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Cultural hybridity in Disney's Mulan (2020): Analysing Media Text, Production and Reception

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Universiteit Leiden

**Cultural hybridity in Disney's *Mulan* (2020):
Analysing Media Text, Production and Reception**

East Asian Studies MA

Master Thesis

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1. Introduction

The increased interconnectedness and economic integration between countries and people, what we commonly refer to as globalisation, radically altered the way the individuals perceive themselves in relation to local and global communities. The pervasiveness of globalisation both in the public and private sphere became more tangible for people in its cultural dimension, when it started to disrupt conventional understandings of culture as being tied to the nation state (Nederveen Pieterse, 2020). The formation of diasporic communities as a result of migration flows and the intensification of global mobility facilitated by technological breakthroughs proliferated cross-cultural interactions and created new opportunities for cultural exchange (Papastergiadis, 2000). Realising that under these new configurations a singular national identity often did not suffice to represent one's cultural experience, theorists began exploring the effects of cultural globalisation on people's sense of belonging (Tomlinson, 1999). One part of these discussions focused on the theorisation of cultural hybridity in conjunction with the hegemonic effects of culture. And even though the mixing of cultures is not a new phenomenon, the degree and pace in which it is happening in the past decades as well as the role of communication and media in this equation support its relevance and significance in academia.

Emerging from postcolonial and cultural studies, the concept of *cultural hybridity*, a central concept of analysis in this research, was employed by social scientists as an approach for interpreting global cultural exchanges and identity formation and transformation within societies where cultural fusion occurred either forcefully or organically (Burke, 2009). Cultural hybridity connotes the merging of "distinct forms, styles or identities" through "cross-cultural contact" (Kraidy, 2005, p.5) which results in the creation of what Homi Bhabha called a *third space*: a "new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211); a discursive space which works as a precondition for the expression of cultural difference (Bhabha, 1994). It is suggested that approaching globalisation as a process of hybridisation might challenge essentialism, remove the East/West or West/Rest binaries, by dissolving cultural, ideological and linguistic boundaries and by establishing in their place interstitial spaces between cultures (Nederveen Pieterse, 2020). However, since cultural exchanges and cross-cultural mixings are more often than not unequal and thus conflictual (Shohat & Stam, 2014), a benevolent view of hybridity as a panacea for eliminating tensions and divisions would ignore the power struggles and asymmetries between cultures, or the causal relationship between cultural hybridity and economic and political power structures (Kraidy, 2005). It is thus crucial to assess the cultural exchanges occurring in each case, since hybridity, when constructed by hegemonic forces, can turn into a tool for normalising cultural differences and neutralising political claims of culture (Kraidy, 2002; Kompridis, 2005).

Manifestations of such claims can be found in popular culture and mass media products from North America and Europe which demonstrate the endurance of Western cultural *hegemony* over non-Western countries and cultures. *Hegemony*, in this case exercised through culture, is not stable or permanent but constantly refigured and negotiated (During, 2007). In order to successfully establish itself it requires the consensual compliance of the dominated culture or group to the interests of the dominant system which will further legitimise the power of the latter (Hall, 2018). According to the proponents of the cultural imperialism theory, Western transnational media corporations are the agents of Western dominant cultures and the representatives of corporate capitalism (Tomlinson, 1999). Globalisation has enabled them to expand their reach and the economic, political and ideological power they have accumulated allows them to disseminate their ideas globally and impose their Eurocentric cultural hegemony on marginal cultures (Tomlinson, 1999). In cinema specifically, the media industries of the dominant centres have maintained their cultural hegemony by commodifying the cultural experience of those in the periphery and incorporating elements of it into their own dominant discourse (Shohat & Stam, 2014). In line with this paradigm, to achieve greater commercial success Western multinational media corporations often create culturally hybrid films by using the process of transculturation: they extract materials of a local culture and then transform them into globalised cultural products that will meet the tastes, values or lifestyles of a wider audience (Wang, 2008). It has been argued that the appropriation of non-Western cultural elements in Hollywood specifically further reinforces dominant ideological representations over representations of the original culture and eventually leads to a single homogenised culture (Yin, 2011).

The reproduction of non-Western tales, legends and fables and the adaptation of their narrative to match the American values and ideals has been Disney's successful strategy for decades (Anjirbag, 2018). But in an era where China has turned into a global counterforce to the dominance of the West, and with the Chinese market providing strong incentives for transnational media corporations like Disney to engage with it (Su, 2014), some of the arguments of the cultural imperialism thesis might need be revisited for the theory to maintain its relevance (Shohat & Stam, 2014). One other major criticism on cultural imperialism for not adapting to new realities has to do with neglecting to examine the interaction and hermeneutic process between the media text and the audience (Tomlinson, 1999). The role of the audience in media production has more gravity than ever before. Through their online presence, people have become very active in voicing their opinions, something that has decisive and direct effects towards globalised cultural products.

In this research, I will attempt to identify how the process of cultural hybridisation takes place in media and specifically in a transcultural context. The word transcultural suggests a motion or a flow

between places and cultures (Kraidy, 2005) that does not necessarily involve the process of cultural hybridization. I will study the American film *Mulan* (2020) which is produced by Walt Disney Pictures and is based on the Chinese poem and folk tale “Mulan shi” or the “Poem of Mulan”. *Mulan* (2020), as a transcultural film production, provides the opportunity to examine Chinese and Western cultural encounters at different levels. From the portrayal of the story to how the message and imagery is encoded and affected by cultural imperialism and finally how it is decoded by the audience, hybridity might occur in multiple instances. Therefore, it is crucial to adopt an approach that considers the links between production, message and reception. Discourse analysis is a suitable methodology for this research because it explores the meaning-making of a media text, in relation to a greater nexus of texts and discourses, as well as the production and reception processes (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Media text on this occasion suggests a more dynamic perception of text and refers to visual, verbal and textual forms of communication and the interactions between them (Wodak & Busch, 2004).

The main research question of the study is: how is cultural hybridity formulated in a transcultural film adaptation? To answer this question, I will first address the following issues in my analysis:

1. How are gender and moral values packaged and interpreted in *Mulan* (2020)?
2. How is Disney’s cultural hegemony consolidated through discourse construction by the film’s production strategies?
3. How is the message of the film decoded by the audience?

To answer my first sub-question, I look into the cultural negotiations of two themes: gender and moral values. Whenever applicable I draw comparisons between *Mulan* (2020), the original poem, the animated *Mulan* (1998) or other Chinese versions, in order to examine how the narratives unfold in the latest movie. Regarding the second sub-question, I analyse interviews of the production team and publications on the production process to confirm or refute the hypothesis that through their discourse Disney’s cultural dominance is reinforced. Scholars have suggested that by analysing the production process of media products we can become more aware of how cultural hybridity is shaped by the broader communication practises (Kraidy, 2005). For my third research sub-question I examine how the media text is interpreted by the audience and whether hybridity can be formed as a result. It has been argued that hybridity in media can be located both in the cultural production, as well as in the interaction and interpretation between the cultural product and the audience (Kraidy, 2005; Wang, 2008). To address this claim I study online reviews on *Mulan* (2020) in Douban, a Chinese online community platform that, among its other functions, allows users to rate movies and write reviews.

In the introduction of my thesis I presented the notion of cultural hybridity and the main axes of my thesis. In the second chapter I will be reviewing the literature on *Mulan*, explain how it informs

my research and analyse how and why Mulan is connected to cultural hybridity. In the third chapter I will recount my choices with regard to methodology and expand on the research methods and data collection. Chapter four will be the main part of my analysis, in which I will examine the contents of the movie with respect to gender and traditional values, the discourse surrounding its production process and finally how it was received by Chinese Douban users. Ultimately in chapter five I will present the concluding remarks of my thesis, its contribution and limitations as well as suggestions for future research.

2. Literature Review

This chapter is divided into two sections. First I will review literature about Mulan and specifically in relation to gender and traditional values which will be two focal points in my analysis of *Mulan's* message. In the second section I will revisit the scholarship on the Westernised and Disneyfied versions of Mulan, summarise the scholars' main remarks and draw linkages among their arguments.

Traditional Values and Gender in Mulan's Tale

The story of Mulan has been expanded across space and time and has been modified and imbued with various meanings in different historical, social and cultural contexts. The contradictions between a filial daughter and a warrior that are incorporated within the heroine, and the negotiations between gender, social position and moral obligations has preserved Mulan's popularity and has drawn the attention of scholars. By reviewing the literature on Mulan we can have a better grasp of the transformations the legend has undergone way before it travelled overseas which manifest its inherent hybrid nature. The Mulan poem originates in the fifth to the sixth century during the rule of the Northern Wei dynasty (386 - 533 CE). Although its first recorded textual form which can be traced back to 568 CE hasn't survived, what is now known as the "Poem of Mulan" comes from an anthology dating back to the twelfth century during the Song dynasty rule (960 - 1279) and it is generally accepted by scholars as the most authentic among other versions of the poem (Kwa & Idema, 2010). Following the examination of historical and literary sources, it is now widely claimed by academics that Mulan was imagined as belonging to the Tuoba Xianbei ethnic group during their rule of the Northern Wei dynasty (Holcombe, 2013). From linguistic analyses Xianbei origins were closer to the Turks than the Han Chinese, and it is suggested that even the name Mulan should not be understood with its Han Chinese meaning (Chen, 2005). Despite that, Mulan's

identity was claimed by the Han and her story was appropriated by the Confucian literati and was refined in a way that would fit their ideology and moral values (Chen, 2005).

Even though in the modern retellings of Mulan the cross-dressing and her gender have received most of the attention, scholars argue that actually the central theme is the filial duty of a daughter to her parents (Hsieh & Matoush, 2012). This is also the main argument of Edwards (2010) who explores the transformations of Mulan in the Chinese retellings and how they are informed by the cultural context of each era. She points out that although the crossing of gender boundaries maintained Mulan's popularity, the main theme of the first versions is her filial actions and, additionally to this, the internal, moral conflict between devotion to the parents and loyalty to the central state (Edwards, 2010). Edwards (2010) observes that the poem stands as an ideal for filiality as well as a "muted critique of the central authorities' unreasonable exertion of brute power" (p. 181). She notes that filial piety until the 20th century retellings of the story was expressed through Mulan's loyalty to her parents, especially her father, but from the 20th century onwards it is interpreted as loyalty to the state complementary and inseparable to the devotion to the parents, abiding to Confucian ideals (Edwards, 2010). Therefore, during the 20th century the central narrative of the story changes, turning Mulan into a national symbol by dissolving her ethnic identity and assigning her that of the predominant ethnic group of the Han (Edwards, 2010). Loyalty to the central state replaced the earlier versions' motive of Mulan to join the army in place of her father. She would enlist in order to protect him from the unreasonable demands of the state; out of obedience to it but not devotion (Edwards, 2010). This claim also seems to be justified by the fact that Mulan denied the offer of an official position. Should her loyalty lay with the state, she would have accepted, but instead she chose to return to her family.

Lan (2003), adopting a historicist approach, she also explains that the values which are highlighted in the first surviving poem of Mulan are not emanating from Confucianism, instead it is the absence of Confucianism that brings about the conception of the poem. According to the Confucian tradition of the time, ideal women had an elegant and gentle image, but the fighting skills and achievements of Mulan match with the value system of northern ethnic groups, where military participation was not limited to men (Lan, 2003). Therefore, Lan (2003) contends that the devotion Mulan showed to her parents was appropriated by Confucianism. She also claims that the three cardinal guides of Confucianism which define the bonds between father and son, monarch and subject and husband and wife, principally shaping the hierarchical structures of Chinese society, emerge in later renditions of the legend (Lan, 2003). Complementary to these bonds are the virtues of filial piety, loyalty to the monarch and moral integrity or chastity. This context is important in order

to understand how filial piety, loyalty and other moral values that she is bestowed with by Disney are packaged in the newest film and will be thoroughly examined in the analytical part of the research.

Apart from the traditional concepts that are detected in the film it is important to review discussions regarding how gender norms and roles are manifested in *Mulan* and how her identity is constructed through that. First of all, according to Edwards (2010), the transgression of gender norms in *Mulan* was considered at the time neither feminist nor revolutionary. Her cross-dressing was used as an indication of the extents of her devotion to her father as well as an intriguing and amusing element to the plot (Edwards, 2010). Kwa (2012) adds to these ideas saying that “the transgressions in *Mulan* as such are not really that transgressive after all” (p.71) since after she carries out her mission she returns to her former life. However, Kwa (2012) also suggests that *Mulan*’s gender is in fact what holds the plot together and her transformation from woman to man and then back to woman again just through putting on and taking off clothes is an important element when considering how femaleness was constructed and interpreted. The hierarchical and gendered social system that was later supported and preserved by Confucianism demanded from female warriors to discard their feminine identity and dress and act like a man in order to enter the realm of men (Li, 2020). Dai (2002) from a Marxist feminist perspective notes that when *Mulan* was permitted to have an active role in the course of history she had to fulfil the requirement of being a filial daughter first. Her devotion to her parents and only that was what allowed her to break gender norms. And even when that happened her female subjectivity would be concealed under the masculine, military clothes (Dai, 2002). In the original poem when *Mulan* returns from her heroic journey she resumes her previous life as a filial daughter and, by taking off her military clothes, she is leaving the valorous world of men and is returning to that of the women. This ending reaffirms the dual temporality of the female and the male worlds (Dai, 2002) and the “spatial segregation” of men and women with the former to belong to the outer and the latter to the inner (Dong, 2011). In the end *Mulan* is no threat to the patriarchal society as her heroism is more celebrated than her boundary crossing actions (Dong, 2011).

Dong, Edwards and Lan all highlight the significance of contextualising *Mulan* and understanding its historical and socio-cultural background. Having the “Poem of *Mulan*” as a hypotext the later renditions added or deducted elements, thus making *Mulan*’s story a cultural “vehicle for transporting and forming cultural traditions” (Dong, 2011, p. 188) across space and time.

Mulan in the West & Cultural Hybridity

Mulan became widely known in North America through Maxine Hong Kingston’s novel, *The Woman Warrior* (1976). The book is based on *Mulan*’s legend, mixing fantasy and myth, but it is by

and large an autobiography with Kingston's personal reflections, her impressions on China, simultaneously incorporating an American point of view which derives from her Chinese American experience (Lan, 2003). Dong (2011) argues that the book provides important insight on Chinese and Asian diasporic identity. She notes that Kingston's impact with *Woman Warrior* was threefold: apart from her contribution to the Asian American discourse and the matrix of *Mulan* texts, she opened the discourse to a wider audience introducing *Mulan* to a cross-cultural context and she paved the way for future interpretations from a feminist standpoint (Dong, 2011).

After Disney took over the role of narrating and spreading globally the tale of *Mulan* in 1998 the criticism it received from various disciplines was fierce, but admittedly proportional to the influence and international reach of the company. Many scholars asserted that the characters and the story were approached from a Eurocentric viewpoint and were interpreted in an Orientalism manner, thus deconstructing *Mulan* and reconstructing it according to the Disney formula (Yin, 2011; Tian & Xiong, 2013; Wang, 2020). Some also observed that it is a standard practice for Disney to use transculturation, which results in the deformation of the original tales and fables and their reformulation into a hybrid cultural product (Wang, 2008, Tian & Xiong, 2013; Xu & Tian, 2013). In 1998 *Mulan*'s case, Chinese culture was transformed in a way that would approach American culture in order to suit the needs of the American public.

One of the movie's selling points and widely acclaimed aspects is the departure from the depiction of Disney princesses as traditional and submissive women and a move towards female empowerment. But Yin (2011) claimed that Disney's appropriation of *Mulan* reinforced Western stereotypes and presumptions on China, reducing Chinese culture to an Oriental tyranny that is hostile to women and individual freedoms. According to her, the version of feminism that was used by Disney was the one that contains Western individualism at its core. There is a general consensus among scholars that Disney's central narrative focuses on *Mulan*'s search for herself and her self-esteem against the fate that was forced upon her from a patriarchal Chinese state (Tang, 2008; Dong, 2011; Yin, 2011; Yang, 2018). Thus, the feminism projected in the film renders female oppression as a problem of non-Western societies (Wang, 2020). This superficial interpretation of feminism in the film is evident in the finale when Fa *Mulan*, for all her independence and bravery, in the end is reduced to "a girl in search of a man" (Giroux, 1999, p.102) just like the rest of the Disney princesses.

Filial piety in *Mulan* (1998) is sidelined and replaced by the Western notion of individualism, creating a discordance with *Mulan*'s first and foremost motive of being a filial daughter (Dong, 2011). Although Yang (2018) attributes this partly due to "cultural filtering and literary misreading" (p. 16), when Tang (2008) examined the production and reception of Disney's *Mulan* through its Chinese

subtitles she found that the writing team rewrote and adapted the script to erase “gender-biased comments” (p. 158) and instead made the dialogues more “family-oriented” (p. 158) stressing Fa Mulan’s wish to be a good daughter to her parents. All these manifest the discursive power of Disney in projecting its own cultural values, the values of the dominant, against the values of the dominated, non-Western culture is a common practice that has been observed in other instances too (Giroux, 1999; Yin, 2011; Anjirbag, 2018).

Wang and Yeh (2007) examined Disney’s cultural production of *Mulan* (1998) and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) as examples of hybridised cultural products. They identified two processes of cultural hybridisation: the blending of traditional Chinese imagery and symbolism and a packaging of multiculturalism that represents the American reality (Wang & Yeh, 2007). They remark that for cultural hybridity to generate new cultures “requires a process of dialectic discourse and reflective interaction through which ideas, values, and meaning clash and are negotiated and regenerated” (Wang & Yeh, 2007, p. 93). Otherwise, it is only a mix of various cultural elements that follows conventional profit-seeking production models and ultimately merely commodifies non-Western cultures (Kraidy, 2002).

3. Methods of Research

To gain an in-depth understanding of how cultural hybridity is formulated in media products I chose to work on *Mulan* (2020); a cross cultural film that incorporates hybrid cultural features. *Mulan* (2020) has been chosen as a case study for this research for several reasons. First of all, *Mulan* narrates the story of a girl who enlisted in the army in place of her father by disguising herself as a man. The film is an adaptation of the 1998 animated movie of the same name, which drew from Maxine Hong Kingston’s book and other variations of the story (Dong, 2011), but, according to the producer Jason Reed, this time more attention was given to the “Ballad of Mulan” and several different versions of it (Lee Szany, 2020). The 2020 film is in English language, has an all-Asian cast, a production crew that is predominantly from the United States and New Zealand and it was filmed in New Zealand and China.

The film was initially intended for a world-wide theatrical release. Due to the impact of Covid-19 it was released on September 4, 2020 in Disney+, the streaming service of Walt Disney Company, for countries with access to the service, and in theatres for countries without access and in which the cinemas were open (D’Alessandro, 2020). In China, where access to Disney+ is blocked, *Mulan* was

released in cinemas on September 11, 2020 (Sprangler, 2020). For this research I accessed the movie through the standard monthly subscription.

In my three units of analysis, which correspond to the three sub-questions, I will use discourse analysis as an approach to investigate the interrelation between the content of the film, its production and its reception. The theoretical framework of this thesis integrates multiple and interdisciplinary perspectives in social research. Therefore, it requires to take into consideration the intertextuality of a text, that is its connection with other past and synchronous texts, as well as its interdiscursivity, the connection of its discourse with other discourses, in order to explore the contribution of the text to the construction of the social reality (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). The story of *Mulan*, because of the many adaptations it has received for over 1500 years (Edwards, 2010), exists in a network of texts which inform one another and is influenced by the socio-political, cultural and historical context. Therefore, to understand the discourse that emerges from the movie and how it relates to wider discourses including gender, identity, globalisation, we also need to understand the context in which it is produced. Studying a combination of text, discourse and context through discourse analysis will enrich the research and allow a more nuanced interpretation of the newest *Mulan* film.

With regard to the film's content I focus on how gender and values are represented in the movie and how the filmmakers drew on the two different cultures. I will critically analyse these two themes in the movie as a whole and then investigate them in detail in specific relevant scenes. Then I compare them with the "Poem of *Mulan*", other Chinese versions such as *Mulan Joins the Army* (1939) and the animated film *Mulan* (1998) to investigate their intertextual relations.

