories, and props. For example, by the fifth season, she rarely wears her harem garb, and when she does she is even ashamed of it in at least one instance. Not surprisingly, the shift in the way Orientalism was represented with Jeannie affected the way in which her relatives and relations from the Middle East, and her relationship to them, were represented. This is illustrated by the fact that whereas in the beginning of the series she is very close to her parents, by the end she is relieved that her mother has not come to her wedding ceremony.

Jeannie becomes so invested in her life in the U.S. that that her genie bottle, her home within her home, literally breaks. When her master tells her not to worry because she no longer needs it, she does not disagree. This signifies the final stripping of her Arabian signifier as all the others have been done away with or diffused. This provokes several questions about the construction of race that have particular relevance to critical race and ethnic studies research. For example, after Jeannie has “lost” all of her visual Arabian signifiers is she an Arab character still? Early scripts said that she would become a mortal if she were to marry a mortal. However, this does not happen; even after she marries Tony her magic stays intact. Thus, I would say that in Jeannie’s case, though it comes close, she has not lost her most important Arabian signifier, her magic. Although it is not readily available to the naked eye, it is her power and the greatest link to her people. So, yes, I believe she is still an Arab character, although a highly Americanized one.

Applying this question to a broader spectrum, if an Arab woman is stripped of all of her Middle Eastern signifiers through Americanization or another process does this rob her of her Arabness? What if she lets go of the signifiers with agency, if it is her choice? What is her “greatest link to her people?” What are her “invisible” signifiers that would correlate to Jeannie’s magic? I hope it would be more than “blood” because histories of arguments based on bloodlines are a little more than problematic. These questions are on the minds of many Arab Americans and people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds that I know, especially now, when the politics of identity carry a great deal of weight.

However, I wonder how to ask questions about assimilation, racialization, ethnicity, and communities without essentializing who “an Arab” is or viewing Arabs as “one people” locked into a static category. Categories are something to try and get away from, are they not? Yet, they seem inevitable. Furthermore, isn’t strategic essentialism necessary up until a certain point?

Returning to the discussion of the popular cultural text, particularly noteworthy to the shift in the mapping of Orientalism onto Jeannie’s character is the introduction of her evil twin sister Jeannie2, who carries all the sultriness that was mapped off of Jeannie. This doubling blatantly defines at least two Orientalist and sexist categories Arab women are thought to occupy. It is striking how the different tropes of Orientalism pit the women against each other – Jeannie as virginal, Jeannie2 as sexualized – each stuck in a different box categorized by extreme and opposite stereotypes. Although these are racist imaginings of Arabian archetypes – the oppressed, innocent, loyal servant and the over-sexualized, erotic, harem dancer – they are also very much rooted in the Judeo-Christian outlook that frames women within a virgin/whore dichotomy. Jarmakani, Shohat and Stam, and Mohanty all point to the fact that Western perceptions of Arab (or Third World) women have more to do with the anxieties of the Westerners perceiving the women than with the actual women who are being perceived.

Months ago, Dr. Espinoza asked me if I Dream of Jeannie could exist today. More specifically, she asked whether or not Jeannie as a character could have her own show today as she did four decades ago. Although there have been rumors for several years

now that the series will be turned into a blockbuster film soon, for many reasons, I have to say that Jeannie as an ongoing television series could not exist today. It was when I viewed “Jeannie and the Kidnap Caper” (21 Feb. 1966) that I realized the essence of why Jeannie would not work today: social tensions and dynamics have changed and the perceived “global enemy” has been redefined by the U.S government.

In the beginning of the episode, Tony demands that Jeannie stop pining over his every need and makes her take a sacred genie oath that she will no longer grant any of his requests and that if she does, she will lose her powers forever. This poses a problem when Chinese agents kidnap Tony in order to uncover NASA secrets. Since Tony refuses to give up any information they must inject him with “a new truth serum that takes effect in five seconds.”<sup>94</sup> Jeannie cannot help because of the vow she has taken but she does fix it so that Tony’s speech is not understandable to the viewer, although the spies can identify it. The spies argue for a moment in Chinese, and then one declares, “That sounds like Arabic. He must have been brainwashed. Very clever, these Americans.” When the female ringleader shows up, Jeannie’s jealousy kicks in, and she begins to devise a real plan to save Tony, which of course she does.

