

Mulan chinese legend, the ballad of mulan. in



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Mulan is an animated movie which was released by Walt Disney Pictures in 1998. It is based on the 6th-century Chinese legend, The Ballad of Mulan.

In the animation, as in the legend, Fa Mulan, the protagonist, disguises herself as a man and goes off to fight in the army, by doing so she is protecting her family and demonstrating a female capability for war.

Therefore, the animation challenges the social norms and gender roles of women. It also shows typical views of society towards women based on the time period in which it was created. Before we proceed any further, it is important to note that the social issue during production time was that men were in higher status than women in many aspects of life.

We encounter with the stereotypes of women throughout the animation. At the very first beginning, Mulan, the heroine, prepares herself for her meeting with the local matchmaker, the matchmaker is a lady whose job is to establish a marriage with a pattern which involves questions and answers. She tries to memorize following things: quiet and demure, graceful, polite, delicate, refined, poised, punctual(Blum 3). According to her society these things are necessities to be a woman. After Mulan's heroic victory against the Huns, when she gets home, her grandmother sarcastically says that "great, she brings home a sword, if you ask me she should have brought home a man"(01: 19: 50-01: 20: 00). Even though she saved the entire empire, this achievement is not seen as important as marriage.

Another stereotype is that women are expected to be silent and submissive to their husbands in the story. One clear example is that Mulan's mother speaks very little in her husband's presence, which implies and promotes

women's inferiority. Over the course of the animation there are many examples which shows society's view towards women and they are displayed carefully along with the songs which are catchy. For instance, in You'll Bring Honor To Us All, it is implied that women can only bring honor to her family by marrying. In another song, A Girl Worth Fighting For, emphasizes that a woman who worth fighting for would be a beautiful and a good cook, neither smart nor brave which gives the impression of education of women is useless. Moreover, women are just seen as " breeders" as Cheu states that when the matchmaker meets Mulan, she comments that Mulan's body is " too skinny" and therefore is " not good for bearing sons"(7).

In the storyline, women are seen as objects to their husbands for the sole purpose of procreation. In conclusion, throughout the animation Mulan tries to rebel against the expectations of her society from a woman and achieves her goals not by being a woman but by being a man, and saves China and the Emperor, but in the end she rejects being General, a title that was given by the Emperor despite of her gender, and goes back to her home agreeing the society's norms. An additional note is that according to the story, women are not allowed in the army and that is the ultimate disrespect and the penalty is death sentence. In my opinion, There is a subliminal message given by the creators and that is, from time to time a woman can be the hero who saves the day but in the end she has to go back to her " rightful" life. Despite her heroic actions, Mulan is not free from traditional gender roles and that femininity will always be inferior to masculinity.