For the second sub-question of this thesis my working assumptions are that cultural hybridity has a causal relationship with power and that Disney's cultural hegemony is articulated during the film's production process. The concept of power, a central element of this research, is closely related to discourse. Power may enable structures and mechanisms to construct dominant discourses in a society and these same discourses have the power to direct people's ways of acting, talking and thinking (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). In order to unpack the underlying cultural imperialism of the film, I extensively examined articles that outline the film's production, as well as press conferences, promotional interviews and question-and-answer sessions with the filmmakers in which I located and analysed discursive formations. My data are all in digital form and have been collected via online search engines mainly from media companies of the United States, the United Kingdom and New Zealand, or the English language departments of non-English news agencies such as Xinhua. I narrowed down the sample to the data with the greatest relevance to the sub-question, without excluding those that might refute my assumptions.

To examine how the audience decodes the message of the film and whether it contributes to the formation of cultural hybridity I turned to Douban user reviews. I chose to work with this type of reviews because online users recount their personal experience to inform each other building a form of an online community, as opposed to professional film critics that have a distance from their readers (Taboada, 2011). Douban is a major Chinese community website that is centred around entertainment and popular culture and largely relies on user-generated content. As a platform, among its many functions it allows users to provide recommendations, rate and write reviews on films. Demographic analyses of Douban have shown that its users are more than 80% Mainland Chinese and less than 10% are located in the US, Taiwan and Hong Kong (Soh & Yecies, 2017). The website accumulates users that are interested in various aspects of culture, tend to be more critical and they are usually from China's middle class, including university students and office workers, with females exceeding the male visitors (Soh & Yecies, 2017). Overall Douban is considered a credible source for feedback but as with the rest of China's cyberspace it still remains constrained by China's censors.

When leaving a film review the users are given the option to either make a "short comment" or post a "film review" that is usually much longer. For this research I will only engage with the former. These comments fall into two larger categories, the users who have watched the movie and those who want to. Subsequently they are divided into positive, mediocre and negative according to the number of stars given, on a scale from one to five. For this research I selected a sample of 50 short comments from each of the three sub-groups from users that have watched the movie and sorted them by "popularity", as opposed to sorting by "newest first". I collected my sample on 6 March 2020, I transferred it to a text processing software and removed from each short comment the username, avatar, number of stars and number of upvotes, keeping only the comment itself and the date it was posted. In a total of 150 reviews translated by me from Chinese to English I selectively analysed my data in order to detect and assign themes that are related to my research questions. The reviews that refer to technical aspects of the film or comment on the actors' acting abilities were filtered out, as they are not relevant to my research, but the entire body of the reviews is included in the appendix. They are coded with "P", "M" and "N" for "positive", "mediocre" and "negative" followed by their numbers.

Finally, this research follows Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model of communication which is still prevalent in media studies. Hall thinks of the process of communication as a "a structure produced and sustained through the articulation of linked but distinctive moments – production, circulation, distribution, consumption, reproduction" (Hall, 2007, p. 508). During encoding, the means, practises and social relations within the media apparatus that operate in the production stage

create and disseminate messages or meanings in the form of coded *sign-vehicles* (Hall, 1973). These messages, framed by the ideology of the encoder and the social, political and cultural context, are circulated and distributed to audiences as discursive formations (Hall, 1973). The codes that the encoders choose —usually unconsciously— assign meanings to events and offer rational explanations and interpretations that will be widely accepted by the audience (Hall, 2018). They signify events in ways that represent and reproduce the dominant ideology of the hegemonic power structures (Hall, 2018).

On the other end of this communicative process, when a message is read by the audience it can be accepted, negotiated or opposed to. Thus the decoding has a degree of autonomy from the encoding process since it is not predetermined that the viewers will understand the meaning as it was intended by the encoder. The production process continuously draws on the audience through various feedback mechanisms, thus making the audience “both the source and the receiver” of the message (Hall, 1973, p. 3). In this way reception becomes a moment of the production process but at the same time both production and reception are distinctive moments in the communication process (Hall, 2007). In other words, both encoding and decoding are equal parts in the process of meaning-making. This model stressed the significance of the decoding in the communication process when applied to television and film as well as the influence of the audience in encoding. It also stressed how messages might take different meanings depending on the audience (Hall, 1973). In the scholarship of *Mulan* there are no research projects that connect the production process with the message and the reception from the audience, therefore, this will be the added value of this thesis.

4. Encoding and Decoding Disney's *Mulan* (2020)

The main body of my research will be split into three units. First, I will analyse how gender and moral values are interpreted and packaged in *Mulan* (2020) and how the film might be informed by previous renditions. Then, in the second part, I will analyse the public interviews of the production team, mainly of the director Niki Caro and the producer Jason Reed, to examine how new narratives were integrated in the encoding of the film, how their discourse legitimises the authority of Disney and the implications of the collaboration with China. Finally, I will identify and draw attention to main themes emerging from online reviews to examine how the film was interpreted by the Chinese audience.

Unpacking gender and moral values

Gender

In this new version of *Mulan* under the Disney banner, the patriarchal society in which Hua Mulan lives is unveiled from the very first minutes into the film. Starting with a scene of Mulan, as a child, training we are introduced to Hua Mulan's temperament as well as the limitations she faces in their male-dominated world. As the viewers watch young Hua Mulan practising martial arts they learn, through the narration of her father Hua Zhou, that Mulan has an inherent ability called *chi* which is defined in the movie as "the boundless energy of life itself" and that *chi* is a power only for men to wield. *Chi*, an older romanisation of *qi* (气), is a fundamental concept in Chinese philosophy and medicine (Cheng, 2013). Mulan has been imagined to possess magic powers before, for example in Kingston's version, but the reinterpretation of a pre-existing, traditional concept and its forceful insertion into the Western tradition reveals an Orientalist attitude (Yin, 2011). It is portrayed in such a manner that this Disneyfied *chi* resembles the Force that the Jedi use in the *Star Wars* franchise, as the Douban users also pointed out. In that way, inserting American pop culture from the beginning creates a distance between the film and Chinese culture. *Chi* is also imagined as taboo for women to use and if they were to use it they would bring dishonour to them and their families, thus foreshadowing Mulan's dilemma. However, knowing that Mulan possesses some kind of power supports the view that to be equal to men you need to be gifted and special rather than work hard. The introduction of *chi* in the plot undermines the achievements of Mulan and makes her character development and her growth as a warrior more limited, making the storyline anticlimactic.

Mulan being a tomboy and having pre-combat training is not an innovation of this film. In several Chinese versions of the story, like Chu Renhuo's *Historical Romance of the Sui and the Tang* (c. 1675) or in *Mulan Joins the Army* (1939) Mulan drifts away from the image the poem creates as a typical woman of her era that spends her time weaving and she is depicted as having learned martial arts and war strategy from her father or as having hunting skills (Edwards, 2010). In Disney's animation we see her as a clumsy but quick-witted tomboy that is not interested in feminine activities but complies with the demands of her parents and society. In a similar manner, the 2020 film shows Mulan as a sharp and mischievous child. Her quick reflexes, the result of her training, reveals her potential as a strong woman, but the society in which Mulan grows up is not appreciative of her social transgressions. Thus, building up Mulan's character, Disney wants to create an antithesis between Mulan and her society, projecting to her American ideals for what a strong girl should be but conceiving the society she lives in as backward and conservative.

Her parents have different attitudes towards their child's nature. Her mother, Hua Li, is stricter and asks her to control herself, afraid of her future and her marriage prospects, while her father is more lenient due to how proud he feels of Mulan. In the original poem Mulan takes her father's place in the army because he is old, but later alterations in the plot have him as also being sick or injured (Tian & Xu, 2013), thus making the audience more empathetic towards him. In order to stress Mulan's devotion and love to her father and underline her quality as a filial daughter, the relationship between them has been in the foreground of the story to contribute to the plot and her character development. In the 2020's *Mulan* the father's character becomes a likeable figure who is further exalted as kind, understanding and loving to his daughter by being put vis-à-vis a strict mother. Thus, in the parents' interactions Hua Li appears to take a harsher attitude to their daughters' upbringing while assuming a dominant stance over her husband, but her doing so makes her character less likeable to the viewer. So we see the creators making the mother an agent of the patriarchy. Unable and unwilling to defy it, she succumbs to her role and prevents Mulan from getting rid of the restraints of the patriarchal society. The fact that a mother is also a victim of the patriarchy is ignored and the burdens and expectations which arise from her position as a woman and a mother are disregarded (Kaplan, 1983). Her role in this film is to urge her husband to talk to and discipline Mulan by reminding him that daughters bring honour to their families through marriage and that Mulan's behaviour might result in her being called a "witch". For *Mulan's* international audience the father here is being portrayed as more progressive and accepting, thus reflecting a Western attitude and values, while the mother is a representation of a strict Asian mother, following the stereotypes that are usually found in Western popular culture.

Seeing how women are imagined in this rendition of Mulan it seems that the filmmakers wish to stay loyal to the Confucian code of conduct for women. Under the Confucian hierarchical and patriarchal society, gender and social roles were distinct. Confucian scholars propagated teachings which dictated that women are inferior to men, they do not belong to the outer sphere and they have to stay in the inner sphere at all times (Zhen, 2013). The understanding and treatment of women at that time was encapsulated in the "Three Obediences and Four Virtues" (Li, 2020). Women, through their sexual morality, speech, modesty and diligence, were obliged to obey their father, later the husband and finally, after the death of the husband, their first son (Gao, 2003). Created to fit into that mould, Hua Mulan, was instructed to control herself and was taught that her duty is none other than bringing honour to the family by getting married. Regardless of her age, social and gender norms needed to be embedded in her mind. When the movie flash-forwards to Mulan being a young woman we see her cheerful and carefree, but her social responsibilities are reestablished when it becomes known that the matchmaker found her an "auspicious match". The

viewers who are familiar with the animated version know that the matchmaking will not succeed, but the film also informs them subtly that this is the future that awaits every other girl in Mulan's society that does not have superpowers or a strong sense of self-actualisation. Mulan is not extraordinary because of her deep devotion to her parents but because she has *chi*, a power that is inevitable to suppress because after all it makes her who she is.

On the other hand, her sister, Hua Xiu, is not that gifted. According to the creators she was added to represent the person that Mulan would be if she didn't have *chi* (Libbey, 2020). She is portrayed as an average, traditional woman that stays within the defined lines of her gender role. Being submissive and obedient we can hardly learn anything about Hua Xiu other than her fear of spiders, which is mentioned three times in the film, and her future marriage plans, which is the only thing that she says about herself when the two sisters meet upon Mulan's return. Hua Xiu's role is to facilitate the unfolding of Mulan's personality. She is an unexplored character added only for the sake of elevating Hua Mulan's character by diminishing her own value. Because she identifies with traditional women like her mother she is not being given any chances to resist the patriarchy making her existence another reason why neither this version of Mulan may break the deeply-rooted gender norms.

While being in the military camp as a training soldier we see an alteration between Mulan's masculine and feminine self. When she wears her armour she assumes her masculine role. Her male alter-ego is hot-tempered, competitive and stubborn, draws her sword without too much thought and strives to become the best warrior, while in the meantime she establishes strong bonds with her fellow soldiers. But as soon as she takes her armour off her feminine and vulnerable side resurfaces and the audience is reminded of her sexuality. We see her return to her female identity when she unties her bosom binder before she goes to bed and when she takes off her armour to wash herself in the lake. Nevertheless, either in her masculine or in her feminine self, her guilt of being a woman and lying about it combined with the fear of bringing "disgrace" to her family creates an even heavier burden. This burden is only alleviated once she starts accepting herself and the existence of her *chi* as well as when she gradually gains the acceptance of other soldiers and her commander.

The narrative that Disney follows thus far resembles that of the animated *Mulan*. The heroine feels out of place in her own world, which is the female, inner sphere of the society, because she is constantly disappointing her family for not being feminine enough. Instead, in the world of the men, which is the public or the outer sphere, she gradually finds her place and thrives by taking advantage of her performative masculinity. But the very nature of the military and militarism is embedded in gender inequality and as Zhen (2013) suggests the "ideology of male superiority and female inferiority originated in conscription and was passed on to later generations" (p. 178). Therefore,

when Mulan transforms back to her gender later, she is treated as a woman that violated the dividing line between the inner and outer realm and she is punished with expulsion; the ultimate disgrace.

Earlier in the film, soon after the viewer learns that Mulan's nonconformist behaviour might result in her accusation as a "witch", we are introduced to Xiannian, a character who embodies the stigma of being a woman with *chi*. Besides having *chi*, she also uses it "in destructive ways" which is forbidden, thus drawing another parallel with Star Wars' Force. Because of this, she was ostracised and later taken in by Böri Khan, the leader of the invading army, who deceived her into joining forces by offering to give her "a place where [her] powers will not be vilified, a place where [she is] accepted for who [she is]". Xianniang's role is instrumental in making Mulan realise that, in order to take advantage of her power, she needs to return to her female self. Her transformation occurs amidst battle and, interestingly, for the filmmakers Mulan embracing her gender is interpreted as removing her armour and releasing her hair while riding her horse to battle. Seeing her undisguised, enemy soldiers recognise her as a woman and flee scared while calling her a "witch". The reveal of her gender and her consequent expulsion happens in the middle of the film, in order to create another obstacle for Mulan to overcome and have her final victory be attributed to her as a woman (Wang & Yeh, 2007; Dong, 2011).

Xianniang, despite having been introduced as a villain, is not the real enemy of Mulan. Being empathetic and seeing herself in Mulan she exposes men and the patriarchy for being ungrateful to Mulan's efforts due to their fear of women with power. She offers an alternative future to Mulan if they join forces. According to Niki Caro their scenes together were deliberately "directed as a love scene" but in a way that would not dissatisfy the general audience (Ito, 2020). The chemistry between the two women is implied in all of their scenes but in order to be well-received from a wider audience their interaction is restricted within the acceptable limits of Disney's heteronormative narratives. After Mulan's rejection, Xianniang comes to terms with the fact that she will never be accepted because her allegiance layed with invaders, whereas Mulan is loyal to the legitimate central state.

The character of Xianniang turns into a vilified, tragic figure. She is called a "witch", a word that echoes images and myths from mediaeval Europe. Creed (1993), from the perspective of psychoanalytic feminism, defines the witch as "an abject figure in that she is represented within patriarchal discourses as an implacable enemy of the symbolic order" (p.76) with her evil powers incorporated in her femaleness. Second, according to the filmmakers the role of Xianniang was created "to explore female power in that society and in different ways" (Lieu, 2020). But while she is imagined as a powerful female character her potential is restrained by subjecting her to the will of Böri Khan, who self-declares himself as her "master". Kaplan (1983) notes that in Hollywood movies

the patriarchy punishes the women who seek to challenge it and refuse to submit to the defined boundaries of their role. If they do resist it they are sacrificed as a punishment for doing so (Kaplan, 1983), and this is exactly the ending of *Xianniang*. Her last act of resistance to the patriarchal society was sacrificing herself to save Mulan from Böri Khan, her former “master”.

Taking into account the current social circumstances and changes that the Me Too movement brought about, *Mulan’s* ending was reimagined to adapt —within certain limits— to contemporary demands. The filmmakers in an ultimate attempt for this movie to break with the past and modernise the Disney princess franchise they decided against Hua Mulan’s domestication. Explaining why the character of captain Li Shang, the love interest of Disney’s animated *Mulan*, didn’t return producer Jason Reed said: “I think particularly in the time of the #MeToo movement, having a commanding officer that is also the sexual love interest, was very uncomfortable and we didn’t think it was appropriate” (Lee Szany, 2020). When Hua Mulan is about to return to her family, she rejects the romantic advances of Honghui, a fellow soldier with whom she had developed a bond. During the movie there were hints about a potential romance between them. Nevertheless, the final parting of the two in the movie was abrupt and contrasted the pink-hued colours of that scene, which created a typical Disney fairytale-like atmosphere. The existence of this setting made sense only when it was revealed that a kissing scene was shot and cut because it was rejected by “the China office” as it “doesn’t feel right to the Chinese people” (Ford, 2020). These comments verify once again the commercial character of the film and expose the complexities and marketing strategies behind *Mulan’s* production.

The original poem ends with Mulan revealing her gender to her fellow soldiers after returning home where she puts on her own clothes, applies makeup and fixes her hair. The soldiers are astonished finding out that they fought beside her for twelve years unaware that she was a woman. Mulan’s response to their surprise reads:

The male hare wildly kicks its feet;
The female hare has shifty eyes,
But when a pair of hares runs side by side,
Who can distinguish whether I in fact am male or female¹

These four verses create an analogy between hares, of which the gender cannot be distinguished while running, and humans, who by dressing differently they can conceal their sexual differences (Kwa, 2012). The placing of this analogy at the very end of the poem gives a didactic tone to the story

¹ Translated by Wilt L. Idema from Kwa, S., & Idema, W. L. (2010). *Mulan: Five versions of a classic Chinese legend with related texts*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co.

implying that femininity and masculinity is something that can be put on (Kwa & Idema, 2010). Mulan's cross-dressing becomes a signifier of gender and roles as social constructs (Dong, 2011). Evoking the "Poem of Mulan", the 2020's *Mulan* positions the hare analogy early in the story when the audience sees Hua Mulan for the first time as a young lady. While she is riding her horse she notices two hares running and when she returns home she narrates how she rode her horse alongside two rabbits. Mulan says: "I think one was a male, one was a female but, you know, you can't really tell when they're running that fast. When I go riding tomorrow, I will try to find them again". For the international audience that is not familiar with the poem, this scene mostly works as a transition to the grown up Mulan. It does not transfer the allegorical meaning of the hares nor it suggests that it constitutes the moral of the story. The scene is impactless, its significance de-emphasised and it appears to be used only to trigger the Chinese audience's emotions who are familiar with the story.

Moral Values

Moral values in *Mulan* (2020) are codified in the catchphrase "loyal, brave, true" in order to become ingrained in the mind and memory of the audience. Loyalty, courage and truthfulness are being repeated as sacred virtues multiple times during the movie -they are even engraved on the sword of Mulan's father in the form of awkwardly translated Chinese characters. These three words are called in the movie the "three pillars of virtue" and all soldiers, among them Mulan, must pledge fidelity to them. It is easy to assume that these three values were chosen because they can be culturally translated for Disney's international audience without too much explanation. Courage as a virtue denotes qualities that are commonly found in the heroes of action-adventure Disney films. Truthfulness, which implies the central character's self-determination and self-fulfilment, is a value that fits Disney's formula. These two values are representative of American and Disney ideals but are presented as integral to Mulan's story. On the other hand, loyalty and filial piety, which is introduced later in the movie as "devotion to family", are more closely relevant to Chinese culture and appeal to Chinese and Asian-American audiences. Loyalty responds to Chinese people's patriotic feelings, while filial piety derives from China's Confucian tradition. Therefore, these values were chosen to represent both the American and Chinese culture but are encoded in a way that relays the message to global audiences. This is Disney's usual strategy of changing the ethnic material to universal, making it easier to be decoded and then massively consumed (Yin, 2010).

We discover the significance of loyalty as a virtue in Mulan's society when Mulan's father is called to serve the imperial army against foreign invaders. His wife and Mulan try to convince Hua Zhou to reconsider enlisting but for him not complying with the imperial edict is unimaginable as

loyalty to the state is unquestionable. In an act of enforcing his authority as a father and a man he becomes furious with his daughter for suggesting that he won't be able to fight, reminding her that his "place" is to bring honour by fighting in the battle and sacrificing himself for the emperor. According to the film a man going to war is not only proving his loyalty to the emperor but he also honours his own family and ancestors and in that way he is being "loyal, brave and true". In contrast, for a woman of this society loyalty to her family is proven by honouring her family through marriage.