In this episode, produced during the Red Scare, Arabic is the “safe” language that saves Tony from the real enemy – the Chinese communists. This would not be the case today. Can you imagine a top military man suddenly speaking Arabic in order to hide national secrets from the enemy? Today’s mainstream American programming usually frames the enemy as Arabic-speaking. Thus, the perceived national threat has changed.

This would be reason enough why Jeannie could not be a primetime diva in this day and age. It is hard to imagine a Middle Eastern woman of Jeannie's stature, that is, with Jeannie's power, moving in with an unmarried national hero and being the main protagonist in a sitcom. Actually, it is hard to imagine a Middle Eastern woman having lines on a sitcom, let alone being a central figure.

This is the part where I feel obligated to ponder when Third World women, and Arab and Arab American women in particular, will be consciously represented as the complex human beings that they (we) are. However, I do not want to go down that road. It feels like going after dangling carrots. Although stereotypes function as confining boxes, they are by no means confined to a box; they are very much a part of current trends. If I have learned anything from this project it is that representations must be viewed within the context that they were or are created in and cannot be divorced from the socio-economic or cultural currencies of the time. Given the current global climate of xenophobia, and anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments, I am afraid that "fair" and "just" representations are a long time off. Of course, as I have already outlined, "good" and "bad" representations are created categories even if perceived as natural.

Still, Middle Eastern actors deserve more roles than Hollywood offers, and, honestly, viewers do too. As a colleague recently put it, "At least men get to play terrorists; Arab and Arab American women are playing second wives to the terrorists." I believe everyone would benefit from these confining boxes opening up. Hopefully, the

current U.S.-centric imperial moment we are living in will be just that – a moment – and there will be space opened up for multiple stories and representations to flourish.

The influence that TV has on people's perceptions is real and I regret that too often a dominant, racist, sexist, classist, homophobic (should I continue?) ideology is disseminated through its texts. When hit over the head with the same message thousands of times a day, resisting dominant thought can be difficult. Yet, I cannot write television off as an apparatus of the state because there are moments of resistance, though perhaps far and few between.

This project has been an in-depth study of I Dream of Jeannie that has incorporated textual, historical, and industrial analyses. I have read the text as a narrative, as part of the sitcom genre and offered an interpretation of it. However, this project has been just that – my interpretation. Because texts are polysemic they can be interpreted in millions of ways. Thus, this project does not put forth, nor claim to put forth, the “truth” about I Dream of Jeannie. Obviously, alternative meanings could be made and the potential for oppositional readings is great. I know of at least one case in which a viewer interpreted the text in such a way that she felt empowered by it. A friend of mine who emigrated to the U.S. from Iran when she was a young girl explained to me that she learned English in part from watching Jeannie and she holds a special place in her heart for the character and the show. Although she understood that Jeannie was obviously a stereotypical representation, it was an important one for her because as a child in a new country, it was comforting to see something related to her homeland on TV even if it had

nothing to do with her lived experience. This example reveals how colonizing moments have the potential for post-colonial unison – while Persian and Arab cultures are collapsed into each other in the text, this nonetheless offers the opportunity for Persians and Arabs to unite. Furthermore, this viewer’s experience suggests that through an ethnographic study, the multiple ways that viewers have made sense of the text could be brought to light.

This brings to the foreground the contradiction that I have suggested I Dream of Jeannie could not exist today, although, it does as the series continues in syndication. In fact, many of today’s viewers first saw the show not when it originally aired but in syndication. Ironically, generations are still growing up with Jeannie even though it had a relatively short lifespan of only five seasons. One must wonder what it is about I Dream of Jeannie that makes it what the industry calls an “evergreen show” – one that continues to captivate audiences and have economic success long after filming is completed. How does one explain its endurance?

