


## STORIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EASTERN CULTURAL COMPLEX: TAKING MULAN AS AN EXAMPLE

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**Abstract:** As a shining pearl in Chinese traditional culture, *Mulan* is deeply rooted in the people's hearts with its unique female hero image. This work not only depicts the legendary experience of Hua Mulan's heroic fighting in the army instead of her father, but also cleverly integrates the family's core elements and the ones of honor, loyalty and so on under the background of Eastern culture, so that the story has profound cultural heritage. First of all, the Oriental cultural complex is clearly reflected in *Mulan*. The scenes, costumes, etiquette and other details in the film all reflect the ancient Cinha's unique charm, presenting the audience with an art world full of Oriental aesthetics. In addition, through Mulan's character, the film shows the family's high value and the one of honor and loyalty in Eastern culture. Secondly, Mulan's role fully embodies female values in the film. He not only bravely joined the army for his father, but also made repeated achievements on the battlefield, breaking the shackles of gender stereotypes. This subversion of traditional gender roles highlights the women's important status and value in society, and plays a role in promoting the awakening of female consciousness in Eastern culture. Finally, it analyzes Mulan's influence on female consciousness and finds that it plays a vital role in shaping and inheriting female consciousness in Oriental culture. Mulan's heroic image inspires women's future generations to face difficulties bravely and pursue self-worth. At the same time, Mulan's actions beyond the restrictions of traditional social roles also provide a model for women to realize individual independence and autonomy.


**Keywords:** Eastern culture. Mulan. Female consciousness. Female image. Feminine values.

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**Resumo:** Como uma pérola brilhante na cultura tradicional chinesa, *Mulan* está profundamente enraizada no coração das pessoas com sua imagem única de heroína feminina. Este trabalho busca retratar a experiência lendária da luta heroica de Hua Mulan, no exército, no lugar de seu pai, e integrar os elementos centrais de família, honra, lealdade, dentre outros, no contexto da cultura oriental, de modo que a história tenha profunda herança cultural. O artigo mostra, em primeiro lugar, o complexo cultural oriental que está claramente refletido em *Mulan*. As cenas, figurinos, etiqueta e outros detalhes do filme refletem o charme único da China antiga, apresentando ao público um mundo artístico repleto de estética oriental. Além disso, através da personagem Mulan, o filme mostra o alto valor da família, da honra e da lealdade na cultura oriental. Em segundo lugar, explicita que o papel de Mulan incorpora plenamente os valores femininos, no filme. Ela não apenas se juntou corajosamente ao exército, por causa de seu pai, mas também obteve repetidas conquistas no campo de batalha, quebrando as algemas dos estereótipos de gênero. Essa subversão dos papéis tradicionais de gênero destaca o importante estatuto e valor das mulheres, na sociedade, desempenhando um papel na promoção do despertar da consciência feminina, na cultura oriental. Finalmente, o artigo analisa a influência de Mulan na consciência feminina, concluindo que esta desempenha um papel vital na formação e herança da consciência feminina, na cultura oriental. A imagem heroica de Mulan inspira as futuras gerações de mulheres a enfrentarem as dificuldades com coragem e a buscar a autoestima. Ao mesmo tempo, as ações de Mulan, para além das restrições dos papéis sociais tradicionais, também fornecem um modelo para as mulheres concretizarem a independência e a autonomia individuais.

**Palavras-chave:** Cultura oriental. Mulan. Consciência feminina. Imagem feminina. Valores femininos.

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## STORIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EASTERN CULTURAL COMPLEX: TAKING *MULAN* AS AN EXAMPLE

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**Abstract:** As a shining pearl in Chinese traditional culture, *Mulan* is deeply rooted in the people's hearts with its unique female hero image. This work not only depicts the legendary experience of Hua Mulan's heroic fighting in the army instead of her father, but also cleverly integrates the family's core elements and the ones of honor, loyalty and so on under the background of Eastern culture, so that the story has profound cultural heritage. First of all, the Oriental cultural complex is clearly reflected in *Mulan*. The scenes, costumes, etiquette and other details in the film all reflect the ancient China's unique charm, presenting the audience with an art world full of Oriental aesthetics. In addition, through Mulan's character, the film shows the family's high value and the one of honor and loyalty in Eastern culture. Secondly, Mulan's role fully embodies female values in the film. He not only bravely joined the army for his father, but also made repeated achievements on the battlefield, breaking the shackles of gender stereotypes. This subversion of traditional gender roles highlights the women's important status and value in society, and plays a role in promoting the awakening of female consciousness in Eastern culture. Finally, it analyzes Mulan's influence on female consciousness and finds that it plays a vital role in shaping and inheriting female consciousness in Oriental culture. Mulan's heroic image inspires women's future generations to face difficulties bravely and pursue self-worth. At the same time, Mulan's actions beyond the restrictions of traditional social roles also provide a model for women to realize individual independence and autonomy.