Moving on to the interpretation of truthfulness, as a training soldier Mulan is being taught that dishonesty is the gravest of crimes in the army, it results in expulsion, which is worse than death and translates to disgrace for the soldier, his family, his village and his "country". Truthfulness becomes a fundamental moral value in this version of Mulan making the heroine's position riskier. In an attempt to connect *chi* with the virtue of truthfulness and tie the plot together it is explained that the mystical power can be found by default in all living things. Since "only the most true will connect deeply to his chi and become a great warrior" Mulan accepts her power and releases her *chi*, but she cannot reach her full potential as a warrior because she still conceals her gender. When she finally reveals her true self she is denounced and expelled. This contradiction is what the entire plotline of this movie is based on. Mulan's society disapproves of women with *chi* but for her to defeat the enemy and save the emperor it requires her to accept who she is and be true to herself. The movie here wants to communicate a modern tendency in Western popular culture that advocates embracing who you are, but to do that it first has to construct an unequal society for women.

After her expulsion Hua Mulan is given an alternative path by the Xianniang, but her sense of duty and her loyalty to the emperor make her resolve to "fight for the kingdom and protect the emperor" stronger, a resolve that reminds of the European knight archetype. Mulan is adamant on staying within the limits of a patriarchal society. The scene in which Xianniang proposes to Mulan to join forces could be regarded as a clash between loyalty to the patriarchy and female emancipation. Its purpose is to emphasise Mulan's devotion and determination but instead she appears to be unable to escape from what Dai (2001) calls women's "social fatalism" (p. 157). Additionally, knowing that the movie had to be given permission by Chinese authorities and at the same time aimed to appeal to the Chinese general audience, Mulan's excessive opposition to betraying the emperor can also be interpreted as a nod to Chinese nationalism. Her loyalty continues to be the focal point of the rest of the film. Her dishonesty is excused due to her loyal and brave actions and the disgrace she brought upon her family is overlooked. By now it is almost forgotten that the reason why Mulan enlisted in the first place was to protect her father, out of her love and devotion to him. Her adventure is one of self-discovery and self-fulfilment more than a filial action and midway her purpose changes to saving the kingdom. Mulan's cross-dressing not only changes her identity but her

goal too. Assuming the identity of a male soldier results in shouldering the same duties and, therefore, while she is a man, honouring her family by marriage is changed into honouring them by being loyal to the emperor.

Shortly before the end of the film we learn from the emperor that “devotion to family is an essential virtue”, after Mulan declined his offer for an official post and asked to return home. She claims that in order to fulfil her oath of becoming loyal, brave and true she must go back to her parents and ask their forgiveness. As soon as Mulan returns, her commander visits her home to repeat the emperor’s offer and to present her a new sword that apart from the three pillars of virtue it also has engraved the Chinese character of filial piety, read out loud by Mulan as “devotion to family”. The meaning of filial piety in the tale of Mulan and the Chinese tradition is far beyond the simplistic “devotion to family” translation (Qian, 2020) but it is rendered as such in order to accord with the other three universalised values.

In the first surviving version of Mulan, filial piety leads the narrative of the story. Mulan’s actions of bravery were prompted by filial piety and were reactionary to the merciless state that required her elder father to fight. However, Disney removes filial piety as the core of the story making loyalty and truthfulness the cornerstones of Mulan’s determination. In earlier Chinese renditions of the tale, loyalty to the emperor often existed as a central theme next to filial piety (Edwards, 2010). In the course of time the more centralised and stable the state was in China the more Mulan’s loyalty and patriotism was emphasised. Nevertheless, loyalty was always an extension of filial piety as serving the state was congruent to serving one’s parents and it is possible that the filmmakers adopted a similar approach.

Seeing how the significance of loyalty and truthfulness are foregrounded in the film, a question emerges: To what degree is Mulan’s enlistment actually motivated by filial piety and to what extent is it an attempt to escape her oppressive society and a quest to find her true self? The film highlights her dissatisfaction of being “matched” and her awkward reactions to her princess-like makeover before visiting the matchmaker, thus reaffirming that Disney imagines Mulan as an unconventional, tomboyish rebel. In order to appeal to modern audiences’ demand for strong, free-spirited heroines that are more suitable as role-models than traditional princesses, Disney tends to portray female protagonists by assigning them clichéd male behavioural characteristics and suppressing their femaleness (Dong, 2011). Having already watched Mulan’s tomboyish behaviour and her powerful *chi*, seeing her yield her father’s sword before she leaves feels entirely natural to the viewer. Mulan’s act of defiance can be perceived as a sacrifice that stems from her love and devotion but I argue that it also derives from the need to escape from her fate and it finally leads to a self-discovery journey.

Before the film ends, Hua Mulan is asked again to become an officer in the imperial guard but the film ends without Mulan offering an answer. The vague ending to her story presumably allows the viewers to decide for Mulan's fate according to their preference. This ambiguity feels appropriate as an ending for a movie that seems to be prioritising pandering to the tastes of the Chinese audience, international audiences and complying with the restrictions of China's authorities so much that it fails to become an adaptation that will make Mulan truly transgress her social and gender boundaries. The Disneyfication and interpretation of the Chinese moral values demonstrates the filmmaker's superficial understanding of Chinese culture and reflects stereotypical assumptions, something that is also evident from their "cultural authenticity" discourse that I will analyse in the next part. Overall, *Mulan* (2020) integrates reimagined and universalised Confucian moral values as much values found in Disney films and adopts a consumer-friendly type of feminism that balances female empowerment out.

Cultural Hegemony in Mulan's Production Process

The concept of hegemony, while it was conceived to interpret the relations between the dominant and the dominated groups within the state, may be applied in analyses of transnational media corporations seeking to gain access and control other countries' markets (Mirrlees, 2013). These corporations, besides contributing to the continuity of the ruling bloc's dominance, have accumulated enough power that allows them to exercise hegemony independently (Mirrlees, 2013). Hegemonic forces that operate within the domain of culture, need to continuously revise and change their content to follow new social and cultural developments to maintain their dominance (During, 2007). Wasko (2020) has pointed out that the characteristics, styles, values and ideologies of Disney are prone to alterations and revisions according to social changes, aiming for the company to appear more inclusive and progressive. Gender, racial and ethnic representations in Disney films reflect the ideology and mentality of the society in which they were produced and they can be traced in the content and the characters (Wasko, 2020). Thus it can be argued that Disney not only operates as an agent of the American hegemony and the capitalist system it is supposed to represent, but it constitutes a hegemonic centre itself that works within but also beyond the state.

The encoding of a Disney film occurs within Disney's system of meaning that represents and reproduces the dominant discourses and ideology of American society, in a process that might be unconscious for the filmmakers. Hall (1973) claims that the encoders, although they are considered as relatively neutral and autonomous due to their professional position, they still have ideological biases and operate within the media apparatus that is ideological itself and aligned with the ruling

elite. To signify events or concepts, the encoders are compelled to employ certain codes, which are within the limits of dominant discourses, aiming for the audience to decode the message in their intended manner in order to legitimise the credibility of their interpretations (Hall, 1973) The filmmakers of *Mulan*, apart from their positions as encoders, they have also assumed an active role in promoting the film, and through their discourse they explain their approach and choices in *Mulan*'s encoding. Below I will analyse how Disney, prompted by social changes, adapted its discourse to maintain its hegemony, and how the encoders, by reproducing this discourse, legitimised the company's authority.

There were two major events in the film industry of the US which occurred almost concurrently with *Mulan*'s development stage and arguably added pressure on Disney to adapt its style and formula to respond to consumer demands. The first one was the public outcry over Hollywood's lack of ethnic and racial representation in cinema, in which the Asian-American community assumed an active role in exposing Hollywood's whitewashing and misrepresentation history (Hess, 2016). Perhaps this was what led the filmmakers to prioritise the authentic representation of Chinese culture (Wardlow, 2020) and made it imperative that *Mulan* would feature an all-Asian cast, most of which were of Chinese heritage. However, the production's crew was much less diverse, mostly non-Asian and with a New Zealander director, hence they received a lot of criticism (Yam, 2020). In an attempt to evade these accusations and manifest Disney's progressiveness and inclusivity, female representation in the crew's major roles was regularly highlighted, embracing the second event that affected the movie: The MeToo movement (Pierrepoint III & Gao, 2020). The revelation of incidents of sexual violence in Hollywood engaged the public in conversations on combating sexism, challenging the patriarchy and demanding equality (Mendes et al., 2018). Even though the development of the film and the choice of a female director was decided prior to the spread of the movement, it has been explicitly mentioned by Jason Reed, one of the producers of *Mulan*, as an influence on the film's content (Lee Szany, 2020), indicating Disney's readiness to follow new developments that would affect its market and target audiences. The adjustment of Disney's course to align with the sensibilities of the era can also be captured in the discourse of the filmmakers while they were promoting the movie. Quoting the film's writers, *Mulan* narrates a "story about authenticity and female empowerment" (Desta, 2020). These two ideas were invoked on many occasions in the filmmakers' interviews as the two axes on which the production and the film was based, demonstrating *Mulan*'s influence from the social context.

Female Empowerment

The director, Niki Caro, took the opportunity of the promotional interviews to express how “*Mulan* is a newer version of what a strong female looks like” (Acuna, 2020), while also highlighting what an achievement but also how “highly unusual” it is to have a “crew led by women . . . in filmmaking at this scale” (Mora, 2020, 04:13). Caro mentioned in a few interviews that she identified with *Mulan* in the sense that they both had to find a way to survive in a male-dominated environment by disguising themselves. “The film organism, even despite my best efforts, is still a man’s army . . . I used to think, embarrassingly now, that I would somehow have to disguise myself” (Radish, 2020). She projects herself to *Mulan* and links the female empowerment behind the camera with the on-screen story. However, it is not the filial *Mulan* that becomes the role model for the director. Instead it is the version that she has directed in this film that surpasses the social constraints only after embracing her female side because “she can never be powerful, unless she loses that disguise” (Radish, 2020). *Mulan* is decontextualised, redefined and envisioned as a “warrior princess” (Geisinger, 2020) and as “a newer version of what a strong female looks like” that would show how “everybody has that potential to find what they’re good at, to find their passion” (Weiss, 2020). Therefore, the interpretation of female empowerment by the filmmakers echoes Western mainstream understandings of feminism, infused with modern American ideas on femaleness, mainly targeting the consumers of countries that had recently received the influence of the MeToo movement.

Female empowerment is often adopted as a narrative in media because it attracts good publicity and accommodates the audience's sensitivities, but when the dominant system, in this case Disney, manages to incorporate it and adjust itself to social changes it might result in a construction of reality within the boundaries of dominant ideologies (Kim, 2008). Kaplan (1990) noted that, while female directors have tried to overcome the limitations that Hollywood has set on women’s image and restore women’s voice and status with their films, it is still possible that they are not able to place femininity outside of the patriarchal order due to lack of knowledge of a different reality. In *Mulan*’s case, imbuing a story of the Chinese cultural tradition with Western, and specifically American, ideas and values appears to be legitimised on the grounds of supporting gender equality and female representation. But even so, this apparently counter-hegemonic discourse that wants to resist the prevailing norms, fails to do so because it is confined within the dominant ideology of Western hegemonic culture.

Cultural Authenticity

Authenticity was also brought up very often in the crew's interviews as a cornerstone of the production and it was explicitly mentioned as a goal from the director, producer Jason Reed and the writers (Lee, 2017; Wardlow, 2020; D'Alessandro, 2020; Desta, 2020). The filmmakers claimed that they did "tremendous amounts of research because it's incredibly important in this film that Chinese culture was respectfully and authentically represented" (Wardlow, 2020). Niki Caro specifically stressed in a number of interviews how she "strives for authenticity and specificity always" (Pierrepont III & Gao, 2020), but her responses on how authenticity was approached were usually vague. She reassured that every decision and every aspect of the film were deeply researched (Mora, 2020; Geisinger, 2020) as they had an "army of Chinese advisors" (Pierrepont III & Gao, 2020). Jason Reed provided more details saying that they had a "council of advisors" during the development stage which consisted of "25 different experts in various areas that were helping with design, costumes, makeup, architecture, story," but he also added that they took into consideration the Asian and the Chinese diaspora audience and received feedback from "researchers and sociologists and storytellers in that area" (Lee Szany, 2020). Evidently, Disney is trying to prove its adaptability to current social issues by implementing a different course of action when working with different cultures. The company has recognised that, in order to improve its public image and maintain the audience's approval, showing or advocating intercultural sensitivity in filmmaking is imperative.

Despite best efforts, the production crew's individual approaches on authenticity can be revealing on the lack of cultural awareness and the underlying Orientalism in Western consciousness. This could be seen by the methods that several members chose to familiarise themselves with Chinese culture. The director and the cinematographer, Mandy Walker, mentioned that they "spent a lot of time on the ground in China" (Weiss, 2020). Walker claimed that they "looked at a lot of Chinese cinema and Chinese art, both contemporary and historical, to see how the images were composed" and that they noticed that many of the artworks were "in widescreen format, rarely square, with either strong vertical or horizontal lines" and that this was one of the "influences in how [they] framed the movie" (Weiss, 2020; Prince, n.d.). The costume designer also revealed that she "went to Europe to all the museums that had a Chinese department and . . . travelled to China [to soak up] all the Chinese culture" (Li, 2020). Even during the casting process for the role of Hua Mulan, romanticised views of the exotic Orient emerged informing the fantasies of the filmmakers. As Caro says: "a lot of us . . . had this really romantic dream that we might find Mulan in a little village in China" (Radish, 2020). The assumption that one can have deep understanding of a thousand-years-old culture through several months of non-topical research nods to a superficial understanding and an Orientalist mindset. The cultural hegemony of institutions like Disney, formed

through time and adaptation to social changes, has legitimised an Orientalist interpretation of Asian culture and a cursory encoding of foreign values that caters to the preconceived views of Western audiences.

When confronted for the movie's inaccuracies like the use of a Fujian Tulou as Mulan's home, a type of structure located in Fujian province in the South of China dated much later than Mulan's setting (Haynes, 2020), the director defended the decision as being a suggestion from the film's producer Bill Kong (Geisinger, 2020). She continued justifying filming in a Tulou saying that she "had an epic vision for her journey, and the journey of a girl who travels across China to go to war . . . from the South East all the way to the North West to battle" (Geisinger, 2020). The choice of this setting and the justification contradicts or rather makes more confusing the director's understanding of "authenticity" and eventually leaves an impression that the Tulou was picked due to its unique, oriental aesthetics. This practice endangers the culture, in this case the Chinese culture, it falsely represents with "*cultural flattening*" by erasing the cultural differences between ethnic groups and different periods of time (Shohat & Stam, 2014, p. 179). It also seems to verify claims that China's film board advised filmmakers against focusing on a specific dynasty (Watson, 2020). Producer Bill Kong stated that he advised the director "not be too concerned about the historical accuracy" since Mulan "is fictional, she's not a historical person" (Ford, 2020). It appears that historical as well as cultural accuracy were brushed aside in the film so that the story can become successful in several markets. Even though the film's creators presented Mulan as a culturally authentic film product, they stressed that it still remained a Disney film that also intended to appeal to global audiences (Lee Szany, 2020; Brzeski, 2019). However, false claims on authenticity, even when referring to fiction, can lead to real life assumptions at the expense of marginalised cultures, while reinforcing the power and authority of the dominant bloc (Shohat & Stam, 2014).

Chinese Culture - Disney Culture

Apart from marketing the film as culturally authentic, Disney's long tradition and expertise was employed to further legitimise its authority on narrating stories of other cultures. "We had two big traditions that we wanted to honor making this film. We wanted to honor the cultural origins of the original story and . . . the storytelling tradition of Disney," (D'Alessandro, 2020) mentioned Reed, while Caro, on the same wavelength, commented that *Mulan* was a "beautiful marriage" because, as she said, "under the Disney brand, we can bring honor to Chinese culture in an authentic and specific way" (Lenker, 2020). The two filmmakers on different occasions placed Chinese culture alongside Disney, expressing a wish to "honor" both by creating a hybrid version between the two. Additionally, Caro wanting to defend the company's decision on choosing her to direct a Chinese story instead of

someone with Chinese origins, she claimed that “although it’s a critically important Chinese story and it’s set in Chinese culture and history, there is another culture at play here, which is the culture of Disney, and that the director, whoever they were, needed to be able to handle both — and here I am” (Ford, 2020). Here the superiority of Disney is reinforced through the discourse of the director who suggests that the company has an equal status with Chinese culture and history, along with assuming herself a position of authority. Despite highlighting the struggle for authenticity, she eventually admits that there are only so many concessions that can be made without Disney losing control of the narrative. Disney’s dominant “culture” imposes its own values and constructs a narrative that perpetuates the distinctions between the dominant/Self and the dominated/Other while implying the superiority of the former (Anjirbag, 2018), something that is now reflected in the encoder’s discourse too.

Niki Caro herself argues that “Disney recognized they needed a director who could convey the cultural imperatives of Chinese culture while honoring Disney's own unique culture and style” (Pierrepont III & Gao, 2020). The company’s objectives when filming adaptations matched Caro’s approach to working with other cultures, as she believes that “to be specific and authentic is to be universal” (Lee, 2017). According to the film’s producer Jason Reed, Caro “has always been defined by her ability to go into specific cultures, find the universal story, and bring a mass audience into that world” (D'Alessandro, 2020), a quality that would manage to preserve Disney’s practises. Chinese culture had to be hybridised and filtered through Disney’s signs and meanings in order to be decoded by bigger audiences. This is expressed by Caro who, while discussing filial piety, remarked that “it’s the core of Chinese culture, and also the core of Disney culture, you could argue,” (Lenker, 2020), thus appropriating it and integrating the context of filial piety within that of Disney. For Chinese moral values to be intelligible to Disney’s global audience, they are naturalised and universalised while remaining within the limits of the dominant ideology.

Giroux (1999) observed that Disney films possess at least as much cultural authority and legitimacy for teaching roles, values, and ideals as more traditional sites of learning” (p.184). The pedagogical role of the company is also brought up by Reed when he explains what makes *Mulan* a Disney film. He thinks that “these stories ... help us look at the world and talk to our children about things that will concern them or things that are maybe more difficult for us to discuss in general” (Lee Szany, 2020). Disney’s educational side and the authoritative power it has assumed in explaining reality and cultures by using its own value system and ideology remains problematic, regardless of the intentions of the filmmakers. The filmmakers through their discourse granted Disney and assumed themselves a hegemonic position that justified the decontextualisation and reshaping of Chinese culture.

Counter-Hegemonic Forces

A factor that affected *Mulan*'s production and content and could potentially undermine Disney's hegemonic stance, is the company's financial dependence on the Chinese market. China currently has the biggest box office worldwide, making Hollywood studios yield to the demands of the Chinese state in order to gain access to the country's theatres (Li, 2021). After many occasions in the past, when Hollywood studios had to apologise to the Chinese state for insulting the country and the people (Yu, 2014), they now have a better understanding on how to work with the Chinese authorities in order to overcome China's cultural protectionism and ensure the distribution of their movies (Su, 2014). The quota system China has implemented, which controls the number of imported foreign movies every year, has forced studios to adapt their productions and content to abide by the state's censors and regulations (Yu, 2014). American studios have objected to allegations that they self-censor their films to pander to Beijing and refer to their stance as "cultural sensitivity" (Belloni, 2019), but a report of an American non-profit organisation on free speech suggests that there is a tendency in Hollywood in recent years to adapt the content of films so that it could attract Chinese audience and stay within the limits of Chinese censorship (Li, 2021). For *Mulan*, a movie with a budget of 200 million dollars, the stakes were high and its success in China was imperative, as highlighted by Alan Horn, co-chairman of Walt Disney Studio at the time, who noted that "if *Mulan* doesn't work in China, we have a problem" (Belloni, 2019). After all, this movie was characterised as "a love letter to China" by its director (Pierrepont III & Gao, 2020).