I suspect that there are many factors that make I Dream of Jeannie an ongoing phenomenon. For beginners, it is a classic colonial fantasy that represents Jeannie as the loyal servant from the conquered land aiding her master Tony in taking on his new frontier, space. The protagonist is blonde and scantily dressed – a sex symbol – and at the same time she and Tony are silly and sweet. Thus, the show draws adult viewers but is accessible to the whole family. Also, magic is something subverted in many cultures while at the same time ever-present and people’s fascination with magic could certainly

make the show triumphant. Furthermore, the socio-economic fantasy that magic offers must not be overlooked. For those struggling to make ends meet (as the poor and many people in the working and middle classes are) the possibility of having some magic to make life a little easier – of having a genie to blink away the bills – is very appealing. Again, an audience-reception study would complement this project by explaining how viewers are making sense of the text. Jeannie's transnational success is indisputable, although the reasons for it are worthy of debate.

It is my hope that the field of Orientalism in the media will continue to develop, and more specifically, that analyses of Orientalism in television will increase. This in-depth study has outlined how Orientalism functioned on prime time in a 1960s sitcom. I wonder how Orientalism is functioning on U.S. prime time today. It is easy to see in news media wherein Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran are represented as enemy nations that are conflated into one, despite the fact that all three regions have distinct cultures, languages, and histories. It is also apparent in dramatized war programs like Over There. However, what are the not-so-obvious sites? For example, what are the comedic texts in popular culture where Orientalism is found? Surely, there are many other shows worth dissecting that would raise eyebrows and provoke the “I never thought of it that way” response that I received numerous times while working on this project. It is of the utmost importance that scholars continue to illuminate how Orientalism has functioned and continues to function in popular culture – for in order to counteract it we must first identify how it works.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Sidney Sheldon. Interoffice communications, 14 Jun. 1966 and June 1969.

<sup>2</sup> Sidney Sheldon. "Production Notes." Undated: 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>5</sup> In March 2006, a Farsi translator translated the pilot episode of *Jeannie* and said that it was an "archaic Persian," although some words were out of order or hard to understand due to Eden's accent. In January 2006, I was informed that the "Arabic" Jeannie and Tony speak in the first season is gibberish. This was asserted by two Arabic translators with whom I viewed four relevant episodes. In later years Jeannie or other characters speak this gibberish although she occasionally uses actual Arabic words in a song or exclamation.

<sup>6</sup> Here, I have followed Mohanty's style of capitalizing "Western" and "the West" while keeping "Third World" in lowercase letters.

<sup>7</sup> While this quote specifically targets feminist scholarship, this binary exists in all sorts of colonial discourse written by Eurocentric authors of all genders.

<sup>8</sup> NBC. Press Release "I Dream of Jeannie." August 1965.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Whitaker, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 4 May 1966.

<sup>10</sup> Sidney Sheldon, Memo to Walter Whitaker, 6 May 1966.

<sup>11</sup> While many scholars site these dates, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia on-line, helped to compile this succinct summary: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Book\\_of\\_One\\_Thousand\\_and\\_One\\_Nights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Book_of_One_Thousand_and_One_Nights) and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baghdad>.

<sup>12</sup> Sidney Sheldon, e-mail to the author, April 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Sidney Sheldon, e-mail to the author, April 2005.

<sup>14</sup> In March 2006, a Farsi translator translated the pilot episode for me. She said that it was an "archaic Persian," although some words were out of order or hard to understand due to Eden's accent.

<sup>15</sup> "General Strength," notes recorded by phone, undated.

<sup>16</sup> In January 2006, I viewed the four episodes in the first season in which Jeannie, or Tony, apparently speak Arabic with two Arabic translators who said that it was not Arabic they were speaking but gibberish.

<sup>17</sup> Most people I have interviewed suggest that genies are "from the Middle East somewhere."

<sup>18</sup> NBC press release, "Biography — Barbara Eden," 1965.

<sup>19</sup> “Those who ‘look’ Arab or Muslim” has become a highly controversial and dangerous political concept since September 11, 2001. See in particular the works of Evelyn Alsultany and Louise Cankar.

<sup>20</sup> Jeannie’s belly button was covered up with what Eden described as “a heavy body makeup” and was not exposed until the 1985 movie, *I Dream of Jeannie: 15 Years Later* (Dir. Joseph Scanlan, 1991). This was an ongoing point of contention in the media and continues to be talked about by many fans and reporters today. In the late 1960s, Eden was supposed to guest star on *Laugh-In* and expose her navel. In the end, she did not make an appearance because Sheldon thought it would not be “in good taste.” In the third season, Humphrey wrote, “No one seems to know exactly who is responsible for this order — maybe some executive who secretly harbors a motherhood rejection complex” (Humphrey C20).