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### INTRODUCTION

*Mulan* “[...] is a story originating from ancient Chinese folklore, which has been extensively praised and adapted. According to historical records, the earliest source of the story can be traced back to a poem from the Tang Dynasty called ‘Mulan Ci’” (Jun, 2021, p. 63). It is said that “Mulan Ci” was created by a folk poet named Liu Guangzu, who expressed this story in the form of poetry (Zhang, 2021, p. 63). This poem, with its touching plot and beautiful words, quickly passed down from mouth to mouth and became a widely circulated folk song (Yuan 2022, p. 126). In 2020, Disney Pictures released a live-action adaptation of *Mulan*, directed by Nikki Caro, which combines the classic Oriental legend with the modern film industry to show a woman's self-discovery and growth in a difficult situation (Jiang, 2021 p. 67). Oriental cultural complex is a multi-dimensional and complex cultural

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phenomenon, which reflects people's understanding and cognition of the Eastern world, and emphasizes the sense of belonging of emotion and soul (Ma, 2022, p. 15).

Eastern culture emphasizes personal loyalty and sense of responsibility, and it is through her own actions that Mulan demonstrates these qualities (Li, 2022, p. 166). With her own perseverance and wisdom, she joined the army instead of her father and achieved great victories on the battlefield. This bravery and intelligence not only break the traditional gender role positioning, but also inject new connotations into the female consciousness in Eastern culture. In ancient China, women had a relatively low social status and had few opportunities to participate in important decision-making and warfare (Li, 2020, p. 149). However, through her bravery and wit, Mulan has changed people's understanding of women and made significant contributions to her family and country with her own strength and wisdom. Her deeds have inspired countless women, inspiring them to pursue freedom and independence, and making women's awareness of autonomy and independence of great significance in Eastern culture. In addition, Mulan's story also sparked reflection on gender equality. With her bravery, fearlessness and perseverance, she demonstrated to people that women also possess outstanding talents and abilities, and should not be limited by gender. This exploration of gender equality has a profound impact in Eastern culture, inspiring people to go beyond traditional gender role positioning, recognize the women's important role in social development, and promote social attention and respect for gender equality. This study analyzes the female consciousness contained in the story of *Mulan* from the perspective of Eastern cultural complex, enabling viewers to have a deeper understanding of female consciousness in Eastern culture and explore its impact on society.

The innovation of this research is mainly reflected in two aspects. First of all, when analyzing Hua Mulan's story, the research is not limited to the story itself, but puts it under the broad background of Oriental culture and interprets it deeply through the unique perspective of Oriental cultural complex. This cross-cultural approach to analysis provides a whole new dimension to understanding the female consciousness in the story, while also highlighting the profound influence of Eastern culture on a global scale. Second, the study cleverly interconnects the ancient "Mulan Ci" with the modern Disney film, demonstrating the enduring influence and adaptability of traditional culture in today's society.

This combination of ancient and modern analysis method not only highlights the universal value of Mulan's story, but also provides valuable ideas for the inheritance and innovation of traditional culture. This research mainly includes five parts. First, from the perspective of Oriental cultural complex, the research deeply explores the connotation and characteristics of female consciousness, laying a theoretical foundation for subsequent analysis. Secondly, focusing on the classic text of *Mulan*, it analyzes the specific presentation of Oriental cultural complex in detail and reveals the cultural implication behind the story.

Then, through the comparison of values in different cultural backgrounds, the cultural collision and value conflict in *Mulan* are analyzed to show the universal value and significance of the story. Then, combined with the realistic social background, this paper discusses the profound influence of *Mulan* on Oriental women, including the promotion of female status and the change of gender concept. Finally, on the basis of summarizing the foregoing analysis, the author draws the research conclusion, emphasizing the important role of *Mulan* in the inheritance of Oriental culture and the awakening of female consciousness.