A film, before it reaches the audience, goes through multiple stages of content and distribution controls that are overviewed by the state and have a great impact on attracting cinema audiences (Xiao, 2011). Producer Reed explained that to ensure *Mulan* would make it past Chinese authorities' censors "[they] worked closely with SARFT (State Administration of Radio, Film and Television) and with Chinese Film Corporation (China Film Group Corporation)" (Lee Szany, 2020), China's biggest state-owned studio (McMahon, 2020). Reed expressed confidence in the relationship between Disney and its partners and distribution entities in China, but the country has also benefited from this partnership. In the past China has recognised that its own productions are less influential in promoting the country's public diplomacy compared to Hollywood films (Peng, 2016). Thus, *Mulan* was an opportunity for both sides to push their own agendas based on reciprocity: Disney managed to secure distribution in the Chinese market and increase its box office revenue while China ensured that the state maintains control of the country's international image, the centrepiece of Chinese soft power strategy for decades now (Su, 2014).

It seems that Disney attempts to sustain its cultural hegemony through the reproduction of dominant discourses which have been adapted to integrate new ideas and by trying to prove its

authority. Disney's independent initiatives in China for the production of *Mulan* that disregarded the political climate between China and the Trump administration at the time (Barnes & Qin, 2020) support the argument that Disney can exercise its hegemony beyond the US state. However, due to the prominence of China's box office globally, Disney and the rest of the American film studios are willing to adapt and sanitise their content in order to gain access to the Chinese market, and it is still unclear where the limits of these adjustments lie. Scholars have suggested that while American cultural hegemony is still undeniable on a global scale it is not completely uncontested (Su, 2019). The emergence of counter-hegemonic forces and ideologies could result in the future establishment of new dominant systems, for example in the form of influential film studios in China (Su, 2019).

Furthermore, the audience itself could become more of a counter-hegemonic force to Disney's hegemony than the Chinese government, as the resistance from the central state can be circumvented by making smaller or bigger concessions to the content. Satisfying the Chinese audience by succeeding to effectively communicate the message of the film between the stages of encoding and decoding however is another hurdle to overcome, and Box office success in China is never certain (Peng, 2016). For the filmmakers of *Mulan*, finding the golden ratio between maintaining the familiar Disney imagery and narrative and appearing "authentic" enough to win over Chinese audiences was perhaps the greatest challenge. Insofar as Disney depends on the Chinese viewers for the success of its films and the maintenance of its hegemony, its formula will need to adapt more to the cultural circumstances of China. The reactions of Chinese viewers to the representation of their own culture through a familiar story will be thoroughly analysed in the next part.

Reception from Douban Users

Mulan (2020), in order to become intelligible to a wider audience had to become universalised, yet the filmmakers made a great effort to ensure that it would be mainly attractive to the Chinese audience by employing various feedback mechanisms (Barnes & Qin, 2020). However, considering that the filmmakers themselves involuntarily draw on the social reality and ideological structures of the West and the US as well as Disney's signs and meanings, it is possible that the Chinese viewers could not decode the message in the way it was intended. Thus, studying how *Mulan* (2020) was perceived by the Chinese audience, will demonstrate the asymmetries between the movie's encoding and decoding. Professor Shiamin Kwa commented on *Mulan* (2020) that "ultimately, the success of an adaptation is how well it resonates with its audience, rather than how well it supports or replicates an original" (Haynes, 2020). Since the referential context and cultural bias for the Chinese

people differs from that of the filmmakers, analysing the Chinese audience's decoding of the film will demonstrate whether the encoded message was accepted, negotiated or rejected.

Many of Disney's adaptations of folk stories and legends are recognised as Disney fairy tales from the audiences and are better known than the original version on which they are based (Wasko, 2020). The audience can identify the distinct characteristics of Disney's images and narratives even when there are changes to the formula, so these changes are only understood as an expansion and redefinition of Disney's narrative that remains within the framework of "nostalgic familiarity" (Anjibarg, 2018, p.230).

Considering Douban's demographic as well as the reviews themselves, the Chinese users on Douban are familiar with the animated *Mulan* (1998) and Disney's general framework. From the 150 comments examined (see Appendix, for the full comment sample), 16 users labelled the film as a "Disney princess movie" or "Disney fairy tale movie", 17 made references or compared it with the 1998 animated version and there were even some that expressed disappointment that the movie was not as Disneyfied as they expected.

Even if their impressions on the story are also informed by the Disney stories and the previous adaptation of *Mulan*, Chinese viewers have a different sense of proximity and nostalgic familiarity with the original tale, which derives from the common cultural roots and is deeply embedded in their consciousness. Chinese audiences, in contrast to the "popular longing for the Occidental" (Dai, 2002, p.192) they experienced in the 1970s and 1980s, when the encounter with the West created a desire for Western culture and an anxiety on their own national identity, they now have a very different perspective of their country's global standing. The economic growth of the consequent decades restored the self-confidence and self-image of the Chinese people who became more resolute in protecting their culture and values (Callahan, 2013). Their fascination with Hollywood images has also been reduced and they have started to welcome more diverse content (Su, 2021). Although Hollywood films are still popular in China, the viewers have different expectations with the portrayal of their own culture. From the Douban reviews examined 55% are negative, 24% are neutral and 21% of the total are positive. These numbers already predetermine that the users' overall impression of the adaptation is poor, but many of the reviews evaluate additional elements of the film that I will not consider in this analysis, such as the cast's acting. Additionally each review might include both positive and negative remarks and was regarded independently. It is possible, for example, a review to be condemning on the integration of Western values but praiseful on the exploration of gender and feminism.

Looking closely at the comments, 43 out of the 150 users explicitly expressed their disapproval of the portrayal of Chinese culture. Another 12 which were indirectly critical pointed out inaccuracies

and problematic aspects, but either thought they were minor compared to their overall impression, or they accepted them by treating *Mulan* as an American or a Disney film and thus lowering their expectations on accuracy. The dissatisfaction of Douban users generally focuses on Western misconceptions on China that are the result of superficial understanding and the lack of research on Chinese culture, leading to homogenisation and proliferation of stereotypes. Users believe that *Mulan* is “completely incomprehensible and the product of arrogant and haughty foreigners” who “[do] not understand Chinese culture and the spirit of *Mulan*”. Some of them even described the movie or parts of the movie as “out of place” or as having a degree of “disharmony”. A few users were also critical on how Disney approached the Chinese audience: “for Disney, this is only part of its global commercialising narrative, and part of the Disney princess business. However, Chinese audiences cannot ignore their cultural background and surrender to Disney's globalisation narrative tactics” (M25). They claimed that the filmmakers’ views on China are stuck in the past as they reflect an old-fashioned understanding of China from, and that they are very detached from the Chinese audiences, ultimately wondering if “Disney [values] the Chinese market or not?” (N46). Another user recognised that the filmmakers “in order to cater to the Chinese audience, they have mechanically applied all kinds of Chinese elements in the story making it an odd mixture of disparate elements” (M45). It seems that the Chinese viewers are aware that Disney is in need of China's market and they are not appreciative of the lack of effort on research. Another 15 users expressed that the screenwriters and the director did not understand or did not try to represent neither the culture or the story well, which also affected the plot. What is interesting is that the disapproving statements are not only found in the negative reviews, but also in the positive and mediocre ones too. Moreover, considering that in a total of 150 reviews approximately 30% could not be taken into account because they focused on the actors’ skills, technical aspects of the film or were humorous remarks without significant observations on the content, the 55 directly or indirectly disapproving comments on the portrayal of Chinese culture and *Mulan* is a substantial number.

Additionally, the Douban users were critical of how Disney took advantage of China’s intellectual property and transformed it to fit the style and narratives of the company. One user expressed that the company “puts commercial attributes above all to the point that it doesn't even bother to create a character and instead exploits *Mulan*” (N46). Others mentioned that Disney’s narratives are “stagnating”, “conservative” and that *Mulan* for Disney was part of its “global commercial narrative”. Reviewers also pointed out several aspects that felt foreign for them. These were the interpretation of *chi* as a superpower, magic, or as the Force from *Star Wars*, with someone noting that for Disney “magic is more important when shooting traditional cultural stories with a Chinese core” (M33). The integration of these elements can be one of the reasons why several commenters felt that the movie

was mainly addressed to American audiences and even though the story is Chinese, its frame is Western. In interviews and articles, the filmmakers of *Mulan* claimed to approach the movie as authentically as possible in order to please the Chinese audience. It can be assumed that either their research was insufficient or that the balance they had to find in order to satisfy all of their audiences ended up alienating the Chinese viewers. This group of users rejects the message as well as the hegemonic viewpoint of Disney and interprets the message within a different reference framework.

The users who had a positive opinion on the depiction of Chinese culture and *Mulan*'s story were only ten and expressed either praise or encouragement for the attempt. They recognised the difficulty of making Chinese or Asian movies like *Mulan* and found the film as somewhat acclimatised. Among those, three liked the film's proper interpretation of the moral values or accepted them as a better alternative to the portrayal of Chinese values in films like *Crazy, Rich, Asian*. However, four of the reviewers rejected the portrayal of moral values; two of them for the pressures they put on women. Another five only acknowledged their existence as an element of the film but kept a neutral stance. Even though in the film the moral values play a big part in tying the plot together, in this set of data there was less reference to them than anticipated. It is possible that the users disregarded that aspect of the film or that the values did not resonate with them and instead considered them as another misrepresented aspect of Chinese culture.

Those who treated the movie as a Disney film rather than an accurate depiction of Chinese culture and society had better impressions of *Mulan* and said that the film had Disney's quality and met their expectations. Although some of them mentioned that they just enjoyed watching a princess or fairy tale movie in the style of Disney, a few others noted that it is also a good way for "exporting" China's image abroad. The importance of projecting Chinese culture abroad, in the sense of "being able to make other nations to film your own nation's stories" (M06) was expressed along with a wish from various users for more domestic productions that will take advantage of the country's intellectual property.

Another issue that was widely commented on is the treatment of gender and female empowerment in *Mulan*, with many users touching on the film's feminism or the lack thereof. Opinions were divided between the people who found the film empowering and those who believed that feminism was commercialized to follow the global trend. The first group of users thought that the film provided a good interpretation on feminism and "female awakening", and they thought that it emphasised women's independence and autonomy. They liked how *Mulan* embraced her female identity and regarded both her and *Xianniang* as feminists that rebel against the patriarchal society. On the other hand, we also detect an oppositional reading on the film's approach on feminism. A user noted that, to highlight *Mulan*'s empowerment, the filmmakers "[degraded] China and women" by

constructing them “according to the Confucian moral injunctions for women as well as the strange ideas of marriage as honour” (N44). The film’s approach is evaluated by a user as “not too daring to make breakthroughs” and only “doing a blunt flattery, currying favour with the majorities in order to win the market” (M30). Another one claims that “Disney’s conservatism maintains the compromise between tradition with feminism” (M31). In addition, two more users disagreed with how the interpretation of *chi* was manipulated to create a discriminatory environment, not only between men and women but also between Mulan and other women, since the exceptional treatment that applies to Mulan does not apply to other female characters.

A controversial aspect of the film, the presence of the Xianniang, although it gathered some negative reactions as a foreign element, with regard to the culture and the story, some Douban users had positive responses when they assessed her dynamics with Mulan. Several reviewers who had alternative readings on the interactions of the two female characters or expressed their wish for different narratives. A group of commenters suggested different alternative scenarios of the two women forming an alliance, overthrowing the emperor and creating a matriarchal society. Another group mentioned that they could discern romantic feelings between the two women, that they hoped for the development of a relationship between them, more than between Mulan and her fellow male soldier, and some even expressed a disappointment for Disney’s heteronormative narratives. As Niki Caro mentioned before, the relationship between Hua Mulan and Xianniang was deliberately left open to interpretation (Ito, 2020).

The Douban audience has perceived Disney’s narrative on female empowerment in different ways. The rebranding of Mulan as a warrior was not necessarily a problem since both the negative and positive comments did not object to Mulan not having a more traditional image of a woman from that era. The difference between the two groups was that, for the disapproving commenters, the empowerment narrative was not genuine and reflected Disney’s commercial standpoint. The portrayal of Mulan as a feminist icon was problematic and Disney’s conservatism was an obstacle to her transgression.

We can conclude that the familiarity of the Chinese audience with Mulan’s story as well as the Disney animation played a major role in shaping the expectations on the new movie. Additionally, having already watched in other cinematic approaches the difficulty of American productions to comprehend the aspects and nuances of Chinese culture and history and effectively portray them on film, the Douban users often seem to show a bias which might be amplifying their negative assessment. Nevertheless, they have a critical approach to their evaluations, mostly noting that the portrayal of their culture as misconceived and misrepresented. They can easily discern elements and concepts that derive from the Western tradition and point them out. The transformation of Mulan in

this movie as a powerful warrior princess was not handled successfully enough, thus the objections Douban reviewers had with the portrayal of culture, ideas and values are anticipated.

5. Conclusion

This research was conducted to investigate how hybridity is formulated in a transcultural film adaptation by analysing the message, production and reception of the film *Mulan* (2020).

The context of the movie was analysed to understand how gender and moral values were packaged and interpreted. The analysis showed that the story of Mulan had to be partially detached from its cultural and historical background so that it could be inserted into Disney's framework of meaning. The addition of new elements and values which derive from the Anglo-American tradition and culture, such as the personification of evil femininity in the witch, the interpretation of *chi* as superpower and the integration of truthfulness as a fundamental virtue, signify that this adaptation remains within Disney's fantasy world. In my thesis, I argued that foreign features were introduced to reinforce the overarching theme of female empowerment but they are forcefully injected into the narrative to create a balance with Chinese cultural elements.

Influenced by social changes in the US the character of Mulan was imagined as a female warrior and a modern role model that embodies modern American ideals and values but lives in a Chinese traditional environment. Mulan's behaviour and mentality is contrasted with the conservative and backward thinking of her society and her family, especially the women, in order for her uniqueness to be exalted. Xianniang, the villainess and the only character that resisted the patriarchal order, was sacrificed because, in contrast to Mulan, she did not serve the central authority. The consumer-friendly interpretation of gender, femininity and feminism in the film follows the patriarchal and conservative narratives of Disney which, due to the origin and the setting of the story, are consequently attributed to the Chinese culture.

Originally the core of Mulan's story was filial piety, but the film suggests that Mulan can fulfil her filial duty only after being loyal, brave and true. The merging of bravery and truthfulness, which are standard Disney virtues, and loyalty and filial piety, which resonate more with the Chinese audience creates a hybridised value system that becomes integral to Mulan's plot. However, Mulan's resolve to be a filial daughter is, as I argued, partially stimulated by her need for self-actualisation, but in the end, her filiality is recognised as an extension of her loyalty to the emperor.

Disney constitutes an independent hegemonic centre that exerts political, economic and ideological power, operating beyond the US. In terms of *Mulan's* production process, Disney's cultural hegemony is consolidated by adapting its content to respond to social changes and by legitimising

the company's authority, which is also reflected in the discourse of the filmmakers. The filmmakers are those responsible for encoding the film by using Disney's specific signs and meanings, who inevitably operate within dominant ideologies and a certain context, and participate in the construction of Disney's hegemonic discourse.

Similarly to past renditions, *Mulan* (2020) was influenced by the social, cultural and political context of the US and specifically the demands for gender equality and more accurate representation of ethnic identities in Hollywood. The creators adapted their narrative to embrace female empowerment on and off-camera but their direction assumed the form of a marketing device and ignored the inclusion of diverse identities, remaining tied to the American and Western context and within the dominant, patriarchal ideology. The "authenticity" venture encompassed superficial understandings of Chinese culture, which demonstrated how the film's crew maintained an Orientalist approach and how they legitimised Disney's authority on narrating stories of other cultures and teaching ideas and values. The equation of the value of "Disney culture" with the Chinese culture by the filmmakers perpetuates the relationship of domination and power between the East and the West. Disney has gained the power to narrate stories by creating its own system of knowledge, established in the collective mind not only of the American, but of its international audience as well.

For the 2020 adaptation of *Mulan* the discussion on Western cultural hegemony embodied in Disney is imperative in order to detect the causal links between dominant discourse and cultural hybridity. Hall's communication model contributes in comprehending the ideological implications in the encoding and the role of the encoders. The assertions of Disney's authority and its equal status with Chinese culture, and the claims on the film's authentic representation of Chinese culture provide justifications for Disney's hegemonic utilisation of hybridity. Cultural Hybridity is employed as a marketing strategy that will ensure *Mulan*'s success in international markets as much as in China. The film's production constructs, justifies and turns cultural hybridity into an instrument for strengthening Disney's cultural hegemony.

A possible disruption to the company's cultural hegemony could be its progressive dependence on the Chinese market. The disclosure of the production crew working closely with Chinese state authorities and having to make adjustments to the content to appeal to the Chinese audience suggests that in the future Disney's production might be willing to make even more concessions to secure a good box-office performance in China. Thus the audience provides a counterbalancing influence to Disney.

For most users of the Douban website that reviewed the movie the message that Disney wanted to transmit was not decoded with its intended meaning. Although Disney and its unique style still

appeals to the Chinese audience, the authority of the studio to narrate stories of other cultures is contested by Douban users. The majority of the users who commented on the portrayal of their culture in *Mulan*, expressed their discontent. The addition of these hybrid and foreign cultural elements alienated the Chinese audience from *Mulan* and they identified it as one of Disney's usual commercial practises. On the other hand, the minority of reviewers that were satisfied either regarded the movie as a Disney fairytale film or found positive the projection of Chinese culture abroad. In my analysis of the film's reception, I showed Douban users had mixed reactions on the treatment of female empowerment and gender in *Mulan*, with some praising the way they were interpreted and others considering it integrated in Disney's conservatism that exploited Chinese culture to create their narrative. Therefore, the encoded message of *Mulan* is accepted in an unchallenging manner by a low number of people who are concentrated on the positive reviews, but the majority of these Douban users resists the significations and meanings given by Disney's hegemonic order. The alternative readings that emerged in the film, such as the potential of a matriarchal society or that of a romantic relationship between *Mulan* and the villainess explore different trajectories and meanings. Through this form of cross-cultural contact, namely the reaction of the audience to the film through internet reviews, could result in the generation of cultural hybridity as part of the reception process. These original interpretations become an area of negotiation of new meanings and ideas that could form a discursive space in *Mulan*'s communication process, demonstrating the possibility for the formation of cultural hybridity from the audience's side.

One limitation for this thesis was the data sample of the Douban reviews, for the analysis of the film's reception. A bigger sample could perhaps make the findings more reliable and provide more insight on themes such as the moral values that in my sample were not mentioned as much.

What this thesis has tried to show is that examining hybridity only in the content of a transcultural movie and identifying the merging of different cultures is not as significant as analysing it in conjunction with its production and reception process. Cultural hybridity in the form it assumes in the film does not constitute a site of resistance against the hegemonic culture, as scholars have suggested, because it is artificially constructed by commodifying the story of *Mulan* in order to fulfil a commercial purpose. Instead the resistance to Disney's cultural hegemony and to the encoding of the producers comes mainly from the audience in the decoding stage of the communication process, where it also can become a site for hybridity to be formed. Future research projects on the formation of cultural hybridity in transcultural films should perhaps consider an analysis of independent films, co-productions between China and the US or a comparative analysis between independent, commercial films and co-productions. Regarding the latter, especially because of new uncertainties

caused by the multiplication of streaming services and the financial instability in Hollywood caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible that Chinese production studios will become more active in funding Hollywood films, thus completely changing the global media landscape and end up destabilising the hegemony of companies like Disney.

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Appendix

P01 2020-09-04

(70/100)工整流畅合格的商业片。迪士尼公主电影里品质上乘的存在。刘亦菲的表演是没有问题的，动作戏精彩，画面质感一流，片尾出字幕时的title design超好看。中国公主花木兰没有让人失望。

(70/100) A movie that meets the standards of a neat and smooth commercial film. It has the first-class quality of a Disney princess movie. There is no problem with the acting of Liu Yifei, the action scenes are brilliant, the picture quality is top-grade and the title design of the end credits' captions is super-good. The Chinese princess Hua Mulan didn't disappoint people.