<sup>21</sup> Sidney Sheldon, e-mail to the author, April 2005.

<sup>22</sup> It should be noted that nearly all of the other women in the first season – both those with speaking parts and extras – appear to have brown or black hair (on black-and-white film it is hard to distinguish between the two). In fact, it appears that many of them wear wigs. Having Jeannie as the only blonde is contradictory because it simultaneously accentuates her “special” status while diffusing Jeannie’s cultural “otherness” that is especially pronounced in the first season. It also reiterates the cultural myth (asserted in the 1953 film of the same title that starred Marilyn Monroe), “Gentlemen prefer blondes.” That Tony is “with” Jeannie, the only blonde in the series, reinforces his gentleman status.

<sup>23</sup> Sidney Sheldon. Memo to Thomas McAvity 17 Feb. 1965.

<sup>24</sup> To my surprise, I did not find any critics writing at the time that mentioned the absence of Melissa or the General after their departure in spite of the fact that they were part of the promotional team and had central roles in the first and fourth episodes.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas McAvity, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 25 Mar. 1965.

<sup>26</sup> Sidney Sheldon, memo to Thomas McAvity, 17 Feb 1965.

<sup>27</sup> According to Cox, Tony’s “houseboy” is Filipino (212) although the actor is Japanese. In the text the origins of this character are never mentioned, although an Asian gong and music plays in two places after s/he speaks.

<sup>28</sup> These records are part of the Sidney Sheldon Collection, housed at the Cinema/Television Library, University of Southern California.

<sup>29</sup> Sonny Chalif, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 17 Nov. 1964.

<sup>30</sup> Sonny Chalif, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 4 Dec. 1964.

<sup>31</sup> That an Indian was playing an Arab is another dimension of Orientalist casting practices still seen today.

<sup>32</sup> Sidney Sheldon. Memo sent 17 Feb. 1965.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas McAvity, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 25 Mar. 1965.

<sup>34</sup> Sidney Sheldon, memo, 5 Apr. 1965.

<sup>35</sup> Sidney Sheldon, memo to Tom McAvity, 5 Apr. 1965.

<sup>36</sup> Mort Werner, memo to Jackie Cooper, 19 Aug. 1965.

<sup>37</sup> In the original script this magazine article was called “How to Be a Woman.” However, a mandate came from NBC executives that “Modern” should be inserted into the title.

<sup>38</sup> There was much debate about the role of the camel in Arab Americans’ lives with the founding of the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. Joan Mandell, the filmmaker who created a short film for the museum, opted to include the role of the camel in Arab Americans’ lives in spite of hearing objections, because so many have used it “positive” light. I spoke informally with Joan about this at the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee National Conference in May 2005. This affinity for camels reiterates Fiske’s point about the potential for resistance and Hall’s notion of polysemic meanings in the cultural economy.

<sup>39</sup> James J. Seaborne, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 18 Aug. 1966.

<sup>40</sup> Sidney Sheldon, memo to Thomas F. McAndrews, Jr., 11 Nov. 1966.

<sup>41</sup> This white dress is also worn in the first season, in “The Americanization of Jeannie” (6 Nov. 1965). Aside from this and her “harem garb,” no costume is repeated.

<sup>42</sup> In an inter-office communication sent from John H. Mitchell (an NBC executive) to Sidney Sheldon on January 14, 1966, the places listed were Colombia, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Central America, Peru, Mexico, Bermuda, Ireland, Philippines, Thailand, Brazil, Curacao, Hong Kong, Australia, United Kingdom, Gibraltar, the Dominican Republic, and Chile.

<sup>43</sup> Edward Justin, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 2 Nov. 1964.