## 1 FEMALE CONSCIOUSNESS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EASTERN CULTURAL COMPLEX

### 1.1 ORIENTAL CULTURAL COMPLEX: EMOTIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND PURSUIT

The Eastern cultural complex refers to an emotional identification and pursuit of Eastern culture, as well as a strong interest and obsession with the values, traditions and arts in Eastern culture (Yan, 2023, p. 118). The Eastern cultural complex is an emotional resonance and projection of Eastern culture, reflecting a unique understanding and identification with Eastern culture. The Eastern cultural complex is widely present worldwide, especially in Western societies. The Eastern cultural complex stems from curiosity about Eastern culture and a fascination with exotic sentiments, as well as reflection on Western culture and pursuit of cultural diversity (Lin, 2020, p. 55). The formation of the Eastern cultural complex is closely related to the uniqueness and profound heritage of Eastern culture. Eastern culture, with its rich diversity and profound heritage, has attracted people from all over the world, such as Chinese Confucian culture, Buddhist culture, Taoist culture, Indian Hindu culture, Buddhist culture, etc., all of which are treasures of Eastern culture. These cultural traditions play an important role in Eastern society.

The historical background of the emergence of Eastern cultural complex can be traced back to ancient times, when Eastern culture attracted the world's attention due to its unique philosophical ideas, literature and art, moral ethics, etc. (Fang, 2022, p. 33). For example, Chinese Confucianism emphasizes moral cultivation and family values, Indian Buddhism emphasizes compassion and tranquility, and Japanese Zen emphasizes inner peace and self-awareness, which have attracted many Western people's attention and longing. In addition, Eastern culture is renowned for its artistic forms of expression (Ding, 2020, p. 28). For example, Chinese calligraphy, painting and tea ceremony, Indian dance and music, traditional Korean music and Hanfu from South Korea, all showcase the unique aesthetic and artistic style of Eastern culture. These art forms are widely praised for their exquisite, elegant and rich connotations. The Eastern cultural complex is also closely related to the glorious achievements of Eastern history and culture. The prosperity and glory of ancient Eastern civilization, such as the Tang and Song dynasties in China, the Peacock Dynasty in India and

the Heian era in Japan, have all made important contributions to world civilization. These historical achievements stimulate people's attention and desire for Eastern culture.

However, the Eastern cultural complex is not without controversy. When praising Eastern culture, there are also some stereotypes and misconceptions. Some people attribute Eastern culture to mysterious, ancient and supernatural things, while ignoring its diversity and modernity (Gu, 2020, p. 228). In addition, the Eastern cultural complex is also prone to falling into a certain romantic misconception, idealizing Eastern culture as impeccable, while ignoring the problems and challenges that exist within it. In summary, the Eastern cultural complex is an emotional identification and longing for Eastern culture, originating from its uniqueness and profound historical heritage. However, it is also necessary to objectively view the complexity and diversity of Eastern culture to avoid falling into the misconceptions of stereotypes and romanticism.

## 1.2 THE FEMALE CONSCIOUSNESS IMPLIED IN THE EASTERN CULTURAL COMPLEX

The female consciousness, in the Eastern cultural complex, is not only a product of historical and social backgrounds, but also a manifestation of cultural values (Chen, 2020, p. 119). In Eastern culture, the women's status and role are often closely related to family, tradition and filial piety, which has a significant impact on shaping the Eastern women's image and shaping social consciousness.

The female consciousness, in the Oriental cultural complex, can be traced back to the ancient traditional ideas and values. In ancient Eastern societies, women were usually given the family's primary responsibility, and they mainly played the wife's, mother's and daughter's roles. This traditional view expected women to possess qualities, such as virtue, obedience and patience, and regarded them as virtues. This resulted in women's status and power being confined to the domestic and private spheres, and this restriction had a profound impact on women's sense of self and role shaping. In addition to family roles, the female consciousness in Eastern culture is deeply influenced by other factors. Among them, Confucianism and Buddhist beliefs have a significant impact on shaping female consciousness. In Confucianism, women are seen as the family's cornerstone and of social order. However, despite the recognition of the women's role in Confucianism, the women's status and power are still subject to certain limitations. In the Buddhist faith, women can gain liberation and wisdom through practice, which offers them a possibility to transcend traditional roles and limitations. This concept has provided a way for women to pursue personal growth and self-actualization, thus positively influencing the sense of femininity in Eastern cultures.

