

# A HERO'S QUEST

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November 22, 2017

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## ORDINARY WORLD

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

- King Odysseus is at home in Ithaca
- With his wife, Penelope, and newborn son, Telemachus.
- Generally well-liked and respected

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

## CALL TO ADVENTURE

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- Witnesses her father being conscripted
- Knows he will die in war
- Decides to disguise herself as a male to save her father

- Odysseus sets out for the war in Troy.



- Odyssey
  - Motivation is to save his people
- Mulan
  - Motivation for adventure is saving her father

## REFUSAL OF THE CALL

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- 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
- Is worried that something bad could occur during his absence

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

## MEETING WITH THE MENTOR

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- Mulan meets with the captain
- Is **inspired** by his ridiculing of the soldiers to **improve** her battle skills

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



- 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

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- 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

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

## TESTS, ALLIES, ENEMIES

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- Mulan improves her skills and becomes even better at being male

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



- Mulan
  - Implied that Mulan's journey will be **soft** and **easy**
  - Only **vague** “montage-y” tests, allies, enemies in the form of **training**
- Odyssey
  - Journey has **real** life-or-death scenarios, and is more **serious** than Mulan

## APPROACH TO THE INNERMOST CAVE

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

- 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

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

## SUPREME ORDEAL

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- 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
- The rest of the army **realises** that Mulan is **female** after undressing her to tend to a wound she had sustained

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



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

**REWARD**

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- 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 die** in the snow with Mushu, the cricket and her horse

- The King of Phaeacia gives Odysseus passage home

- 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

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- Mulan realises most of the Huns did **not die** in the avalanche after all
- Decides to make her way **towards** the **Imperial Palace**
- 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

- 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



- 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

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- 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

- 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

- Mulan
  - Much more dramatic
  - Not very patient or mature
- Odysseus
  - 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

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- 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

- 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**



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

## ARCHETYPES

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- Odyssey has Poseidon
  - Poseidon conforms to his archetype as he always creates trouble to Odysseus
- The Shadow in Mulan is Shang Yu
  - Shang Yu conforms to his archetype as he is the leader of the Huns

## SIMILARITIES

- Both of the characters are **villains**
- In the Odyssey, Poseidon **isn't** the main **threat** to Odysseus
- The **main** problem is the **war**
  - But Poseidon still causes **trouble** throughout the journey
- Poseidon is more **cunning** and **mischievous** in comparison to a big, more **traditional** villain like Shang Yu

- The hero in Odyssey is **Odysseus**
  - He conforms to his archetype as he is the leader and king and he is the **main saver** of the story
- The heroine in Mulan is **Mulan**
  - Mulan conforms to her archetype by **saving the whole of China**

## SIMILARITIES

- Mulan is introduced as a **free-spirited** outcast, clumsy, and **unable** to follow **rules**, regulations, or traditions
- Nevertheless, she has a **warm heart** and wants nothing more than to **uphold** her family **honor**, while keeping true to herself
- Odysseus has two major **flaws**:
  - Arrogance
  - Pride
- In comparison, Mulan is very **selfless** and puts **others** **before her**

- The helper in Odyssey is Goddess Athena
  - She conforms to her archetype by helping through the journey
- The helper in Mulan is Mushu
  - Mushu conforms to his archetype as he guides her and convinces her to not give up

## SIMILARITIES

- The characters in each movie and book **help** the **protagonist**.
- In the movie Mulan, Mushu **helps** her by **cheering** her **spirit** and gives her **confidence**
- In comparison, Athena in the Odyssey, sends him **divine aid** and **help**



- The dream person in Odyssey is Penelope
  - She conforms to the archetype as she is married to Odysseus
- The dream person in Mulan is the Captain
  - He conforms to the archetype as Mulan and the Captain like each other

- In comparison, Odysseus **is married** to Penelope whereas Mulan and the Captain **aren't**

# THE THRESHOLD GUARDIAN(S)

- The threshold guardians in Odyssey are the Lotus Eaters
  - They test Odysseus' strength and ability to problem solve by making his men forget about home.
- The threshold guardians in Mulan are the ancestors
  - They conform to the archetype as they are not real people and guide Mushu to help Mulan

- In Mulan, the threshold guardians want to bring her back to not fight for the war
- In comparison, the Lotus Eaters are native to their land and help the Odyssey crew with the 'lotus' fruits

- The tricker in Odyssey is Poseidon
  - Poseidon conforms to the archetype by tricking Odysseus through the adventure
- The tricker in Mulan is Mushu
  - Mushu conforms to the archetype by lying to the consul

## SIMILARITIES

- In Mulan, Mushu **tricks** the consul to **go to war**
- Mushu **doesn't harm** Mulan in any way
- In comparison, Poseidon **tricks** Odysseus many times by getting him into frustrating situations

- The herald in the Odyssey is the starting of the war in Troy
  - This conforms to the archetype because it tells Odysseus to go to war
- The herald in Mulan is Mushu and the Consul of the Emperor
  - He conforms to the archetype by telling the "news" to the Captain

## SIMILARITIES

- In Mulan, Mushu **lied** about going to war; the news was **fake**
- In Odyssey, the starting of the war **warned** everyone to stay **alert**