<sup>44</sup> According to a memo sent from Ed Justin to Sidney Sheldon on March 7, 1966, the following licensees were secured: Milton Bradley Company - boxed board game, card games and adult jigsaw puzzle; Ben Cooper, Inc. - Halloween costumes and masks; Dell Publishing Co. - comic books; Libby-Majorette Doll Corp. - costumed doll and doll wardrobe; Pocket Books, Inc. - paperback novel. In Dreaming of Jeannie: TV’s Prime time in a Bottle, Steve Cox writes that only two issues of the comic books were published by Dell Comics, circa 1966; a paperback book was published by Bantam, circa 1966; and “Miss Barbara Eden” hi-fi and stereo LPs released on Dot Records label, circa 1966 and 1967. These records pictured Eden dressed as Jeannie on the cover (Cox 201-202).

<sup>45</sup> Ed Justin, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 18 Feb. 1965.

<sup>46</sup> Sidney Sheldon, memo to Ed Justin, 23 Feb. 1965.

<sup>47</sup> Sidney Sheldon, “Re: ‘I Dream of Jeannie,’” memo to Ed Justin, 25 Mar. 1966

<sup>48</sup> Sidney Sheldon, teletype message to Ed Justin, 29 Mar. 1966.

<sup>49</sup> Ed Justin, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 15 Mar. 1965.

<sup>50</sup> Sidney Sheldon, memo to Ed Justin, 17 Mar. 1965.

- <sup>51</sup> Richard M. Warren, letter to Ed Justin, 22 Mar. 1965.
- <sup>52</sup> Ed Justin, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 22 Nov. 1965.
- <sup>53</sup> Ed Justin, memos to Sidney Sheldon, 11 Apr. 1966.
- <sup>54</sup> A common expression in Arabic. Although not a greeting, “Inshallah” means “God willing.”
- <sup>55</sup> Jeannie’s wardrobe affected doll sales and the ability to sell separate outfits, which were considered important moneymakers. As of May 1966, there were two wardrobe changes for the Jeannie doll on the market retailing at \$2.49 and \$2.98. Myrna Masour, memo to Ed Craig, 12 May 1966 and Sidney Sheldon, “Re: ‘I Dream of Jeannie,’” memo to Ed Justin, 25 Apr. 1966.
- <sup>56</sup> This was a common lyric sung on Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood, which premiered on February 19, 1968 on PBS. A total of 895 episodes were produced when production stopped in 2001. Fred Rogers, the show’s producer and writer, died in 2003. The show continues in syndication today.
- <sup>57</sup> I am not advocating for a more normal Jeannie. In fact, the episodes in which her power is contained are, if anything, fantastically dull.
- <sup>58</sup> Marvin Korman, “Re: ‘Jeannie’ Contest,” memo to Sidney Sheldon, 2 June 1966.
- <sup>59</sup> Although it was not announced in this episode, the year of Jeannie’s birth was 64 B.C.
- <sup>60</sup> At the annual meeting of the National Association of Broadcasters he congratulated them on their financial success and then commenced to tear apart prime time calling it a “vast wasteland” of “a procession of game shows, violence, audience participation shows, formula comedies about totally unbelievable families, blood and thunder, mayhem, violence, sadism, murder, western bad men, western good men, private eyes, gangsters, more violence, and cartoons. And endlessly, commercials – many screaming, cajoling, and offending” (Barnouw 1975: 300, quoted in Taylor 1989: 28).
- <sup>61</sup> Jackie Cooper, memo to John Mitchell, 20 Sept. 1968.
- <sup>62</sup> James J. Seaborne, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 18 Aug. 1966.
- <sup>63</sup> Sidney Sheldon, memo to Thomas F. McAndrews, Jr., 11 Nov. 1966.
- <sup>64</sup> Jackie Cooper, “‘I Dream of Jeannie’ – Third Season,” memo to Sidney Sheldon 20 Jan. 1967.
- <sup>65</sup> This show was also written and produced by Sidney Sheldon and ran from 1963-1966.
- <sup>66</sup> Jackie Cooper, “‘I Dream of Jeannie’ – Third Season,” memo to Sidney Sheldon 20 Jan. 1967.
- <sup>67</sup> Sidney Sheldon, letter to Edward S. Barker, 24 Feb. 1967.
- <sup>68</sup> Jackie Cooper, “‘I Dream of Jeannie’ – Third Season,” memo to Sidney Sheldon 20 Jan. 1967.
- <sup>69</sup> Sales Planning Department, “I Dream of Jeannie” pamphlet for the 1967-68 third season.