In today's society, the development of female consciousness has been significantly influenced by social changes and the women's liberation movement. With the passage of

time, women began to actively fight for equal rights and opportunities, and they pursued self-realization and true independence. This process promotes the further awakening and development of female consciousness in the Oriental cultural complex. In the society's continuous change, the women's image has gradually changed, and women have begun to show more independence, autonomy and the pursuit of personal value. They not only play an important role in the family, but also actively participate in the social, political and economic spheres. In terms of cultural creation, women have also gained more opportunities to speak out, and their works and opinions have begun to receive more attention and recognition. This change not only reflects the awakening of women's consciousness, but also reveals the social redefinition and evaluation of women's roles. Although female consciousness has made some progress in the Oriental cultural complex, it still faces many challenges and difficulties. Due to the influence of history and tradition, social structures and concepts still limit women's development to a certain extent. As a result, women still suffer from gender discrimination and lack of equal treatment in some fields. Therefore, it is still an important issue to continue to promote the development of female consciousness and change the society's inherent concepts and prejudices towards women.

## 2 THE PRESENTATION OF EASTERN CULTURAL COMPLEX IN *MULAN*

### 2.1 THE FAMILY'S VALUES IN THE FILM *MULAN*

The values that prioritize family, in the Eastern cultural complex, have deep roots in history, philosophy and social perspectives. The family is regarded as the society's fundamental unit, and family traditions, kinship and filial piety are considered important values. This value reflects respect and maintenance for the family, as well as the pursuit of social stability and harmony. In Eastern culture, the values that prioritize the family have a profound impact on individuals and society.

The movie *Mulan* fully embodies the complex of Eastern culture in the values of putting family first. The film showcases the plot of Mulan's surrogate father joining the military to protect her family, showcasing Mulan's selfless and filial family relationship, and highlighting the significance of family love for Eastern culture. In the film, Mulan's father is old and frail, unable to join the army. To fulfill her parents' heavy trust, Hua Mulan resolutely took over from her father to join the army. She cut off her long hair, changed into men's clothing, and was determined to protect her family and motherland. This plot demonstrates the importance that Eastern culture places on family values. In Eastern culture, people believe that the family is society's important unit, and the connection among families is extremely close. Respecting and showing filial piety to parents are considered an obligation and responsibility that every child should fulfill. Mulan's act of serving, as a substitute father, in the military reflects respect and filial piety towards her parents, and is also a family value.

In Eastern culture, home is a warm and harmonious place, where relatives care for, support and rely on one another. For every member, family stability and happiness are essential. This family concept is also reflected in *Mulan*. In the film, Mulan's family initially had a deep understanding and even concern about her decision, but ultimately understood and supported it. This type of family harmony and support runs through the entire article. The film also demonstrates the attention of Eastern culture to family honor. Mulan's act of joining the army, on behalf of her father, is not only to protect her family, but also to uphold her family's glory. In Eastern culture, a family's reputation is considered very important, and every family member should strive to uphold the family's honor. Mulan demonstrated her importance and sense of responsibility for her family's honor, by joining the army as a substitute father.

The film *Mulan* depicts the plot of Mulan's surrogate father joining the military to protect her family, reflecting the values that prioritize family in Eastern culture. This plot demonstrates the importance of filial piety and family values in Eastern culture. The family is seen as a warm and harmonious place, where each member plays an important role and cares for, supports and relies on each other. In addition, the film also demonstrates the attention of Eastern culture to family honor, believing that the family's reputation is crucial. Through these displays, the film presents the uniqueness and value of family concepts in Eastern culture.

## 2.2 THE FILM *MULAN* RESPECTS TRADITION AND THE CONCEPT OF FILIAL PIETY

The concept of respecting tradition and filial piety is reflected in the pursuit of social order and stability in Eastern culture. Eastern culture emphasizes social harmony and stability, believing that individual behavior and moral norms play an important role in the society's development. Respecting tradition and the concept of filial piety helps to maintain social order and stability. In Eastern society, people establish a social relationship of mutual assistance, cooperation and harmony, by respecting tradition and practicing filial piety.