P02 2020-09-04

后半段节奏还是有点问题，but who cares? (刘亦菲真好看、刘亦菲头发真好看)

The second half still has some problem with the rhythm, but who cares? (Liu Yifei is really good-looking, her hair is really beautiful)

P03 2020-09-04

大家进影院千万不要抱着美国人能拍好中国历史的期望，还有服化道能一直符合中国人审美的期望，就当做中国风架空神话故事就好。有一些和动画版不一样的改动其中蛮多我觉得挺好的，符合当代审美。还有姬佬真的一本满足，刘亦菲跟巩俐的戏份比我想象还要姬一百倍吧。巩俐真“男主”爱上年下，所谓男主兄弟情单箭头打酱油。已经可以想象国内全面上映以后会有多少人搞cp了。

Everyone who enters the theatre by all means must not hold on to the expectation that Americans can shoot good Chinese history films, and the expectation that the costumes, make-up and props can always conform to the aesthetics of the Chinese people. Just treat it as a Chinese style unfounded myth. There are some alterations that are different from the animated version, many of which I think are quite good, in line with contemporary aesthetics. Also the lesbians are really satisfied. Liu Yifei and Gong Li's scenes are a hundred times more lesbian than I thought. Gong Li, the real "male protagonist", fell in love with the younger one, and the so-called male protagonist's love is one-sided and it is none of my business. I can already imagine how many people will be shipping them after the full domestic release.

P04 2020-09-04

突出了女性独立自主的想法，不能用美貌来定义女性，应该用品格来定义。

It highlights the notion of women's independence and autonomy. Women cannot be defined by beauty, they should be defined by their characters.

P05 2020-09-04

其实我觉得刘亦菲还挺适合这个花木兰形象的，相比动画里的机智活泼，真人版花木兰是一个外表看似柔弱内心实则刚强，想要在压抑保守的男权社会里活出自我的角色，这个角色和小龙女其实颇有几分相似之处，而后续花木兰挣破束缚则和导演的《鲸骑士》一脉相承，其内核正是女性觉醒之旅，得益于妮基·卡罗的女性视角与出色的掌控力，《花木兰》是所有迪士尼真人公主大片里女性主义诠释得最好的一部，相较于公主，花木兰更像骑士。

In fact, I think Liu Yifei quite suits this image of Mulan. Compared to the quick-witted and lively Mulan of the animation, the live-action version of Mulan is a character who seems weak on the outside but is in fact strong in heart, who wants to live life on her own terms in a repressive and conservative patriarchal society. In addition to this character being in fact quite similar to Xiaolongnü, Hua Mulan strives to break the chains following the same line as in the director's "Whale Rider". Its core is the journey of female awakening and thanks to Niki Caro's female viewpoint and outstanding control, "Mulan" is the best interpretation of feminism in all Disney live-action princess blockbuster movies. Compared with princesses, Mulan looks more like a knight.

P06 2020-09-04

我觉得最好的结局就是，花木兰在巩俐邀请加入她的时候答应下来，两个女人大杀四方先用可汗手灭帝国然后再灭可汗创造母系氏族[胜利]（很叛逆，一点也不忠和孝，我就喜欢这种叛逆反抗权威的）

I think the best ending would be Hua Mulan agreeing to the invitation of Gong Li to join her. The two skilled women would first use the Khan to destroy the empire and then wipe the Khan out to create the matriarchal clan [Victory] (very rebellious, not at all loyal and filial, I like this kind of rebellious resistance to authority)

P07 2020-09-04

1.刘亦菲真的美惨了啊啊啊 2.巩皇跟皇位太配了 3.反派是个纸老虎吧hin失望 4.我想磕的CP没磕过瘾啊啊啊 5.刘亦菲真的美惨了啊啊啊... ..

1. Liu Yifei is really beautiful 2. Empress Gong is so perfect for the Emperor's throne 3. The villain is a paper tiger, very disappointing 4. I think the shipping is not enjoyable 5. Liu Yifei is really beautiful...

P08 2020-09-05

父女线很感动，虽然一开始抑制木兰天性我难以接受，但是不得不说这是古代的对女性的态度。木兰用实际行动让不看好她的人改观。

The father-daughter lines were very touching. Although it was initially difficult for me to accept Mulan's suppressed nature, I have to say that this is an ancient times' attitude towards women. Mulan uses realistic actions to make those who don't have a good outlook towards her change their views.

P09 2020-09-04

70分吧，比起后边更喜欢前半段。另外刘亦菲真的很美！

70 points. Compared to the last half I prefer the first part. In addition, Liu Yifei is really beautiful!

P10 2020-09-04

三十五刀花的不心疼 好看 刻画的中国很多美景 颜色明亮 除了木兰 其他角色的服装都怪怪的 特别是皇上...

I don't regret spending thirty-five dollars. It looked nice and portrayed many beautiful sceneries of China. The colours were bright. Except for Mulan, the costumes of the other characters were odd, especially of the emperor...

P11 2020-09-04

台词过于简单，语速也过慢，很有年代气息！不过巩俐饰演的女巫死得过于仓促了，也可以理解成不愿意那样活着了。总体来说不错，刘亦菲完成的很好，郑佩佩很有喜剧天赋，但木兰的妹妹比木兰还老怎么回事。

The dialogues are too simple, the speaking speed too slow, it has the atmosphere of the era!

However, the witch played by Gong Li died too hurriedly, which could be understood as not willing to live like that. Overall, it is not bad. Liu Yifei did a good job and Zheng Peipei has comedic skills. But what's going on with Mulan's younger sister being older than Mulan?.

P12 2020-09-04

给刘亦菲的武打加一颗星，太TM飒了

Adding one more star for Liu Yifei's martial arts, freaking elegant.

P13 2020-09-05

用朋友的D+账号看完了，第一，我肯定会去电影院支持的，国内能去电影院看这个电影真的是福气呀，太适合院线了。第二，刘亦菲演的真的太棒了，在里面帅呆了，酷毙了。第三，完全合格的合家欢公主片，绝对是迪士尼真人翻拍片的上称之作。第四，瑕不掩瑜，刘亦菲的演技加上迪士尼超强的技术水平，你值得拥有。

I finished watching it using my friend's D+ account. First, I will definitely go to the cinema to support it. It's a blessing to be able to watch this movie in a cinema in China. It's so suitable for theatre

chains. Second, Liu Yifei's acting is really good, and she is so brilliant and cool in it. Third, it is totally up to the standards of a family princess movie and it is definitely the best of Disney's live-action remakes. Fourth, the pros outweigh the cons. Liu Yifei's acting skills on top of Disney's super strong technical skills... You're worth it.

P14 2020-09-04

大波浪卷...巩俐戏份一开始就料到...无意看了字幕才发现皇帝是李连杰演的....

Big curls...Gong Li's part in the film was foreseen from the beginning... I accidentally watched the subtitles and discovered that the emperor was played by Jet Li...

P15 2020-09-04

8.0 手松一些可以八分的 迪士尼更加专注于个人的成长 我认为这一点十分巧妙 不过，你能从中明显看出来其他人对于中国的理解，这么多年了，我们的文化自信似乎并没有什么进步

8.0. Freely hand out eight points. Disney is more focused on personal growth. I think this is very clever. However, you can clearly see other people's understanding of China. After so many years, our cultural self-confidence apparently has not improved much.

P16 2020-09-04

A-, 标准的迪士尼公主电影，巩俐和木兰可有点意思。原先准备四星，但让世界看到我们可以加一星，刘亦菲表现出彩。

A-, a standard Disney princess movie, Gong Li and Mulan are a bit interesting. Originally intended for four stars, but let the world see that we can add one star, Liu Yifei's performance was outstanding.

P17 2020-09-04

嘛，不是通过正常渠道看的（到时上映了会补上一张电影票的），拍得确实很美，景美人也美，所以小屏幕看有点不够。刘亦菲文戏武戏表现都不错，她讲英语比讲中文要顺畅一些，其他人普普通通。没有预想的那么严重的违和感，甚至看得有点点泪目。总的来说值四星吧。□

Well, it was not watched through regular media (I'll get a movie ticket when it's released.), it is shot really beautifully, the scenery is beautiful, the people are also beautiful, so the small screen is not enough. Liu Yifei performed well in both acting scenes and martial arts scenes and she speaks English more fluently than Chinese. The other people were ordinary. The sense of disharmony was not as serious as expected, so much so that I was watching a little teary-eyed. Overall it's worth four stars.

P18 2020-09-04

多了一个星给神仙姐姐！！这电影很迪士尼童话风格了，符合我的预期，当时不能用普通电影的尺度来衡量！记住这是迪士尼童话系列就完事儿

One more star for the fairy sister!!! This movie is in the style of Disney's fairy tales, and it meets my expectations. But it cannot be put on the same scale as ordinary movies! Remember this is a Disney fairy tale series and it's settled.

P19 2020-09-04

从电影角度来讲影片质量还是不错的 刘亦菲不愧是从小练武术 但是作为中国人 对影片里面强行套入的欧洲中世纪家族荣誉的观念和日本装扮与称呼的叫法还是略感尴尬

From a film perspective the quality of the film is still not bad. Liu Yifei proved herself as a practitioner of martial arts since childhood. However, as a Chinese, I still feel a little embarrassed about the concept of European mediaeval family honour and the Japanese attire and titles that are forcibly embedded in the film.

P20 2020-09-04

是个7分的很可以看的片子，因为有很喜欢的东西所以打高1分。喜欢的地方：刘亦菲适合木兰这个角色，好看，打戏漂亮帅气，演技也没有什么毛病。原声大好，太喜欢了，既有新音乐，也完美融入动画片的音乐元素。画面优美，取景新西兰。美术优秀，片尾graphic很美。剧本看得出尽力保留动画片内容，但又符合真人版的严肃，完成度70%吧。下面是雷点：巩俐的角色，从化妆造型到服装到人物弧线都.....一言难尽，更一言难尽的是下场。木兰的love interest，有必要么？有必要么？小伙子你在这片子里晃来晃去干啥呢？你是人长得帅还是会演戏还是能打还是有计谋？说实话木兰和女巫的CP感强多了！其他的男性角色，除了木兰爸爸，也都... ..唉。至于福建土楼唐朝彩妆什么的，反而是末节了。总而言之，现在要去找原声来听。

It's a 7-point movie that is easy to watch. It gets one extra point because there are things I like very much. Favourite things: Liu Yifei is suitable for the role of Mulan. She is good-looking, her fighting scenes are beautiful and elegant and the acting has no shortcomings. The original soundtrack is great, I like it very much and not only does it have new music but also perfectly integrates the musical elements of the animated movie. Beautiful scenes, shot in New Zealand. The art is excellent and the graphics of the end credits are very beautiful. The screenplay discernibly tries to keep the content of the cartoon, but it is in line with the seriousness of the live-action version, and it accomplishes it at a 70% rate. Here are the triggering points: Gong Li's role, from makeup to costumes to character arcs... it is hard to express succinctly, and it is even harder to express her ending. Is Mulan's love interest necessary? Is it necessary? Boy, what are you doing, going back and forth in this film? Is it that you are handsome, you know how to act, how to fight, or do you have a stratagem? To be honest, Mulan and the witch have a much stronger feeling of being a couple! Other male characters, except for the father of Mulan, are also... Sigh. As for the Tulou of Fujian, the Tang Dynasty makeup and so on, they are minor details. In short, now I'm going to look for the original soundtrack to listen to.

P21 2020-09-05

剧情很感人，非常有意思的转折点在于，一开始木兰以男性身份代父从军，本质上是对女性身份的压抑。到后来不再束发，不再伪装自己，坚定做自己，承认自己的女性身份，这是一个身份的转变。

The plot is very moving, and a very interesting turning point is at the beginning when Mulan enlists in the army on behalf of her father taking on a male identity, which was essentially a repression of female identity. Afterwards, she no longer ties her hair, no longer disguises herself, is determined to be herself, and recognizes her female identity. This is an identity shift.

P22 2020-09-04

木兰行军第一夜的那个离家回镜承接游子离家的脆弱画面、刘亦菲演的真好！剧本的逻辑基点“拯救君王”(亚瑟骑士原型理论)真亮、解释了花木兰何以青史留名！真的好期待我们自己也能拍出这样优秀的作品！

On the first night of Mulan's march, in the sentimental scene of leaving home to become a wanderer, Liu Yifei played really well! The logical base point of the screenplay, to "Save the King" (Arthur's Knight Archetype Theory), is really bright, explaining why Hua Mulan left her name in history! I really hope that we can shoot such excellent works ourselves!

P23 2020-09-04 很不错，就是海报画风有点老。

Very good, but the poster style is a bit old.

P24 2020-09-05

不得不说，这次迪士尼的真人改编花木兰很出色。有几条感情线都走的很好，父女间，木兰与女巫，我个人很喜欢这点。再一个，电影是很具有美感的。女主角刘亦菲非常出色的完成了自己的部分，有一瞬间她真的是那个时代的花木兰，感情处理的很好，而且她非常美！emmm，怎么说呢，电影也不是一点槽点没有。不过在我这，它是瑕不掩瑜，三十刀也算值了吧！

I have no choice but to say that this time Disney's live-action adaptation of Hua Mulan is remarkable. There are several emotional lines that go well, between the father and daughter and between Mulan and the witch, which I personally liked very much. Another thing is, the movie has a good aesthetic perception. In the female leading role Liu Yifei was remarkable in her part; for a split second, she was really the Mulan of that period. She handled her emotions very well and she was very beautiful! Emmm, how should I say, it is not that the movie didn't have anything to complain about. But for me, the pros outweigh the cons, and thirty dollars is worth it!

P25 2020-09-04

一部不像迪士尼电影的迪士尼电影 全程都没有歌舞 (有点遗憾吧 如果有唱reflection 效果一定

非常好)但是还是给了5星 电影剧情不错 有些细节和动画版有出入但也却更有新意 后面高潮不断 看着很爽 结尾很感动 个人最喜欢的是从华军到木兰的蜕变 开始真正做自己的那段 骑马散发脱盔甲配上reflection的bgm真的超燃超感动 然后 就是这部电影无处不在的gender stereotypes 给人的印象也很深 而且我个人并不觉得巩俐女巫角色的加入很突兀 相反 我认为她和木兰一起更加突出了feminist 强调了独立女性的力量 临死前"take your place, mulan"这句话也很让人感慨 loyal brave true 我觉得 木兰能成功wise也是不可缺少的一个元素吧

A Disney movie that is not like a Disney movie. From start to finish it has no singing and dancing (it's a pity, if they sang reflection, it would have been very good), but I still gave it 5 stars. The plot is good. There were some details that were different from the animated version, but it was more up-to-date. Later it had a constant climax. It was very cool. The ending was really moving. Personally, my favourite is the transformation from Huajun to Mulan, the part where she started being her real self. When she was riding the horse, let her hair loose and took the armour off, it matched the background music of *reflection* and it was really super exciting and moving. Also, even if this film's gender stereotypes are everywhere, it still leaves a deep impression. And, personally, I don't think the addition of the role of Gong Li as a witch is abrupt. On the contrary, I think she and Mulan give even more prominence to "feminist" and emphasized the power of independent women. The sentence she said before dying, "take your place, Mulan" is also deeply moving. As for "Loyal, brave, true" I think Mulan can succeed in "wise" which is also an indispensable element.

P26 2020-09-05

我们9.4见。 巩皇是真女权。我觉得迪士尼拍的中国故事，放到中国有文化贴现，但可能更适合海外通行。有一些地方还是有点让人难以信服。刘亦菲的表演是很到位了，无可指摘。武术的还原和一些中国文化的追溯是值得鼓励的，多一颗星，不要吓到好莱坞。

We watched it on September 4. Empress Gong is a true feminist. I think the Chinese stories filmed by Disney are culturally discounted in China, but they may be more suitable for foreigners. There are some places that are still a bit unconvincing. Liu Yifei's performance is very good, beyond reproach. The reconstruction of martial arts and some tracing back to Chinese culture are worthy of encouragement. One more star, not to scare Hollywood away.

P27 2020-09-04

这个这是一个非常迪士尼的公主片，符合我的期望，我就想骂迪，干嘛让女巫死啊呜呜呜呜

This is a very Disney princess movie that meets my expectations. I want to scold Disney. Why on earth did you let the witch die boo hoo hoo

P28 2020-09-04电影几个大场面还是挺震撼的，打斗戏也精彩，电影院观看效果会更佳！就是剧情较为拖沓，结束的也有点草率了，反派有点弱...

The big scenes of the movie are quite stunning, the fighting scenes are also brilliant, and if watching it in a movie theatre would have better audiovisual effects! It is just that the plot is fairly sluggish, the ending is also a bit sloppy, the villain is a bit weak...

P29 2020-09-05

起立鼓掌👏为刘亦菲。通过角色花木兰升华了你的美。飞檐走壁，赤手空拳，长短兵器，竹子，棍子，暗器，巷战，近身作战，马上作战，群战，冰河决斗，脚手架，平衡木决斗，越往后难度逐渐升级，简直是迪士尼的中国功夫大全，由刘亦菲独挑大梁全部完成。支撑起一个纯武侠动作片。我女神太厉害了！！！！

Standing ovation👏 for Liu Yifei. Your beauty was sublimated through the role of Hua Mulan. Leaping onto roofs and vaulting over walls, with bare hands, with long and short weapons, bamboo, sticks, or hidden weapons, with street fighting, close combat, immediate combat, group combat, glacier duel, scaffolding, balance beam duel, going forward the difficulty gradually increases. It is practically Disney's complete collection on Chinese Kung Fu, all accomplished by Liu Yifei alone, who plays the leading role. Support a pure martial arts action movie. My goddess is too awesome!!!!

P30 2020-09-04

360度展示刘亦菲有多美的公主片，活泼、工整，内核又暗扣当今的平权潮流，最让人意外的，就是老美对东方的猎奇向审美这次出奇地克制，各个方面都毫不费力地释放着商业片应有的魅力，在迪士尼真人部作品系里，绝对是亮眼且不可忽视的存在，而这种气质，才是当下影市所急需的。

A princess film that is a 360-degree display of how beautiful Liu Yifei is. Lively and neatly, its core also hides the current trend of equal rights. The most unexpected thing is that the Americans' curiosity for the Orient's aesthetic this time is unusually restrained. Every aspect is effortlessly releasing the charm of commercial films. In the series of Disney's live-action works, it absolutely is an existence radiant and impossible to ignore, and this kind of temperament is what the film market urgently needs.

P31 2020-09-04

刚刚在Disney+ 买片。对影片很满意，适合全家观看。屏幕越大效果越好。风景很美很梦幻。刘亦菲的花木兰表情很细致，演员们演技都在线。寓意教导- 真忠善孝。迪士尼真人中国公主电影让人满意

I just bought the movie on Disney+. I am very satisfied with the film and it is family-friendly. The

larger the screen, the better the audiovisual effects. The scenery is beautiful and dreamy. Liu Yifei's Hua Mulan expression is very detailed, and the actors' acting is on point. The moral teaching: true, loyal, virtuous, filial. Disney's live-action Chinese princess movie is satisfying.

P32 2020-09-04

电影本身三星，但是总觉得这一部Mulan承载着太多。在这个时段，一部华人主演的好莱坞电影讲述的不就是我们永远不甘宿命，不管别人怎么看我们，我们也要像世界宣示我们的故事。此身无悔入华夏🙏

The movie itself is a three-star, but overall I think that this Mulan bears too many weights. At this time, a Hollywood movie with Chinese protagonists is not just about that we will never resign to destiny. No matter how others think of us, we have to make our story known to the world. I feel proud of being Chinese.

P33 2020-09-05

我看到很多人品论说是糟蹋了民族精华。我不同意，我觉得你要想让传统文化走出本地走向世界，就是要有一个浅显易懂的故事外壳，不要说忠勇义，这部剧里能表达出一个孝，就非常不容易了。文化输出的慢慢长路，这是一个很好的开始了，比crazy rich asian的价值输出要更贴近中华文化。刘亦菲挺棒的，我希望过10年她能是一个有力量女人，而不是总被人说是公主，女孩。

I have seen a lot of people commenting and saying that it insulted the national essence. I disagree. I think that if you want to make traditional culture go out of the local area and into the world, you must have a clear and easy-to-understand story shell. Don't speak about loyalty, courage and righteousness. Expressing filial piety in this piece of work is very difficult. This is a very good start for the slow and long journey of cultural export. Compared to the export of values from *Crazy, Rich, Asian* it sticks closer to Chinese culture. Liu Yifei is excellent. I hope that in 10 years she will be a powerful woman, instead of always being called a princess, a girl.

