

A Hero's Quest

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MSC

Ordinary world

Mulan

- Honor is vital
- Mulan does not fit into traditional female values
- Mulan is quite clumsy
- Embarrasses herself in front of the matchmaker

Odyssey

- King Odysseus is at home in Ithaca
- With his wife, Penelope
- With newborn son, Telemachus.

Comparison

- Odysseus
 - Full of pride and honor
 - King is respected by his people
- Mulan
 - Clumsy
 - Not respected by her family

Call to adventure

Mulan

- Witnesses her father being conscripted and knows he will die in war
- Decides to pretend to disguise herself as male to save her father
- Mulan's motivation for adventure is saving her father, while in the Odyssey the King's motivation is to save his people

- Odysseus sets out for the war in Troy.

Comparison

- Odysseus
 - King's motivation is to save his people
- Mulan
 - Mulan's motivation for adventure is saving her father

Refusal of the call

Mulan

- Doubts her disguising abilities and almost gives up in front of the training camp
- Mushu convinces her to go anyway

- He does not want to leave his family and sail to Troy
- Knows it will be a long trip

Comparison

- Mulan
 - Fears for herself
- Odyssey
 - Odysseus fears for others
- Shows that Odysseus believes in himself, while Mulan does not

Meeting with the mentor

- Mulan meets with the captain and is inspired by his ridiculing to be a better soldier

Odyssey

- Athena, the Goddess of wisdom, crafts, and battle is Odysseus' guide
- She wants to help Odysseus, though she has been instructed not to
- She takes pity on him while other gods forsake Odysseus
- Constantly saves him from death
- Gives him guidance

Comparison

- Mulan
 - Does not have a person that constantly guards her
- Odyssey
 - Odysseus does
- May indicate that Odysseus' struggles will be so much more difficult that he needs others to guard him

Crossing the threshold

- Mulan comes to be respected by the others in the army for her skill

- After the war, the gods become angry with the Greeks for their prideful ways
- A great storm emerges and throws them off course

Comparison

- Odyssey
 - Odysseus does not have a real *threshold* to cross
- Mulan
 - Mulan does
- Implying that the King's journey will be longer and more drawn out

Tests, allies, enemies

- Mulan improves her skills and becomes even better at being male
- Mulan has only vague “montage-y” tests, allies, enemies in the form of training, while Odysseus has real obstacles to overcome

- Odysseus is thwarted with many tests as he travels back to Ithaca:
 - Polyphemus
 - Circones
 - Lotus Eaters
 - Lastrygonians
 - Sirens
 - Scylla & Charybdis
 - Cattle of the Sun God

Comparison

- Mulan
 - Implied that Mulan's journey will be soft and easy
- Odyssey
 - Odysseus's journey has real life-or-death scenarios, and maybe a sad ending

Approach to the innermost cave

- Army goes to a village the Huns decimated after being tricked by Mushu into going to war

Odyssey

- Odysseus nearly makes it home
- His crew opens a bag that had been given to Odysseus by Aeolus, god of the winds
- When the bag is opened, it releases a wind that blows them far away from Ithaca

Comparison

- Mulan
 - The Approach is much more subdued in Mulan, and feels “set” and “official”
- Odyssey
 - Approach in the Odyssey more spontaneous, integrating surprise
 - It is more dangerous, setting the tone for the Supreme Ordeal

Supreme ordeal

Mulan

- Army is ambushed by the Huns who are hiding behind the summit of the mountain
- All hope is lost
- Mulan saves everyone by firing a rocket into an overhang of snow, causing an avalanche
- She kills almost everyone, but some of the army survive (hmm... I wonder why only the main characters survive..)
- Mulan was wounded, and after being undressed to tend to her wound, the rest of the army realises she is female

Odyssey

- Odysseus is sent to the underworld seeking information to guide him home
- This quest brings him to the verge of death

Comparison

- Mulan
 - Mulan sustains little damage
- Odyssey
 - Odysseus sustains comparatively *huge* personal damage
- In general much more extreme storyline in the Odyssey

Reward

Mulan

- Instead of the reward going to the hero, it goes to the others in the army after they realise Mulan is female
- The reward consists of beating the Huns and not perishing
- Mulan is left to perish in the snow with Mushu, the cricket and her horse

- The King of Phaeacia gives Odysseus passage home.