The film *Mulan* fully reflects Mulan's respect for tradition and filial piety. Mulan resolutely joined the army on behalf of her father, demonstrating her respect for family and tradition. In ancient China, the concept of family was very important, especially for the requirement of filial piety to parents. Hua Mulan's father was too old to resume military service. Hua Mulan resolutely took over this mission to protect her family and make up for the sky, demonstrating her responsibility for the family and her pursuit of filial piety. Mulan's military performance also fully demonstrates her advocacy for tradition and filial piety. She is diligent and hardworking in training, never giving up, in order to achieve better results. She respects her superiors' instructions and adheres to military discipline, demonstrating her respect for the military system and traditions. Meanwhile, she never forgets her identity and responsibilities, always maintaining care and nostalgia for her father. This persistence and loyalty reflect her adherence to filial piety. As one of the core values of Chinese culture, filial

piety emphasizes that children respect, care and support their parents. This value is deeply reflected in *Mulan*. *Mulan*'s bravery, unwavering spirit and selfless dedication to her family, all reflect the value of filial piety. With her own actions, she interprets the family's meaning, shows the strength of family ties and affection, and also reflects the individuals' responsibilities and obligations to their families and society. This conveys a common value to the audience: the family's preciousness and importance. Through *Mulan*'s image, the audience can more deeply understand and feel the status and significance of filial piety in Eastern culture, so as to better practice filial piety in their own lives, maintain family harmony and inherit the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

*Mulan*'s respect for tradition and filial piety in the movie *Mulan* reflects the importance of these values in Eastern culture. Through *Mulan*'s story, the audience can see the value of tradition and filial piety in Eastern culture, as well as their impact and significance on individuals and society. This spirit of respect and adherence to tradition not only reflects the characteristics of Eastern culture, but also provides the audience with an opportunity to think and understand other cultures.

### **2.3 THE STRONG AND BRAVE FEMALE CONSCIOUSNESS DEMONSTRATED IN THE FILM *MULAN***

The manifestation of strong and brave female consciousness, in the Eastern cultural complex, is an important cultural concept that plays a central role in many Eastern cultural traditions. This awareness is of great significance for women's self-identity and social status improvement. In Eastern society, a strong and brave female consciousness not only promotes the individual women's growth and development, but also has a positive impact on the entire society's progress and development.

The movie *Mulan* fully embodies *Mulan*'s strong and heroic personality. *Mulan*'s decision to replace her father in the army itself demonstrated her courage and determination. She is not afraid of difficulties and obstacles, and resolutely undertakes this heavy responsibility. In the army, she faced the hardships of training and battle, always maintaining a strong will and brave spirit. She bravely marched forward on the battlefield, fearless of strong enemies, and fought to protect her family and country. Her brave and resolute image left a deep impression on people. The praise of women's strength and bravery, in Eastern culture, also has a profound historical background. In ancient Chinese culture, women were always expected to possess strong and brave qualities. In ancient China, there were many female heroes and legendary figures who were praised for their bravery and determination. This kind of praise not only shows respect for individual women, but also affirms the significance and contribution of women's roles to society. The women's strength and bravery are of great value to Eastern culture. Firstly, women's strength and bravery demonstrate their autonomy and independence, enabling them to face difficulties and challenges independently. This spirit



of autonomy and independence is crucial for women's growth and development, while also promoting social progress and development. Secondly, the women's strength and bravery also inspire other women, allowing them to see their potential and possibilities, so that they can move forward bravely and achieve their dreams and goals. This incentive effect is of great significance for the entire society's development and the improvement of women's status. In the film *Mulan*, Mulan's brave and strong image also brought a positive impact to society. Her experience has inspired many viewers, especially women, to bravely face challenges and strive to achieve their own values and dreams. Its image breaks through women's traditional stereotypes and demonstrates their charm and potential. This influence is not only manifested in Eastern culture, but also exists in cultures around the world. The women's image, as strong and brave, can stimulate the entire society's vitality and creativity, promoting social progress and development.

In short, Mulan's strong and brave image in the movie *Mulan* showcases the praise of women's strength and bravery in Eastern culture. Her brave plot of facing difficulties and challenges, as well as the exploration of the value of women's strength and bravery in Eastern culture, provide the audience with thinking and understanding of women's power. The women's strength and bravery are not only reflected in Eastern culture, but also on a universal human value that is of great significance for the society's progress and the advancement of women's status.