P34 2020-09-04

在D+用平板看的，看的时候满怀期待，也许是英文水平还不是很高🤔感觉剧情有点简单，但是完全不影响美感，最后的价值观也是恰到好处。

I watched it on D+ using a tablet, and I was full of expectations. Maybe it was because my English level is still not very high but I felt that the plot is a bit simple, but it did not affect its sense of beauty at all. Finally, the value system is exactly right.

P35 2020-09-05

D+上看的，电影很有迪士尼的色彩，反正我挺喜欢的。之前几部真人最喜欢阿拉丁，主要是故

事来说一直不喜欢灰姑娘和美兽，阿拉丁算是比较不一样的。

I watched it on D+, the movie is very Disney-like, but in any case I quite liked it. From the previous few live-action films I like Aladdin the most, mainly for the story. I have always disliked Cinderella and Beauty and the Beast but Aladdin is relatively different.

P36 2020-09-04 我爱刘亦菲！

I love Liu Yifei!

P37 2020-09-04

在大家都觉得安佑森ABC的时候我反而能get到帅点 所以我觉得他应该让给我 让木兰和仙娘搞姬去

When everyone thinks of the American-born Chinese Yoson An instead I can get the point of why everyone thinks he is handsome. So I think he should let Mulan get together with the immortal woman

P38 2020-09-04

啊刘亦菲！！！！可以了可以了（巩皇转折突兀了一些）

Ah Liu Yifei!!! It is alright. (The plot twist for Empress Gong was a bit abrupt)

P39 2020-09-05

还原度很高，没有迪士尼公主情结的磨磨唧唧，忠，勇，真，孝的中国概念也诠释的很好

The degree of reconstruction is very high. It does not have the shilly-shallying of the Disney princess complex. The Chinese concepts of loyalty, courage, truthfulness, and filial piety are also well interpreted.

P40 2020-09-04 有很多精彩打戏很燃，场景很好看，很宏大

There are many brilliant fighting scenes that are very exciting, the settings are very beautiful and grand.

P41 2020-09-04

简单平凡的小故事，除了英文说古代官话不太得劲之外，其他都挺好

Simple and ordinary story, apart from English not being a good fit for ancient bureaucratic Mandarin, everything else is pretty good.

P42 2020-09-04

轻轻的人物传记片，不算炫彩但还是很不错的！

Lightly biographical film, not very dazzling and colourful but still very good!

P43 2020-09-04

看的原版，英文对话就emmmm国语版估计就没什么违和感了，场面宏大，画面很美，全片都很酷，虽然没什么笑点

I saw the original version and the English dialogue is just "emmmm". I suppose that the Mandarin version does not feel so out of place. The scenes are grand, the picture is beautiful, and the whole film is very cool, although there are no funny bits.

P44 2020-09-04

本人演了个龙套角色。

I played a minor character.

P45 2020-09-05

作为一个星战迷，我对《花木兰》很满意，迪士尼果然每年都拍了一部星战片！

As a fan of Star Wars, I am very satisfied with "Mulan". As expected, Disney makes a Star Wars film every year!

P46 2020-09-04

还不错👍

Not bad.

P47 2020-09-05

木兰的确是帅到我了，刘亦菲真的演出了花木兰的忠勇真，我喜欢在如今搞男女对立的营销模式下，保持清醒和理智，多去经历多去自我感觉，别在网上看到什么就是什么。什么时候看盗版资源在网上都能理直气壮地说出口了？但是转念一想，国产电影拍不出好的作品不光是主创人员的锅，我们忽视了观看的人。网上的舆论环境越来越不经允许了，观点狭隘，思想单一，不是黑就是白。偏执的相信自己所看到的，容不得别人一点的反驳，我不喜欢这样的网络环境。

Mulan indeed won me over. Liu Yifei really expressed Hua Mulan's loyalty, courage and truthfulness. Under the current marketing model of confrontation between men and women I like to remain clear-headed and rational, to experience more and become more self aware, and not to believe everything I see on the Internet. When you see pirated resources online can you confidently speak up? But on second thought, the inability of domestically produced movies to produce good works is

not only caused by the creators, we ignore the viewers. The public opinion environment on the Internet is becoming more and more impermissible, with narrow views and single-mindedness it is either black or white. Being prejudiced in accepting what one sees as true and being unable to tolerate a little opposition from others, I don't like this kind of network environment.

P48 2020-09-04

忠勇真善

loyal, brave, true, virtuous

P49 2020-09-04

难以掩饰的西方猎奇东方文化的视角，因此整体剧情框架有些引人发笑。不过其他的一切还是挺满意的。三颗星，神仙姐姐加一颗。

It is difficult to conceal the perspective of the West's curiosity of the Eastern cultures, therefore the entire plot outline is somewhat laughable. But everything else is still quite satisfactory. Three stars, one for the fairy sister.

P50 2020-09-04

美国电影总是会看似普通的故事剧情里添上点魔幻现实主义的东西，这部迪士尼拍的《花木兰》也不例外。原本早前曝光的刘亦菲夸张化妆造型其实只不过是一个“对镜贴花黄”的玩笑。除了对白感觉像是同学之间在练习seminar，让人容易出戏之外，其他的都还不错，特别是几个主要的造型和动作。这算是目前看过的国外翻拍中国故事最成功的作品了，比之前的《杨贵妃》之类的好了不少。

American movies always can add some magical realism to seemingly ordinary storylines, and this "Mulan" that Disney made is no exception. The previously exposed exaggerated makeup style of Liu Yifei was actually nothing more than just a joke of "apply my bisque makeup by the mirror". Except for the fact that the dialogue feels like a practice "seminar" between classmates, making it easy for people to lose interest, other things are pretty good, especially the main poses and actions. This is currently considered as the most successful foreign remake of a Chinese story, and it is much better than the previous "Princess Yang".

M01 2020-09-04

30美金的超前点播...可能是我期待太高了 优缺点都很明显的一版花木兰 优点当然是武术编排和画面 雪崩那场戏尤为突出 缺点则是我没有看到木兰的成长 她对自我身份的认同过程太潦草了 我完全无法和她共情 最后被剪掉的动画版桥段的确对剧情有影响 7/10

For 30 US dollars for early access streaming... Maybe I was expecting too much. A version of Mulan with obvious advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of course are the martial arts arrangement and the scenes. The avalanche scene is outstanding. The disadvantage is that I didn't see the growth of Mulan. Her process of self-identification was too sloppy. I can't empathise with her at all. And finally the cut scenes from the animated version do have an impact on the storyline. 7/10

M02 2020-09-05

迪士尼战斗值最高的公主就这？就这？还不如巩半仙的一根鸡爪子。刘亦菲和巩俐之间我好像看到了姬情（啊不是...）

This is the princess with the highest combat value in Disney? That's it? She is not even as good as one of Gong Li demi-goddess' chicken claws? It seems like I can see romantic feelings between Liu Yifei and Gong Li (Oh no, there is none...)

M03 2020-09-04

看了一半 这拍摄感觉太尬了（我个人先认为是导演功底不行...继续看看吧

Halfway through, this filming feels too awkward. (I personally first think it was because the director's skills are not good... I will continue watching)

M04 2020-09-04

仙女姐姐好美，歌好听

The fairy sister is so beautiful and the song is good.

M05 2020-09-04

今天Disney+首发，198大洋线上看，伴随着English cc字幕，别提有多爽了。3分献给我的198块！
Released today on Disney+. I watched it online for 198 yuan with English CC subtitles. Not to mention how cool it is. I offer 3 points for my 198 yuan!

M06 2020-09-07

是很一般，但分低了。看迪士尼就像看童话故事，不能太较真细节，童话故事若较真细节，都是假，但小孩子们就是会信会喜欢。同样道理，花木兰这类故事，如果真的去较真的话，你说一个女人，长期女扮男装混迹在一帮男人当中，却能不被认出，难道周围人都瞎吗？我觉得只有一种可能，该女子长得五大三粗、肤黑貌丑，所以，意淫花木兰、祝英台这些能够女扮男装，却又长得很漂亮的人，可以休矣。最后，啥叫文化输出，这就叫文化输出，能让别的民族，去拍你民族的故事。这方面，我们常年输入，偶尔输出，值得鼓励。

It is very mediocre, but the score is low. Watching Disney is just like watching fairy tales; you should not mind the details too much. If fairy tales are detailed they are all fake, but children will just believe

it and like it. In the same sense, if you take this kind of stories like Hua Mulan seriously, you say that a woman who has long been dressed as a man and mixed with a group of men can not be recognized. Is everyone around her blind? I think there is only one possibility. The woman is big and tall, with dark skin and ugly looks. Therefore, it is time to stop fantasising about Hua Mulan and Zhu Yingtai, these people who look very beautiful even when they dress up as men. Finally, what is cultural export? This is cultural export: being able to make other nations to film your own nation's stories. In this regard, we import all year round and export once in a while, so it is worth encouraging.

M07 2020-09-05

2.5 果不其然地滑入儿戏式的东方学想象、“成为一种生意”式的伪女性主义表达。之前始终没怎么关心过这个片的新闻，看正片才发现竟然是没有歌舞片段的。其实高水平的欢脱歌舞、油腻但活灵活现的表演方式（比如去年的《阿拉丁》），几乎是解除迪士尼如同僵尸般叙事模板的唯一出路了。而这部电影却做着把僵尸进一步僵化的努力，创作地越认真，效果越可怕，直叫人怀念动画版的一场场歌舞秀。迪士尼“公主真人版”电影一贯的问题都是故步自封、毫无想象力，但至少在高投资、正向创作心态的保证下，能做好“花瓶电影”的本分，这部同样差不多如此。

2.5 As expected, I slipped into a child-like Oriental imagination, an expression of "commercialized" type of pseudo-feminism. I haven't paid much attention to the news of this film before, but after watching the feature film to my surprise I found that there are no singing and dancing parts. In fact, the high-level cheerful singing and dancing, the cheesy but lively acting style (such as in last year's Aladdin") are practically the only way out of Disney's zombie-like narrative template. But this movie is striving to further rigidify the zombies. The more serious the creative work, the more dreadful the result, just making people miss the singing and dancing shows of the animated version. The problem that Disney's "live action princess" movies had all along is that they are stagnating and conservative, they are completely unimaginative, but at least with the guarantee of high investments and positive creative mentality, they can play their part as a "pretty-face movie", and the same goes for this one.

M08 2020-09-04

前面部分总感觉在看亚洲地区的电影，不过在说别人为什么说英语的同时也得想想自己的IP为什么不能自己拍。迪士尼还是牛，自家的风格仍然保留也没有太严重的水土不服。
In the first part I was always feeling that I was watching a movie in Asia, but while talking about why others speak in English, we also have to think about why we ourselves can't shoot films with our own intellectual property. Disney is still awesome, it retains its own style and it is fairly acclimatised.

M09 2020-09-04

这个片，尴尬到让我想起那部木乃伊3.....就可惜了这么好的演员，但是这个古怪的发音，这个一言难尽的剧情，预测豆瓣评分落脚点6分不能再多，刘亦菲真好看，两星给刘亦菲。

This movie is so awkward that it reminds me of Mummy 3... It is just a pity that there are such good actors, but with this weird pronunciation and this hard to explain storyline, I predict that the Douban score will not be more than 6 points. Liu Yifei is really good-looking. Two stars for Liu Yifei.

M10 2020-09-04

有点流水线产品的感觉

It feels like an assembly-line product

M11 2020-09-05

不知道为啥 剧组透露出穷穷的味道 花木兰好像一共才四个造型 反派群戏没超过20人 动画版全城灯会的桥段也删了

I don't know why but the performers and the production team give off hints of poverty. Hua Mulan seems to have only four looks in total. The villain group scenes do not have more than 20 people. The scene with the lantern festival in the city from the animation version has also been deleted.

M12 2020-09-09

可能墨西哥人看寻梦环游记也觉得挺好笑的~

Maybe the Mexicans who watched *Coco* also thought it was ridiculous.

M13 2020-09-04

没劲 Boring

M14 2020-09-06

迪妮尼名不虚传啊，巩俐和刘亦菲对手戏需要贴得这么近吗？虽然有1000个不满意的点，但是看到98版木兰介绍新木兰出场的时候还是挺感动，亚裔电影太不容易了。以及这不比沉睡魔咒2好看么？？？

"Digini" is well-deserved. Do Gong Li and Liu Yifei in their fighting scene need to be so close to each other? Although there are 1,000 unsatisfactory things in the '98 version of Mulan, however, I was very moved when they introduced the new Mulan. Asian movies are not easy to make. Also isn't this better than Maleficent 2???

M15 2020-09-05

什么玩意儿！导演真不行，亚洲刻板印象集锦，剧情坍塌得只能哄小学生，可惜了这么好的IP

(作为天仙的颜粉，被片中造型丑到 还要安慰自己：这灰头土脸的素颜 也就我们刘亦菲能扛住)

What the heck! The director is really bad, it is a collection of Asian stereotypes and the plot collapsed so much that it could only amuse elementary students. It is a pity for such good intellectual property. (As a fairy fan, I was so appalled by her style in the film that I had to comfort myself: this makeup-free covered in dirt face, our Liu Yifei can carry it off.)

M16 2020-09-04

天仙眼神真的不行 真的不行 (忍不住再说一遍) 真的不太行 太呆滞了 剧情嘛看着看着忍不住 WTF了好几回 不过讲道理哟 花木兰难道不是应该跟巩俐那个角色在一起吗 毕竟同类人惺惺相惜 整体嘛。。就 O...K? 三星嫌多两星嘛或许还不至于的那种 【想了一下亚裔真的不容易 但是这片子太尴尬到吐血了 哎算了算了还是保留三星吧 友邻们多帮我骂骂那些白人

The fairy's expression is really not good. Really not good. (Can't help but say it again.) Really not good enough. Too lifeless. The plot, I was watching and watching and couldn't help but say WTF several times. But it is reasonable. Shouldn't Hua Mulan be together with that role of Gong Li? After all, the same type of people sympathise with each other. The whole thing is... just O...K? Three stars are too much. Two stars... maybe it is not that bad. After thinking about it, Asian films are really not easy to make, but this one is so embarrassing to the point of spitting blood. Forget it, keep the three stars. Neighbours, help me scold those white people more.

M17 2021-01-29

选景和造型和想象的几乎一样，值得表扬。而更重要的，故事，讲的不伦不类，个人觉得是西方人不了解中国文化而妖魔化的产物。再说这女一，虽说隔行如隔山，改行很难，但演戏对你而言更难，不是吗？

The scenery and style are nearly the same as imagined, which deserves to be praised. But, more importantly, the story is incongruous and, personally, I feel that it is the product of demonization by the Westerners who do not understand Chinese culture. Moreover, about this leading actress, even though I am not familiar with the field and changing careers is difficult, acting is harder for you, isn't it?

M18 2020-09-06

前面都把Chi当作原力处理了，不如干脆拍木兰版Rogue One还高级一些。

The Chi was treated as the Force, so it would be better to simply shoot a Mulan version of Rogue One, which is higher in quality.

M19 2020-09-04

5. 木兰他爹竟然叫花粥哈哈哈哈 总算明白花木兰流传至今的原因了，这对当时的思想观念简直是雪崩一般的冲击 刘亦菲在里面挺好看的(不扮男装的情况下)，无功无过，不知道化妆那段是故意恶搞还是功课做得不够 剧情非常简单：花木兰替父从军拯救“世界”(没错，就是这几个字)，反派太弱鸡了，无力吐槽 听古代人讲英语太违和了，就算后期配音嘴型也对不上，况且中文还是大白话，更尴尬 如果只看英文字幕也能理解，单词基本上不超出高中范围 PS：花木兰真是中国女权第一人啊

5. Mulan's father is actually called Hua Porridge hahahaha. I finally understand why Hua Mulan has been passed down to this day. It had a snowball effect on the thinking and concepts of that time. Liu Yifei was pretty good-looking in it (not when she was dressed up as a man). She neither adds to nor detracts from the result. I don't know whether that makeup scene was a deliberate spoof or they did not do their homework well. The plot is very simple: Hua Mulan joins the army on behalf of her father to save the "world" (yes, that was the word) and the villain is too weak. I am speechless. Listening to ancient people speaking English feels very out of place. Even if the dubbing was added later it does not correspond to the shape of the mouth. Moreover, Chinese is in the vernacular too, which makes it more awkward. If you only look at the English subtitles, you can understand. The words basically do not exceed the level of high school. PS: Hua Mulan is really the number one feminist in China.

M20 2020-09-04

女神打戏太帅了 五星好评 服化道拉胯扣两分

The goddess' acting is very cool. Would give a 5 star review but the lame costumes, make-up and props deduct 2 points

M21 2020-09-06

本就是左宗棠鸡，你挑啥不正宗。那个安柚鑫笑起来怪好看

This is like General Tso's Chicken, you choose what is not authentic. An Yoson when smiling is quite good-looking.

M22 2020-09-06

明白了，这是个女巫练气功的故事。

I understand, this is a story of a witch practising qigong.

M23 2020-09-04

刘亦菲就应该和巩俐联手打天下啊

Liu Yifei should join forces with Gong Li to fight the world.

M24 2020-09-05

“女巫”、“黑魔法”这种老套格鲁的词都出来了。编剧要么对中国只懂皮毛，要么是另眼曲解。且不说这标准的美音和其时的中国南北朝有多不和谐，就这样的西方眼中来看中国封建王朝和家庭是格格不入的，因为中国的平民百姓从来就没有像里面这样精致这么自主过，所以看起来就像是看迪斯尼式古希腊史诗神话。【忠勇真】，这也纯然西方的价值观，跟古代征壮丁完全两样。巩俐这个角色可以看做是女权的一点呐喊，突然被口盾弃暗投明也太莫名了。李连杰这个皇帝正面决斗这根本就是英国绅士的传统好吧~~！唯二的看点，一是大远景大西北地貌之壮丽，以及CG还原的大都城和实景结合尚有那么些古都的庄严雅致，二是刘亦菲，太酷了。5.6

Old English words such as "witch" and "dark magic" came out. The screenwriter either has just superficial knowledge about China, or he misinterprets it. Not to mention the disharmony between the standard American accent and the Chinese Southern and Northern Dynasties of the time. From a Western view, the Chinese feudal dynasty is detached from the households, because the common people in China have never been that refined and self-dominant as depicted in the movie. And so it looks like watching Disney-style ancient Greek epic myths. [Loyalty, bravery and truthfulness.] These are also purely Western values, completely different from those of recruited soldiers in ancient times. The role of Gong Li can be regarded as a cry of feminism. It is too inexplicable to be suddenly persuaded to renounce the dark and seek the light. The face-to-face duel of Jet Li, as the emperor, is simply a tradition of British gentlemen! The only two things to notice are, first, the magnificent longshots of the great Northwest landforms, as well as the CGI-restored metropolis combined with the real scenery which still have the solemn elegance of the ancient capital. The second one is Liu Yifei, who is very cool. 5.6

M25 2020-09-21

对于大多数美国观众来说，这应该是很好看的合家欢电影；对于大多数中国观众来说，如果不能努力把它想象成一部「外国电影」，那么观影感受是会很拧巴的.....对于迪士尼来说，这只是它全球商业化叙事的一部分，是迪士尼公主生意的一部分。但中国观众就无法忽视它的文化背景而臣服于迪士尼全球化叙事策略，直接结论就是它不好看。

For most American audiences, this should be a good family-friendly movie; for most Chinese audiences, if they can't try hard to imagine it as a "foreign movie", then the watching experience will be very uncomfortable... For Disney, this is only part of its global commercialising narrative, and part of the Disney princess business. However, Chinese audiences cannot ignore their cultural background and surrender to Disney's globalisation narrative tactics. The immediate conclusion is that it is not good.