Comparison

- Mulan
 - Reward is vague
 - Cannot really be classified as reward
- Odyssey
 - Powerful kings of faraway lands lead the classic hero home: I like it!
 - More epic in general

The road back

Mulan

- Mulan realises most of the Huns did *not* die in the avalanche after all, and decides to make her way towards the Imperial Palace
- She decides that she is obligated to save China, instead of just going home
- Mulan arrives at the Imperial palace and attempts to convince the others that the Huns are in fact *not* dead, and that they are there, trying to murder the Emperor

Odyssey

- Unlike other heroes, Odysseus was not in search of treasure
- Instead, he was desperately trying to reach his home
- Once he returns, he finds out that his house has been overrun with suitors trying to steal his wife and palace

Comparison

- Mulan
 - In this case, Mulan's story is much more dramatic and heroic
 - Trying to save China!
- Odyssey
 - Much more noble
 - Not as dramatic
 - Lower stakes

Resurrection

Mulan

- No one believes her, because they believe that Mulan cannot be trusted as she had already lied to them before
- The Huns reveal themselves, and the remaining members of the army, directed by the captain, attempt to ram the Imperial Palace's doors open, to no avail
- Mulan eventually convinces all members of the army to join her in her plan to disguise themselves as women
- Mulan's plan succeeds, and she is rewarded by the Emperor by being offered a seat on the Imperial Council, which she declines

Odyssey

- Instead of rushing in and killing the suitors, Odysseus is patient
- He wishes to learn if his wife has been faithful
- With the help of his son and a loyal swineherd, he devises a plan
- Athena disguises him as an old beggar so that he can enter his house undetected
- Telemachus steals all the suitors' weapons, and a final test is proposed
- Penelope will marry the man who strings Odysseus' bow and shoots an arrow through a line of small circles; a seemingly impossible task

Comparison

- Mulan
 - Much more dramatic
 - Not very patient or mature
- Odyssey
 - Very mature way to handle situation
 - Cunning
- Implies that Odysseus is mature and clever, while Mulan's plan is just brute force with a bit of disguising

Return with the elixir

- Instead, the Emperor hands Mulan a sword and a necklace
- Mulan returns home with the captain in tow to the delight of her family
- Mulan's family is also impressed with the gifts Mulan received

Odyssey

- Odysseus, still dressed as a beggar, completes the task and is restored to his original state
- He and his son expel the suitors from their home by force
- Penelope, seeing how Odysseus has changed, tests him to make sure it is actually him
- She tells him she moved their bed
- He replies, correctly, that this would have been impossible, and all is returned to normal

Comparison

- Both noble and dramatic
- Odyssey slightly more dramatic IMHO
- Mulan scenario very unrealistic
- Assuming all mystical creatures are real, Odyssey scenario quite realistic

Archetypes

The Shadow

- Odyssey has Poseidon, etc
- The Shadow in Mulan is Shang Yu

The Hero(ine)

- The hero in Odyssey is Odysseus
- The hero in Mulan is Mulan

The Hermit/ Helper/ Mentor

- The helper in Odyssey is Goddess, Athena
- The helper in Mulan is Mushu

The Dream Woman/Man

- The dream person in Odyssey is Penelope
- The dream person in Mulan is the Captain

The Threshold Guardian

- The threshold guardian in *Odyssey* are the Lotus Eaters
- The threshold guardian in *Mulan* are the ancestors

The Trickers

- The tricker in Odyssey is Poseidon
- The trickers in Mulan is Mushu

- The herald in Odyssey is the starting of the war in Troy
- The herald in Mulan is Mushu and the consul of the Emperor