### **3 THE DEEP CONTRADICTION IN MULAN – THE CONFLICT OF IDENTITY AND VALUES**

#### **3.1 MULAN'S IDENTITY AND SELF-NAMING**

Identity “[...] is a complex concept that involves individuals' identification and sense of belonging to themselves, society and culture” (Yang, 2020, p. 40). It is the process of establishing connections and identification between individuals and society. Identity can be understood as an individual's identification with their own identity. This includes understanding and acceptance of one's own values, interests, abilities and personality. Individuals establish self-identity through internal dialogue and reflection with themselves, thereby forming their own cognition and identification. Identity also involves an individual's sense of belonging and identification with social groups. Individuals establish connections with others and gain a sense of identity through communication and interaction with social groups. This can be a group on the ground of shared values, culture, interests, or identity, such as family, friends, community, country, etc. Individuals shape their social identity through interaction and participation with these groups. Identity is a dynamic process that constantly changes and develops as individuals grow and experience it. Personal experience is influenced by various factors, such as family, education and social environment, thus shaping self-identity. Meanwhile, individuals will also re-examine and adjust their identity through self-

exploration and reflection. Identity is crucial for an individual's mental health and happiness. When individuals are able to establish positive self-identity and gain recognition with others and society, they will feel more satisfied and meaningful. However, if individuals are unable to establish their own identity, or suffer from identity conflicts and pressures, it may lead to identity crisis and psychological problems.

The uniqueness of Chinese culture lies in the “[...] unity of family and country” (Chen, 2021, p. 125). In the film *Mulan*, the protagonist's moral belief of “unity of family and country” is portrayed. Even though her true identity is exposed and expelled from the army, she still adheres to her identity and says to the witch, “As a woman, I am willing to fight for the country.” After learning about Bu Li Khan's conspiracy, Mulan still disregards her own identity and takes national righteousness as her own responsibility, asking General Dong for help. Her noble qualities of loyalty and righteousness moved General Dong and earned all soldiers' respect. As Hong Hui said, “Hua Mulan's courage and loyalty surpass all men, and she is the most outstanding soldier among us.” In wartime, her behavior was considered a “loyal to the king” and received widespread praise. Mulan, with her female identity, eliminated the patriarchal society's prejudice towards gender power construction and injected new vitality into the process of gender equality in society. Mulan led the army to successfully rescue the emperor who was trapped in danger, while also dedicating her own strength to the country in turmoil. During this process of female growth, Mulan completed the perfect transformation from an “inexperienced” weaving girl to a “charged” heroine, achieving self-identity.

The individuals' process, who pursue identity and self-naming in historical time and social space, is an important link in constructing self-identity. The strong faith and perseverance, demonstrated by the witch for Mulan, helped her overcome her own loss and evil, and ultimately decided to help Mulan save the emperor. In the film, Bu Li Khan referred to Mulan as a “woman”, and the witch corrected this title by referring to Mulan as a “female warrior”! When Bu Li Khan shot Mulan with an arrow, the witch blocked Mulan with her body and let Mulan take her place before her death. In fact, it meant that the witch agreed to Mulan's decision and pinned her hope of “correcting the woman's name” on Mulan. At the end of the film, Mulan breaks free from the shackles of gender and the society's ones through courage and perseverance, proving a woman's value and ability, allowing viewers to reflect and explore their gender identity and self-identity.

### 3.2 THE CONFLICT BETWEEN PERSONAL VALUES AND SOCIAL VALUES

In the movie *Mulan*, Mulan faces a conflict between her personal values and social values. Personal values refer to a person's personal beliefs and principles regarding morality, ethics, beliefs, life goals, and other aspects. Personal values are shaped by various factors, such as an individual's background, experience, education and outlook on life, which have

a guiding role in their behavior, decision-making and lifestyle. Social values refer to beliefs, behavioral norms and concepts that are widely accepted and recognized in a specific social and cultural context. It is a moral norm and code of conduct that the entire society follows, reflecting the society's habits, traditions, laws and rules.