M26 2020-09-06

不好说刘亦菲一定是最完美的花木兰人选，毕竟宇宙这么大，话不好说太绝对，但单就地球（排除平行时空）而言，目前很难找出第二个比她更合适这个角色的人了。成片不说多好看，但也远到不了难看。四平八稳标准化的迪士尼公主成长之路，且期间颜值一度爆表把标准线粉碎得模糊，除了武打少了些武侠风的空灵，战争场面不够大气，部分服装非常违和——这些由西方幻想式东方审美下导致的很多不适应，成片整体在好莱坞同类型体系里并不露怯。看到很多差评的说法，我恍惚间明白了国内叫好的电影去国外个保个扑街的原因。不说审美高低，但审美绝对不同。此外也请理解下西方的民主科学的基因，对于不了解道、功夫、武侠、气功、天人合一、奇经八脉等的他们，这种程度的东方玄幻已经是顶天了，可也许你们要看的是古代女版奇异博士吧。

It's hard to say that Liu Yifei is certainly the perfect candidate for Mulan. After all, the universe is so big, we cannot be absolutely sure. But with regards to the earth alone (excluding parallel time and space), it is currently difficult to find a second person who is more suitable for this role than her. I do not say that the movie was good, but it was far from being unwatchable. The path of growth of the Disney princesses is stable and standardised, and the once extreme attractiveness index of that period crushed the standards. Apart from the lack of graceful martial art scenes, the war scene was not impressive enough, and some of the costumes were very out of place -these are the result of the Western-style vision of oriental aesthetics that fails to adapt. Within Hollywood-like setups the film does not make a blunder at all. Seeing a lot of bad reviews, I realised the reason why domestically popular movies that went abroad were doomed to be flops. Without mentioning its level, the aesthetic is absolutely different. In addition, please understand the genes of Western democratic science. For those who don't understand Daoism, Kung Fu, martial arts, qigong, the oneness of man and nature, and the eight extraordinary meridians, this degree of Eastern fantasy is already extremely high, but maybe what you want to see is the ancient female version of Doctor Strange.

M27 2020-09-05

一言难尽.....一言难尽.....一言难尽.....

Hard to explain in a few words...

M28 2020-09-06

2020-09-05 向来对迪士尼真人电影期望低，准三星很惊喜。迪士尼公主不可能是五大三粗型战士，编剧用“气”（魔法）解释花木兰能力，几场战斗都巧妙避开群殴以智力取胜。虽然不能和好莱坞优秀电影比，还是好过现世所有其他《花木兰》影视作品。没有狗血，简单干净。中国观众期望值太高，总是用本土古装片审美（其实不怎么样）硬套，难以取悦。不要管中国，再架空些，多些想象，会更好。

Before the 2020-09-05 I had very low expectations for Disney's live-action movies. I am granting 3 stars while pleasantly surprised. Disney princesses can not be big and tall warriors. The screenwriter uses "qi" (magic) to explain Hua Mulan's abilities. In a few battles, she cleverly avoided group fights and prevailed with intelligence. Although it can't be compared with the excellent Hollywood movies, it is still better than all other "Mulan" television and cinema works. It is not melodramatic, it is simple and clean. The expectations of Chinese audiences are too high and they are hard to please by always using local period costumes to make them aesthetically rigid. Do not be concerned about China. The more unfounded and invented, the better.

M29 2020-09-05

谁想的让花木兰她爹叫花粥，你咋不让他叫花花华晨宇呢...

Whose idea was calling Hua Mulan's father Hua porridge. Why don't you call him HuaHua Hua Chenyu...

M30 2020-09-05

前面三分之二可以三分，但是后面进宫后就全程崩溃，感觉编剧已经进入自暴自弃状态，无法评分。但是拍出来真的超级爆笑，所以纯粹就“可嘲笑”的娱乐价值来讲，还真是仍然非常值得一看的。此外认真多说一句：花木兰的故事虽然被拍过好多次了，但形象一直被设定成非常传统的“女性”样子，也就是说，绝对是首先要是一个大多数人觉得“好看”的女人。然而混在战场上跟男人都分不出来，又怎么可能是那样子呢？只能说商业片到底还是不会太敢于突破吧，所以这部表面上讲“女性意识觉醒”的电影，实质上仍然是在做一种生硬的讨好，讨好大多数人以便赢得市场，讨好“正确”以便完成“觉醒”的叙事，哪怕人物行为都莫名其妙了……所以啊，这其实还是一个花木兰的故事没办法让人信服地讲述的时代。

The first two-thirds can have three stars, but after entering the palace the entire thing collapses. I feel that the screenwriter has entered a state of giving up and stopped bothering, so I am unable to score it. But the filming is really hilarious, so purely in terms of having a "ridiculous" entertainment value, it is still very worth watching. In addition, I will say one more thing seriously: Although the story of Hua Mulan has been filmed many times, the image has always been set as a very traditional "female" appearance. In other words, she is definitely first and foremost a woman that most people think of as "good-looking". However, you can't have her not being recognized among the men on the battlefield. It can only be said that after all commercial films are still not too daring to make breakthroughs, so this film that talks about "the awakening of female consciousness" on the surface, is actually still doing a blunt flattery, currying favour with the majorities in order to win the market, currying favour with "political correctness" in order to complete the narrative of "awakening". Even the behaviour of

the characters is inexplicable... So this is actually still an era when Mulan's story cannot be narrated convincingly.

M31 2020-09-05

「美式价值观」比国人更热爱花木兰，尤其在当下「女性主义」强调独立自主的今天，而迪士尼的保守主义则维系了女性主义与传统的「折中」——用「皇权」来表达传统「正道」，用「女巫」来界定「女性主义」张扬的边界。此外美国人对「气」的迷恋和误解还停留在19世纪末，而郑佩佩未来可以出演真人版的《天书奇谈》。

"American values" adore Mulan more than people of this country, especially today when "feminism" emphasizes independence. Disney's conservatism maintains the "compromise" between feminism and tradition using "imperial power" to express the traditional "right way" and using "witches" to define the boundaries of "feminism". Moreover, Americans' infatuation and misunderstanding of "qi" are still stuck at the end of the 19th century, and Cheng Pei-pei could appear in the live-action version of "The Book of Heaven" in the future.

M32 2020-09-04

连夜看完，只能说是中规中矩。不过这么多年了，刘亦菲依然可以保持这种透明的少女感，真的好厉害><

After watching it tonight, I can only say that it is conforming with the norms of society. But after so many years, Liu Yifei can still maintain this transparent girly feeling. She is really awesome.

M33 2020-09-04

1.以西方视角来拍中式内核的传统文化故事，魔幻色彩自是更重了（对气的诠释、女巫）；2.特效和打斗还可以，叙事平稳流畅，与动画版相较不会有惊喜，无功无过的改编，着重刻画了父女情；3.女巫：男权社会掣肘下的反叛者和指引木兰寻回自我归属感的领路人，功能性略强行为动机也很突兀；4.吉祥物木须变守护神凤凰，乐趣虽少了但象征意义更浓厚（涅槃重生），没和以往公主片一样尬歌尬舞好评；5.平心而论天仙的表演不算拉胯，整体发挥在及格线以上。

1. According to the western perspective, magic is more important when shooting traditional cultural stories with a Chinese core (the interpretation of Qi, witches). 2. Special effects and fights are okay, the narration flows smoothly, and compared to the animated version it has no pleasant surprises. An adaptation with neither contribution nor faults that puts emphasis on portraying the emotions between father and daughter. 3. The witch: a rebel against the impediments of the patriarchal society and a leader who guides Mulan into finding her sense of belonging, with slightly strong functional behaviour as well as abrupt motives. 4. The mascot Mushu changes to the guardian spirit of a

Phoenix. Although it lacks the fun, the symbolic meaning is stronger (nirvana rebirth). It is not as acclaimed as the previous princess movies with the awkward singing and dancing. To be honest, the fairy's acting is not a let-down, and the overall performance is above the passing line.

M34 2020-09-04

唧唧复唧唧，木兰捉小鸡

A sigh, a sigh and then again a sigh, Mulan catches the chick.

M35 2020-09-11

什么鬼……花木兰就演出个“木”，这次滤镜碎的彻彻底底，打三星我都嫌高了系列……

What the hell... Hua Mulan's acting is "wooden", this time the camera filter is completely broken, and giving it 3 stars is even too much.

M36 2020-09-07

基本符合预期，摄影和美术赞，故事虽幼稚但流畅，三观正，笑点有点尬。人物方面，木兰是个发现自我的神，而不是成长起来的人，这是一个缺憾。至于各种文化细节，是一部美国电影，木兰故事本来就是浪漫色彩浓厚的扯淡传说，你还要纠结原力土楼对联太极拳？那我国国师的《长城》是什么玩意儿？刘亦菲形象挺好的，扑克脸适合这个角色。所有人加起来都不是巩俐对手，只能用她想死来解释。最震惊的是看完全片也没认出李连杰。

Basically in line with expectations. Photography and art are to be praised, the story is childish but smooth, but the worldview, the values and the funny bits are a bit awkward. In terms of characters, Mulan is a self-discovering god, not a person who matures. It is a pity. As for the various cultural details, it is an American movie. The story of Mulan is originally a deeply romantic nonsense legend. Do you still have to band together the Force, Tulou, rhyming couplets and tai chi? Then our country's and our teachers' "Great Wall" is a plaything? Liu Yifei's image is quite good. The poker face is suitable for this role. All men added up were not enough to be Gong Li's opponents, so her death can only be explained if she wanted to die. The most shocking thing is that I didn't recognize Jet Li even after watching the entire film.

M37 2020-12-20

1.刘亦菲红衣长发在雪中骑马绝美！2.虽然电影和中国传统花木兰的故事大相径庭，但是电影本身不难看。

1. Liu Yifei with red clothes and long hair riding a horse in the snow is absolutely beautiful! 2.

Although the movie and the traditional Chinese story of Mulan are worlds apart, the movie itself is not unwatchable.

M38 2020-09-04

很傻很天真 看完信条后死亡的脑细胞得到了滋补 谢谢迪士尼

Very silly and naive. The brain cells that died after watching *Tenet* are nourished. Thank you Disney.

M39 2020-09-11

如果没有巩俐, 我大概会想把电影院砸了 ☹️

Without Gong Li, I would probably want to smash the movie theatre.

M40 2020-09-04

三星都给刘亦菲

Three stars, all for Liu Yifei

M41 2020-09-04

和原版动画的connection好弱, 主题曲在正片中就飘忽的出现了两三次, chi是个什么玩意儿啊 动画里有吗?? 刘亦菲脸还是好看的, 反正看完也不能说多烂但就是有点无聊, 外加心疼银子

The connection with the original animated version is very weak, the theme song appears fleetingly two or three times in the feature film. What on earth is the chi? Was it in the animation? Liu Yifei's face is still good-looking, but anyway after watching it I can't say it was too bad, but it's a bit boring, in addition to regretting my money.

M42 2020-09-11

神奇女侠1984在中国大陆于2020.9.11提前上映。

Wonder Woman 1984 will be released ahead of schedule on September 11, 2020 in mainland China.

M43 2020-09-07

其实大家忘记了。卡通版的木兰就是个美式的tomboy, 和中国没啥关系。零期待所以看得下去, 不过看天仙个巩俐得对手戏觉得, 如果是年轻的章子怡演会好很多, 天仙气质太娘了。

Actually everyone forgot. The cartoon version of Mulan is an American tomboy, which has nothing to do with China. I had zero expectations so I could watch it, but when I watched the fairy's and Gong Li's rival scene I felt that if there was a young Zhang Ziyi, she would play much better. The fairy's disposition is too girly.

M44 2020-09-05

太…玄幻了…跑偏的略严重啊

Too much fantasy... The deviation is rather serious.

M45 2020-09-05

女巫姐姐和木兰妹妹你们俩组队建立一个王朝不好吗？女巫姐姐做empress，木兰做护国大将军，为啥非得臣服于老男人呢？？斥\$29.99巨资看了一脑子问号。神仙姐姐确实是美的，但这个故事为了迎合中国观众而生搬硬套了各种中国元素搞得四不像，实在太失败了。Economist上上周那期里的一篇文章讲到为什么中国资本在影视里的影响力越来越大是值得让人担忧的一件事，这个电影恐怕是个好的例子。

The Witch and Mulan, is it not good for you two to team up and found a dynasty? The witch will act as the empress, and Mulan as the general that protects the country. Why must they submit to old men? Spent the huge sum of \$29.99 to watch something unintelligible. The fairy sister is indeed beautiful, but in order to cater to the Chinese audience, they have mechanically applied all kinds of Chinese elements in the story making it an odd mixture of disparate elements, which was actually a great failure. An article in last week's issue of the Economist talked about why the Chinese capital becoming more and more influential in film and television is a matter of concern. Perhaps this movie is a good example.

M46 2020-09-12

作为一个合家欢翻拍很失败吗...可能是时代变了吧...抛开意识形态和价值观，就只有转折比较突兀吧（反正我是觉得花军变木兰之前还挺挺下饭的），一个儿童片把观众当小朋友没毛病。总比把观众当白痴的自慰商业片要好吧。没错，我是真心觉得花木兰比信条观感友好...

Is it a failure to see it as a family-friendly remake? Maybe the times have changed... Aside from ideology and values, the plot twist alone is quite abrupt (Anyway, I think before Huajun changed into Mulan he looked pretty fine). There is nothing wrong with a children's film treating the audience as children. It is always better than a commercial film that treats the audience as idiots. Yes, I sincerely feel that Mulan has a better impression than *Tenet*...

M47 2020-09-09

不知道如果我说还可以会不会被踹出去啊，好像真没预想中那么不堪入目，不就是迪士尼行货嘛！情节简单，价值观真善美的那类；众多眼熟的致意元素，耳熟的经典迪士尼老歌化用的选段，仿佛陷入了一场跨越十多年的怀旧之旅，刘亦菲浴火重生扔掉铠甲、解开长发，妥妥滴就是当年动画片重现嘛；另外这真不是啥展现中国文化博大精深什么历史片，只是一部米国人眼中的东方世界的架空片，就如同他们拍阿拉伯人拍萨米人一样，不要自己凑上去往被污辱被损害的坑里跳，记住这只是美国片而已。赶脚米国的制作者们看到评价如此之差要委屈了：我们明明只是想进一步跟随如今女性时代潮流讲一个勇敢的替父从军又报效祖国的好女娃的故事嘛，为什么会被骂那么惨啦！以及再怎么样海报真的太难看了，救命啊

I don't know if what I will say is ok or I will get kicked out, It seems that it's not as unsightly as I

expected. Isn't it a Disney licensed product? The plot is simple and the values are those of truth, goodness and beauty, that kind. It has numerous familiar elements, excerpts from familiar, classic old Disney songs, as if we are caught up in a nostalgic journey spanning more than ten years. Liu Yifei rising from the ashes, throwing away her armour and untying her long hair, it is just like the animated movie reappears. In addition, this is really not a historical film that reveals how broad and deep Chinese culture is. It is merely a groundless film of the Eastern world from the eyes of the Americans, in the same way they filmed Arabs and Sami people. Don't get insulted and damaged on your own, remember that it is only an American movie, that's all. The American producers that saw such a poor evaluation must have felt wronged: we obviously only want to further follow the trend of today's women's era and tell the story of a brave girl who joined the army to serve the motherland again on behalf of her father. Why were we cursed so badly? And no matter what the poster is really ugly, help!

M48 2020-09-04

1. 刘亦菲的英文台词竟然真的不错，但是面部表情好木。虽然形象上符合木兰，演技还是差一截。2. 编剧究竟有没有读过木兰辞？难道木兰内心的觉醒是靠一只塑料质感的凤凰？又或者是女巫（到底为什么必须出现一个女巫？）的三言两语？3. 狗迪出品，万万不可以有真正的同性恋，但绝对不对放过打擦边球的机会。4. 李连杰和甄子丹俩打功夫巨星摆在这就比划这么几下，大材小用。5. reflection不管什么时候都是这么好听。6. 全员说英语，木兰一个北方人住福建土楼，四两拨千斤说的是ounce和pound这种不伦不类没做功课的地方也很出戏。7. 全片弥漫着过时的气息。说是十年前的电影我也信。

1. Liu Yifei's English lines turned out to be really good, but her facial expressions were wooden. Although her image fits that of Mulan, her acting skills are still lacking. 2. Has the screenwriter ever read the ballad of Mulan? Could it be that Mulan's inner awakening depends on a plastic phoenix? Or is it the witch's few words? (And after all, why does a witch show up?) 3. Being a stinky-Disney production, it is absolutely impossible to have true homosexuality, but it is totally wrong to let go of the chance to bend the rules. 4. Jet Li and Donnie Yen are both superstars in Kung Fu. To have them show just a few moves is a waste of talent. 5. Reflection is so nice no matter what. 6. The entire cast speaks English. Mulan is a northerner who lives in a Tulou. In the expression "to achieve much with little effort" they used the words "ounce" and "pound". These kinds of incongruous things that lack research also make you lose interest. 7. The whole film is full of an outdated atmosphere. If they said that it was a movie from ten years ago I would believe it.

M49 2020-09-05

哎……即便不去苛求常识和文化差异那些 就你迪的水准没想到抠像和打光这么差 动作戏更

是一场糊涂 明明刘亦菲是能打的 你们拍之前就不能问问成家班问问正宗的武指？当然刘亦菲演的是没什么好 但她真的好“干净”这么多年了她还是能保持这种干净太神奇了最后找一个夸的地方吧 音乐还是OK的

Hey...Even if you don't go demanding common sense and cultural differences, for Disney's standards I didn't expect the chroma keying and lighting to be so poor. The action scenes are even more of a total mess. Obviously Liu Yifei can fight. Before you shoot, can't you ask the Jackie Chan Stunt Team about an authentic stunt coordinator? Of course, Liu Yifei's acting is not good, but she's really "clean" for so many years. It's miraculous that she is still being "clean" after so many years. Finally, I found something to praise. The music is still OK.

M50 2020-09-08

其实技术层面的问题没有那么大，主要还是美国离中国实在太远了，离古代中国更是远到了无法想象的地步，所以古代中国的背景和这个追寻自我的现代美国故事完全没办法到融合到一起，这种拧巴几乎体现在所有的细节描写和氛围营造上。美国写《寻梦环游记》这种近邻墨西哥文化的故事就写得很好，中美之间真的相隔太远太远了，远超过了想象力和情感共通所能达到的极限。

In fact, the technical problems are not that big. The main thing still is that the United States is really too far away from China, and it is even further from ancient China, to an unimaginable degree. Thus the background of ancient China and this self-seeking modern American story cannot be mixed together. This awkwardness is almost reflected in all the details and the atmosphere. The Americans wrote "Coco", the story of their neighbouring Mexican culture, very well. The distance between China and the United States is really so far that they exceed the limits of imagination and common feelings.

N01 2020-09-04

呆若木兰

Dumbstruck

N02 2020-09-04

真香失败.....剧情涣散，表演僵硬，打戏还是十几年前国产古装剧的水平，巩俐这个女巫的角色加得实在是太失败了，最后那个射大雕差点把我笑死.....

Awesome failure...The plot is disorganised, the performance is stiff, and the fighting scenes are still at

the level of the domestic costume dramas of more than ten years ago. The role of Gong Li as a witch is really a failure. In the end, the shooting of the big raptor almost made me die laughing...

N03 2020-09-04

刘亦菲怎么做到一个表情演完整部电影的 巩俐的角色完全没必要 我最喜欢的木须也没有 小时候最震撼的全京城百姓下跪感谢木兰也没有 迪士尼擅长的电影配乐也没有 难看至极

How did Liu Yifei manage to act in the entire movie with one expression? The role of Gong Li is completely unnecessary. My favourite Mushu was not there. The scene with the entire capital kneeling down to thank Mulan which has stunned me the most as a child was also not there. Neither was Disney's movie soundtrack. Extremely unwatchable.

N04 2020-09-04

看完想给张艺谋道歉，给景甜道歉，还不如拍木须和蟋蟀唱歌跳舞，起码长城正片还有一首大风歌改编的不错，动画版木兰亮点全删了

After watching, I want to apologise to Zhang Yimou and Jing Tian. It is better to shoot Mushu and the cricket singing and dancing. At the very least the Great Wall feature film also has a good adaptation of the *gale song*. All the highlights of the Mulan animation have been completely deleted.