<sup>70</sup> This was one of two shows filmed on location in Hawaii. The second one, “The Battle of Waikiki” (2 Jan. 1968) revolves around Tony teaching King Kamehameha (Michael Ansara), the king who defended the islands from invasion centuries earlier whom Jeannie has blinked to present day, about “the benefits of civilization.” Again, Tony takes the high road and must enlighten the Third World character about the “progress” put forth by his nation.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Wookey, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 23 Aug. 1967.

<sup>72</sup> In the memo Sheldon wrote, “I thought a young sister of Tony’s might be an effective character” but had not worked it out to his satisfaction yet. The only member of Tony’s family who ever appeared was his mother in “Meet My Master’s Mother” while Jeannie had numerous visits from her sister and mother and occasional visits from other genie friends. Sidney Sheldon, memo to Thomas F. McAndrews, Jr., 11 Nov. 1966.

<sup>73</sup> The Boyce & Hart Group wrote many songs for the Monkees and also appeared on The Flying Nun and Bewitched (Cox 239).

<sup>74</sup> Many argue that the U.S. Patriot Act is not new legislation but a continuation of COINTELPRO, revamped to target Arabs, Middle Easterners, and “people of Muslim descent.”

<sup>75</sup> Leonard Goldberg, memo to various, 20 May 1969.

<sup>76</sup> Originally Black Panther member Bobby Seale was being tried, and the case was known as “the Chicago Eight.” However, Seale was ordered bound and gagged because of his courtroom outbursts and in November 1969 his case was severed from the trial and tried separately from the group, leaving the “Chicago Seven.”

<sup>77</sup> Sidney Sheldon, letter to Jeff Rose, 12 Aug. 1968.

<sup>78</sup> Joseph A. Goodson, letter to Jack Petrie, 18 Dec. 1968.

<sup>79</sup> James Hardiman, memo to Marvin Korman, 15 Nov. 1968.

<sup>80</sup> Marvin Korman, “Re: ‘Jeannie’ Contest,” memo to Jerry Hyams, 25 Feb. 1969.

<sup>81</sup> Mimi Wold, letter to Warren R. Welsh, 12 July 1970.

<sup>82</sup> It is written into dialogue in several episodes that Tony does not drink alcohol.

<sup>83</sup> For an in-depth look at the Orientalism of cigarette advertisements see Amira Jarmakani’s dissertation: “Disorienting America: The Legacy of Orientalist Representations of Arab Womanhood in U.S. Popular Culture.”

<sup>84</sup> Sidney Sheldon, “RE: ‘I DREAM OF JEANNIE,’” memo to Jackie Cooper, 9 Jan. 1968.

<sup>85</sup> Mrs. H. Leigh Nygren, letter to Screen Gems Production, 24 Sept. 1968.

<sup>86</sup> Sidney Sheldon, letter to Mrs. H. Leigh Nygren, 27 Sept. 1968.

<sup>87</sup> Sheldon responded to his “kind letter” with another: “Just as ‘JEANNIE’ has been able to ‘blink’ her master out of seemingly impossible situations, so has the Air Force, again and again, ‘blinked’ for ‘I DREAM OF JEANNIE’.” J.P. McConnell, letter to Sidney Sheldon, 25 June 1969 and Sidney Sheldon, letter to J.P. McConnell, 7 July 1969.

<sup>88</sup> They did not receive the award, however, because the request was submitted too late. “I am confident that had we met the deadline, our nomination would have been honored unanimously and enthusiastically.” Arthur S. Ragen, LtCol, USAF, letter to Sidney Sheldon, 24 Feb. 1969.

<sup>89</sup> Sidney Sheldon, memo to Claudio Guzman, 12 Sept. 1969.

<sup>90</sup> Sidney Sheldon, memo to Jim Hardiman, 26 Feb. 1969.

<sup>91</sup> “I DREAM OF JEANNIE – FIFTH YEAR.” undated document.

<sup>92</sup> John H. Mitchell, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 18 Feb. 1970.

<sup>93</sup> Seymour Friedman, memo to Sidney Sheldon, 1 Apr. 1970.

<sup>94</sup> “Truth serum” was seen on many shows in the ‘60s and ‘70s, including but not limited to Get Smart, Batman, and Wonder Woman.

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