The core of Mulan's personal values is courage, responsibility and family honor. She is willing to take risks for her family's honor and the country's interests, and believes in her ability to make contributions. She firmly believes that she can join the military instead of her father, even though it goes against the society's expectations and norms. However, social values hold a traditional view of women in military and combat. In ancient China, women were regarded as vulnerable groups, and their role was mainly to take care of and serve in the family. Therefore, Mulan's decision violated this traditional social expectation and sparked a conflict between social values and personal values. This conflict is clearly demonstrated in the movie. Mulan had to disguise herself as a male and hide her true identity in order to integrate into the military, but this was a huge challenge for her as she had to resist conflicts between social and personal values. However, through her courage and perseverance, Mulan finally overcame these difficulties and proved her own value and ability. Her persistence and efforts have changed the perception of women in the military and won their respect and recognition. The existence of this conflict indicates the opposition and challenge between social and personal values. Mulan's story reminds people that, sometimes, they must bravely pursue their dreams and beliefs, even though it contradicts the society's expectations and norms. Meanwhile, the movie *Mulan* has also sparked reflection and questioning of traditional values, prompting people to re-examine the issues of gender roles and social expectations.

The conflict between Mulan's personal values and social values is an important theme in the movie *Mulan*. She bravely pursued her dreams and beliefs, even though it contradicted the society's expectations. This conflict has sparked opposition between social and personal values, as well as reflection and questioning of traditional concepts.

## **4 THE INFLUENCE OF MULAN ON EASTERN WOMEN**

### **4.1 THE EASTERN WOMEN'S PORTRAYAL IN MULAN**

Mulan is a very famous female figure in traditional Chinese culture. In the movie *Mulan*, she was portrayed as a brave, strong and independent character. This shaping method has a profound impact and significance on the Eastern women's image.

Mulan's image emphasizes the importance that Eastern women attach to their families, their loyalty and filial piety, and their patriotism. In the social context of "twelve volumes of military books, each with a father's name", and due to the family reasons of "Father has no eldest son, and Mulan has no elder brother", as a female and even a daughter, Mulan

would rather impersonate her father to avoid the hardships of the military, but also have to go through life and death on the battlefield. She resolutely decided to disguise herself as a man and join the army as her father. Faced with the government's conscription order, she did not complain or protest. Despite being full of reluctance and sighs, she did not escape. However, after careful consideration, she resolutely stood up to serve her father in the army. Like male soldiers, she flew across Guanshan and fought on the battlefield. After experiencing the blind swords and bloody battles on the battlefield, she finally "record great achievements, reward countless treasures", which not only demonstrates Mulan's loyalty and sense of responsibility to her family, but also reflects Mulan's national righteousness. In Eastern culture, family is a very important value, and women play an important role in the family. Mulan's image reflects the importance that Eastern women attach to their families and the concept of filial piety.

Mulan's image showcases the Eastern women's resilience and courage. As a woman, Mulan followed male soldiers over mountains, far away from her homeland, and bravely fought for twelve years on arduous journeys that traveled thousands of miles. She, like the male soldiers in the army, marched northward and fought southward, sacrificing her life and perseverance, and finally achieved great success, showcasing a woman's unique strength, bravery and ability to fight. Her heroic deeds have also won widespread praise in later generations, such as the complete poem "Mulan Ci", attached to the stele of the Yuan Dynasty Marquis's "Identification of the Statue of General Xiaolie's Temple". At the beginning of the inscription, it reads:

General Wei, born in his native place, was named Mulan, a native of Bozhi Qiao... In the southern part of Suiyang, situated 80 miles east of Yingkuo, which is the ancient Bofang domain and the ancient village of Xiaolie. ancestral temples and statues were also built, and the local people were also worshipped on April 8th, marking the general's birth.

Du Mu also wrote a poem titled "The Mulan Temple": "She played the role of a man bending his bow; But she dreamed of penciling her eyebrow. How many times, homesick, wine cup in hand; Would she bless the princess of her homeland?" Mulan tells the world through her own actions that Eastern women not only possess the characteristics of softness and gentleness, but more importantly, they possess a strong inner heart and fearless courage. Mulan's resilience and courage are important qualities possessed by Eastern women, as well as the women's expectations in Eastern culture.

The film *Mulan* portrays the Eastern women's image, showcasing their resilience, courage and emphasis on family. It emphasizes the importance of warrior spirit, filial piety and family honor in Eastern culture.