N05 2020-09-04

.....o.k.(钱德勒初见莫妮卡式ok)

...OK (Chandler-sees-Monica-for-the-first-time-type of ok)

N06 2020-09-04

正片比海报还要难看！

The film is uglier than the poster!

N07 2020-09-04

其实挺佩服迪士尼还要在中国上映的勇敢的。片子完全是无法理解的外国人自大又傲慢的产物，这样的片子只配网大。还有菲啊，你真是一如既往的稳，各方面拿捏的死死的，没有一丝一毫的波动👍

Actually I really admire Disney's courage in still wanting to release it in China. The film is completely incomprehensible and the product of arrogant and haughty foreigners. Such a film is only fit for an online short-length movie. And Fei, you are really as stable as ever, in control of every aspect, there is not a slightest fluctuation.

N08 2020-09-04

我的电影票钱

My movie ticket money...

N09 2020-09-04

1.0 全方位的烂，不必苛责人尽皆知的刘亦菲的差演技，她真不是最差的那个，导演比刘亦菲差得多，调度根本是胡来，镜头设计，分镜，剪辑全部都有很多莫名其妙，越轴胡乱用，摄影机旋转胡乱用，剧本沿袭迪士尼动改真的一贯套路，几乎没改，如果说动画我还能以给小孩子看为借口去接受剧情的逻辑问题，那么真人电影还那么胡来，我绝对接受不了，到处都是bug，更不要谈人物了，最后我也不知道这片的投资花在哪了，真的用在了特效上？完全的网大质感，游戏质感。我真的没有在这部电影身上找到哪怕一丝的优点

1.0 All-round bad, there is no need to be harsh on Liu Yifei's well-known poor acting skills. She is really not the worst one. The director is much worse than Liu Yifei. The mise-en-scène is simply nonsense. The shot design, the storyboard and the editing are all very baffling. The over-the-axis shots are careless, and the camera is rotated randomly. The script follows Disney's consistent methods that are almost unchanged. If I can accept the animated film's plot problems under the pretext of being a children's movie, then the real-life movie is so sloppy, I absolutely can't accept it.. There are faults everywhere, let alone the characters. In the end, I don't know where this film's investments were spent. Were they really used for special effects? Completely has the quality of an online low budget film, the quality of a game. I really didn't find even the slightest advantage in this movie.

N10 2020-09-04

更想问2亿美元的预算花哪儿了？前半已经没啥建构了，后半还能塌成这样，不得不让我怀疑迪士尼内部是否有问题

I want to ask where the \$200 million budget was spent? Despite not having anything to build on in the first half, the second half still collapses like this. I can't help being sceptical over whether Disney has internal problems.

N11 2020-09-04

垮得蛮彻底的。。所有人物都很脸谱化，包括反派，剧情不出意外地乏善可陈，没有谁演技在线
A complete breakdown... All the characters lack individuality, including the villain, the plot, unsurprisingly, has nothing worth mentioning. No one is acting on point

N12 2020-09-04

烂出高度。配色柳绿花红，实景与特效差别太大了。音乐强行煽情，音画分离。情节缺乏铺垫，

所有应该下功夫的都流于表面。主角拍得像是活在阿拉伯的功夫熊猫，所有人物的选择都是失败的。巩俐那都什么玩意儿？

Extremely lame. The colour matching is too much. There is a big difference between the real scene and the special effects. Music is forcibly emotional, separating the sound from the image. The plot lacks foreshadowing, and all those things that required a concentrated effort lack depth. The protagonist is filmed like a Kung Fu panda living in Arabia, and all of the characters are a failure. What even is Gong Li?

N13 2020-09-04

木兰什么时候有超能力了。。。剧情尬，台词尬，失望。不明白迪士尼的操作。

When did Mulan have superpowers?... The storyline is awkward, the dialogues are awkward, it is disappointing. I don't understand Disney's operation.

N14 2020-09-04

水土不服+演员表演形如枯槁

Not acclimatised + actors' performances appear unenergetic

N15 2020-09-04

对剧情和设定感到hmmm的朋友可以把气理解为原力，木兰理解为天资聪慧的原力少女蕾娅，巩皇理解为堕入黑暗面被放逐的黑武士，这样一来故事就通顺多了

Friends who feel hmmm about the plot and the setting can understand the Qi as the Force.

Understand Mulan as Leia, the gifted and intelligent girl with the force, and Empress Gong as Darth Vader who fell to the dark and was exiled. In this way, the story is more clear and coherent.

N16 2020-09-04

五讲四美三热爱。贫瘠的实景，廉价的CG，花拳绣腿的动作戏，赛马段落以为在看《还珠格格》？看完想给国师的《长城》道歉。如此没有生命力的木兰不知道究竟该以何动人，仅靠一头长发？

The Five Emphases, Four Beauties, and Three Loves. Poor live action, cheap CG, action scenes with all show and no go, and a horse racing part in which you think you are watching "My Fair Princess"?

After watching the "Great Wall", I want to apologise to the national master. Such a lifeless Mulan after all doesn't know how to move people and is only relying on her long hair?

N17 2020-09-04

吐，又是一部烂片，看完真浪费时间

Spits It's another dud movie. I finished watching it and it's really a waste of time.

N18 2020-09-05

1. 皇帝要让花木兰做将领的时候，花木兰却拒绝了，因为她要回家向家人赔罪。父母没有因为对她催婚而向她道歉，她为什么要因为展示了自己的“气”而道歉？花木兰是一个独立、自主的女性，她不应该觉得女性有“气”是一种罪，她应该觉得这是她的天赋。她也不应该觉得女性不能带兵打仗，她应该觉得男性能做的事，女性也能做。2. 本以为电影最后人们不会再觉得有“气”的女性是女巫，结果电影压根就没提这件事。似乎这个问题根本不重要，只要电影最后花木兰取得成功就行了，其它女性过得好不好不重要。但是花木兰一个人不再受到歧视，并不代表所有女性都不会受到歧视。3. 中国的故事被美国人拍成电影，演员都是中国人，说的却是英文，这让我感觉很魔幻。假如中国的电影公司把美国的故事拍成电影，演员都是美国人，说的却是中文，估计会喷死吧。

1. When the emperor wanted to make Hua Mulan a high-ranking military officer, she refused because she wanted to go home to apologise to her family. The parents did not apologise to her for rushing her to marry, so why must she apologise for revealing her "qi"? Hua Mulan is an independent and autonomous woman, she shouldn't think that it is a crime for women to have "qi". She should think that this is her gift. She shouldn't think that women can't lead troops to fight. She should think that women can do the things that men can do. 2. I thought that at the end of the movie, people would no longer think that women with "qi" are witches, but in the end the movie didn't mention this at all. As if this issue is not important at all, everything is fine as long as Mulan is successful at the end of the film. It is not important whether the other women are well. But Hua Mulan alone no longer being discriminated against, does not mean that all women will not receive discrimination. 3. A Chinese story being made into a movie by Americans. The actors are all Chinese, but they speak English, which makes it feel very illusory. If a Chinese film company makes an American story into a movie, and the actors are all Americans speaking Chinese, they would be roasted to death.

N19 2020-09-05

又有凤又有龙，真可谓龙凤呈祥，花木兰在这里向全世界人民拜个早年。

There are phoenixes and dragons, it can be said that the dragon and the phoenix are symbols of good fortune. Hua Mulan salutes pointlessly to the people of the world.

N20 2020-09-04

这是在干什么？

What is this doing?

N21 2020-09-04

有这时间不如把动画片再看一遍

If you have this time, it's better to watch the cartoon again

N22 2020-09-05

一星为巩俐 天线 (天仙) 那呆板的眼神真让人出戏

The one star goes to Gong Li. The stiff expression of the fairy is really disengaging.

N23 2020-09-04

太出戏了，河北土楼？Niubi

Too fake. Hebei Tulou? Awesome

N24 2020-09-05

西方人误读东方文化集大成之作

Westerners misinterpret the masterpieces of eastern culture

N25 2020-09-05

阿谋看了会沉默，甜甜看了会哭泣，还不如《长城》

Zhang Yimou will be silent when he watches it, Jing Tian will cry when she watches it. It is not as good as "The Great Wall"

N26 2020-09-05

刘亦菲十年如一日的盲人演技

Liu Yifei's acting is an eyesore that makes the 10 years that passed to seem as one day

N27 2020-09-04

耳熟能详的剧情、还是被尬到了。证明了刘亦菲真的不会做表情，比起演员她更适合当模特。

Familiar plot, but still felt embarrassed. It proves that Liu Yifei really cannot be expressive. She is more suitable for a model than an actor.

N28 2020-09-05

尬的我脚趾头都蜷起来了！！村民械斗，是村民械斗吧？？国内网络大电影都比不过的水平！迪士尼这次太让我失望了！

It was so embarrassing that my toes curled up! A villagers' fight, is it a villagers' fight? Doesn't reach the level of domestic online movies! Disney disappointed me a lot this time!

N29 2020-09-04

故事情节很弱 毫无逻辑的突出花木兰的英雄情结 武打戏效果又弱 没买票的省点钱吧 在网上看好了！

The storyline is very weak, and illogically highlights Hua Mulan's hero complex. The effects of the acrobatic fighting scenes were also weak. Save a little money if you didn't buy a ticket. Watch it on the Internet!

N30 2020-09-04

我刚看了个啥？

What did I just watch?

N31 2020-09-04

它的女性主义可能在于木兰能够长发以女性身份去战斗，“气”的设置仿佛把歧视外化了，巩俐所饰演的女巫是木兰的另一个反面（至少她不压抑自己的气和女性身份），从这个意义上讲，女巫不是什么反派，更像一个引导者。但我说了这么多，还是要骂一句：怎么这么难看？怎么这么难看！

Its feminism possibly lies in Mulan being able to fight in her capacity as a woman with long hair. The setup of "qi" seems to externalize discrimination. The part of the witch played by Gong Li is Mulan's opposite (at least she does not suppress her own qi and feminine identity). In this sense, the witch is not a villain, but more like a guide. But having said all that, I still have to curse: Why is it so unwatchable? Why is it so unwatchable!

N32 2020-09-05

剧情整个跟闹着玩似的，练气功的就是巫师。整个电影英文台词抑扬顿挫，听的难受。皇帝李连杰跟傻子似的被烧，巩俐大鸟是巫师啊，射一箭就死了。而且手抓箭是什么有寓意的镜头么，大家都能抓住箭，反派最后死在没抓住箭。。。雪崩和沙漠的特效更是一塌糊涂，唯一好点的，背景音乐烘托的还行。而且迪士尼公主不是应该有歌舞么，我还期待了一下，毛都没有。。。。

The entire plot is like they are joking around, practising qigong is wizardry. The intonation in the English lines of the whole movie is painful to listen to. Emperor Jet Li was taken as a fool, the big bird Gong Li is a wizard, but she died after they shot one arrow. Moreover, what is the meaning of the scene when he caught the arrow with her hand? Everyone can catch the arrow, but in the end the villain died by not catching the arrow... The special effects of the avalanche and the desert are even more messy, the only good point is, the background music is not too bad. And shouldn't the Disney princesses have singing and dancing? I was looking forward to it but there was not one bit...

N33 2020-09-04

什么迪士尼，这电影的水平还不如电视剧琅琊榜和大军师。

What Disney? The level of this movie is not as good as the TV series Nirvana in Fire and The Advisors Alliance.

N34 2020-09-05

我不该喷中国版海报，我要道歉，这不是丑化木兰，这是对电影内容最真实的还原！！！！

I shouldn't spit on the poster of the Chinese version. I want to apologise. This was not a defiled Mulan, it was the most authentic restoration to the movie content!

N35 2020-09-04

太扁平了……

Too flat...

N36 2020-09-04

应该是给小盆友看的

It should be for little kids

N38 2020-09-11

虽然李连杰、巩俐等都是本人的中文配音，口型却完全没办法对上，因为，这是英语拍摄的。而影片带给观众的感觉也是这样，即便有大量东方面孔，讲东方故事，但骨子还是西方的，是译制片的感觉。这种违和感渗透到各种地方，比如美术，人物设定以及剧情。郑佩佩的妆，李连杰的服装和通篇使用的红色，都有种刻意和违和感。剧情方面也太老土了，配角基本都是符号角色。就像大家吐槽巩俐的角色为何死得这么无厘头，实际上，她必须死，因为，她就是一个让主角觉醒和硬扣主题的工具型角色。而全片，大多数角色都很工具和刻板。另外，动作戏就别吹了，很老套也不精彩啊。

Although Jet Li and Gong Li both dubbed themselves in Chinese, because they were shot in English, the shape of the mouth does not match up at all. And the feeling that the film brings to the audience is also like this. Even if there are a lot of East-Asian faces telling an East-Asian story, the frame is still Western, it feels like a translated film. This sense of disharmony permeates all kinds of places, such as the art, the character setting, as well as the plot. Zheng Peipei's makeup, Jet Li's costumes and the red used throughout the movie all have a sense of deliberateness and disharmony. The plot is too old-fashioned, and supporting roles are basically symbolic roles. It seems like everyone is venting for the meaningless death of Gong Li's character, but in fact she must die because she is an instrumental character that awakens the protagonist and forcefully fits into the theme. In the whole film, most of

the characters are instrumental and rigid. In addition, don't brag about the action scenes, they are cliché and not exciting.

N39 2020-09-04

挺无聊，剧情还略傻。。

Quite boring and the plot is slightly silly.

N40 2020-09-04

粗制滥造的改编，几处改编尽数沦为败笔，诸多人物心境转变过快缺乏铺垫，整体制作更是堪称灾难。

Poor-quality adaptation. Several adaptations have all turned out to be failures. A lot of characters' mental state changes too quickly and lacks foreshadowing. The entire production is even more of a disaster.

N41 2020-09-05

害，没想到内地版海报才是抓住了这部电影的精髓。5毛的特效6毛的台词和演技，浓浓的邵氏复古风武打，每一个吊威亚的地方都能把我尬一下，看了盗版资源的白嫖用户感谢搬运工帮我省下冤枉钱[强]为什么不评价剧情？因为剧情不配。

I didn't expect the mainland version of the poster to capture the essence of this movie. 50 cents worth of special effects, 60 cents worth of dialogues and acting skills, a strong Shaw brothers studio's retro style of martial arts, every fighting scene that used wires can embarrass me. Free-riders who have seen pirated resources thank the porter for helping me save money. Why not evaluate the plot? Because the plot does not deserve it.

N42 2020-09-04

二十年前看可能会给三星

Twenty years ago I might have given it three stars

N43 2020-09-05

浪费光阴，你改个名都行，和花木兰本身这个故事真没有什么关系

It's a waste of time. It is ok if you change the name, this story really has nothing to do with Mulan itself.

N44 2020-09-05

先说结论：壳是中国壳，魂还是老外那个劲，造型是日本艺伎，内核是老美超级英雄主义。总之是外国对中国片面化的认识。。。。。。看完挺不适的，电影还是明显的迪士尼风格。能理

解迪士尼想凸现花木兰的英勇女性角色，但是如果这种精神是以贬低中国和女性为衬托，那么我表示拒绝！整体挺局限的，从巩俐女巫角色的莫名其妙到刚训练不久的几人小队拯救国家和皇帝，再到整体营造的女性以三从四德和嫁人为荣耀的奇怪思想。多种文化杂糅，多重风格杂糅。影片显然不了解中国文化和花木兰精神。大概从头至尾最能提现花木兰精神的就是剑上那几个字了吧。

Let me start with the verdict: the shell is a Chinese shell, and the soul still has the spirit of foreigners. The style is Japanese geisha, and the core is American superheroism. In short, it is the foreign countries' one-sided understanding of China... It's quite uncomfortable after watching, the movie is still obviously Disney style. I can understand that Disney wants to highlight Mulan's heroic female character, but if they set off this kind of spirit by degrading China and women, then I state my refusal! The entire thing is quite limited, from the baffling character of Gong Li as a witch to the newly trained tiny team of a few people to save the country and the emperor, and up to the overall construction of women according to the Confucian moral injunctions for women as well as the strange ideas of marriage as honour. A mix of multiple cultures and multiple styles. The film obviously does not understand Chinese culture and the spirit of Mulan. Probably the most reminiscent of Mulan's spirit from beginning to end is the words on the sword.

N45 2020-09-05

烂片，没有动画十分之一好看。

Bad movie, not one-tenth as good as the animation.

N46 2020-09-04

跟摘金奇缘一样美国人拍给美国人看的电影，体现了他们对中国文化浅尝辄止的研究和简单粗暴的符号堆砌，不过是好莱坞女权大潮中一枚棋子而已——这倒也司空见惯了——真正令人惊讶的是迪士尼将商业属性前置到连角色塑造都懒得做了，把花木兰放到了工具人的境地，都糊弄成这样了还要在中国走院线发行，不知该说迪爸是重视还是不重视中国市场？再加上唱段一砍，记忆点全无，大概下次在Disneyland烟花秀木兰旋律响起时才会记起有这么一版吧。

The films that Americans make for Americans, like Crazy, Rich Asians, reflects their superficial research on Chinese culture and their simple and crude symbolic stacking. However it is nothing but a pawn in the trend of Hollywood feminism -this is actually also common. What's really surprising is that Disney puts commercial attributes above all to the point that it doesn't even bother to create a character and instead exploits Mulan. It is all sloppily made like this and it will still be released in theatres in China. I don't know what to say. Does Disney value the Chinese market or not? And on top of that, the singing parts are chopped and there are no nostalgic points. Probably next time when the Mulan melody sounds at the Disneyland fireworks show I will recall that there is still such a version.

N47 2020-09-04

一星给刘亦菲。

One star is given to Liu Yifei.

N48 2020-09-04

中国故事能被迪士尼拍摄，从这个角度来说还是不错的，但电影的确拍得中不中，西不西，既然请了这么多华语演员拍摄中国题材，那就该多对中国文化和市场进行调查，而不是拍出一部旧时代中国的电影，电影里面的一些东西，给我的感觉，体现出对中国的了解还停留在七八十年代，本来木兰代父从军是个感动励志的故事，励志是故事本身这个很好体现，可是居然连感动都没拍摄出来，很让人失望，整部影片冗长无趣，有几幕我感觉在看权力的游戏，只能说这次的挑战也是一次失败的挑战

Chinese stories can be filmed by Disney, it is not bad if you see it from this angle. But the film is indeed neither Chinese nor Western. Since so many Chinese-speaking actors have been invited to shoot a Chinese subject matter, then more research should be conducted on Chinese culture and market instead of making an old-fashioned Chinese movie. Some things in the movie give me the feeling that they reflected the understanding of China from the 70s and 80s. Originally, Mulan joining the army on behalf of her father was a moving and inspirational story. The inspirational part is well reflected in the story itself, but unexpectedly they did not even shoot the moving part. It was disappointing.. The whole film was long and dull. There were a few scenes where I felt I was watching Game of Thrones. I can only say that this challenge is also a failed challenge.

N49 2020-09-04

平庸之作。我对迪士尼电影的爱，再也回不去了吗？

Mediocre work. My love for Disney movies can't it return any more?

N50 2020-09-05

整个故事扁到不行，流水账，很死板。架空背景下的奇幻家庭内核，不中不西，体验很差。巩俐是里面戏最好的，但就是这角色做得太糙了，虎头蛇尾，不过其他角色也好不到哪去，都是一张纸。而且画面饱和度太高，看着很不舒服，有几幕拍的就像阿娇红枣的广告。迪士尼应该考虑一下网飞这种拍不同国家题材的运作模式了。

The whole story is extremely flat, like a daybook, and very stiff. The core of the fictional family under its groundless background is neither Chinese nor Western. It was a bad experience. Gong Li is the best in the film, but this role is too slipshod and anticlimactic. However the other characters are even worse, they are all shallow. Moreover, the screen saturation is too high, it is very uncomfortable to

watch. There are a few scenes that look like an advertisement for *Ejiao Jujube*. Disney should consider Netflix's modus operandi of shooting different countries' subject matter.