#### 4.2 MULAN'S INFLUENCE ON THE EASTERN WOMEN'S SUBJECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

Mulan is a classic character, representing the Eastern women's image, and her story has always been loved and appreciated by people. Her bravery and resilience, as well as her emphasis on family and filial piety, have brought profound inspiration and reflection to people.

In traditional concepts, Eastern women are often seen as weak, lacking autonomy and independence, and needing to be attached to men. This concept is also reflected in the "Mulan Ci", such as "Ah ye no big son, Mulan no elder brother, willing to be the city saddle horse, from now on for Ye." However, Hua Mulan's bravery and tenacity brought more freedom and rights to Eastern women and changed people's inherent ideas about women. Hua Mulan transcends the female image of three principles, five constants, three virtues, four virtues, a good wife and mother in traditional Chinese thought, dares to choose her own life path and pursues equal status with men from her boudoir. Mulan proves, by her actions, that women can also have the strength and wisdom to courageously pursue their dreams and goals. Under Hua Mulan's influence, Oriental women began to explore their potential and realize their self-worth more actively, and were no longer satisfied with being limited in the traditional role positioning.

Under Mulan's influence, Eastern women began to courageously pursue freedom and equality. They are no longer satisfied with the traditional constraints and role positioning, but actively explore their own potential and realize self-value. This change is not only happening at the individual level, but also affects the society's values as a whole. Eastern women began to show their talents and wisdom in various fields, winning more respect and opportunities. Hua Mulan's behavior subverts the mainstream concept of "men saving women" in the patriarchal system. In the "Mulan Ci", there is a poem wrote: "[...] male rabbit feet papping new, female rabbit eyes blurred; When two rabbits walk beside me, can Ann tell me whether I am male or female?" This shows not only Mulan's intelligence and courage, but also her subversion of traditional gender roles. Her heroic "female identity" to re-enter the battlefield, with wisdom and courage, successfully reversed the situation. Her image has created a symbol of nobility, courage and confidence for Oriental women. Inspired by Hua Mulan, countless Eastern women have become more determined to pursue their dreams and goals. They have bravely faced challenges, braved difficulties and obstacles, and proved with their actions that women can also have strength and wisdom. This brave and confident spirit has inspired generations of Eastern women to continue to move forward and strive to realize their value.

All in all, Mulan has become an important representative of the awakening of female consciousness in Eastern culture. Her story is not only a legend, but also a spiritual inheritance. Under Hua Mulan's influence, Eastern women constantly pursue self-advancement and growth, and contribute their strength to the progress and development of society.

## CONCLUSION

The story *Mulan* originated in the Tang Dynasty, after thousands of years of evolution. Its influence has far exceeded the story itself. It is not only a part of Chinese culture, but also an important representative of female consciousness in Eastern culture. From the Tang Dynasty, when the feudal centralization was the most stable, to today's new era of freedom and democracy, Chinese women have been constantly pursuing self-worth and independent status under *Mulan*'s inspiration. *Mulan* not only shows *Mulan*'s bravery and tenacity, but also reveals the importance of courage, loyalty and family responsibility in Eastern culture. *Mulan* alone, for the father's army, not only reflects the deep attachment to the family and responsibility, but also highlights her courage and responsibility. This spirit is the profound understanding of individual responsibility in the Oriental cultural complex. At the same time, *Mulan* also contains the spirit of self-transcendence and struggle. In the patriarchal social environment, *Mulan* not only challenges the gender role, but also surpasses the social expectations for her and becomes the generation's heroine. This spirit of self-transcendence is the embodiment of wisdom and courage in Eastern culture. For the majority of women, *Mulan*'s story is not only a legend, but also an inspiration. It encourages women to courageously pursue their ideals, to challenge social restrictions, and to fight for the same rights and status as men. At the same time, it also emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility and dedication, letting women understand that, only on the basis of assuming family and social responsibilities, they can truly realize their self-worth. In addition, *Mulan* also provided impetus for women to fight for equal rights. It sends a strong message to society that women can be equally responsible and can be the society's backbone. This has undoubtedly promoted the social recognition and support for women's rights and interests, and provided strong support for women's struggle for equal rights and interests. In general, *Mulan*'s story is the concentrated embodiment of the Oriental cultural complex, and it shows the values and spiritual core of the Oriental culture in a unique way. It is of great significance for people to understand Oriental culture, promote gender equality and promote women's rights and interests.

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