

GENDER ROLES AND CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF *MULAN* AND INDONESIAN SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Analysing films involves more than just examining character arcs or plot points; it also requires an understanding of the cultural values embedded within the narrative. The primary objective of this study is to identify similarities and differences between the depiction of gender roles and cultural expectations in the film and those prevalent in Indonesian traditional culture, and to understand how they intersect or diverge. Using a descriptive qualitative method, this research applies Charles S. Peirce's semiotic analysis to examine gender roles and cultural expectations in *Mulan*, while conducting library research to explore gender roles in Indonesian society. The study reveals that there are notable similarities between the two contexts, particularly regarding the roles of women as household keepers, their loyalty to family, and their submissiveness to patriarchal expectations. However, both narratives also reflect evolving challenges to these traditional norms. In conclusion, the study highlights the parallels between traditional gender expectations in *Mulan* and Indonesian culture, while acknowledging the gradual shift toward gender role redefinition in both societies.

Keywords: gender, gender roles, cultural expectation

ABSTRAK

*Dalam menganalisis film melibatkan lebih dari sekadar meneliti alur karakter atau plot; ini juga memerlukan pemahaman tentang nilai-nilai budaya yang tertanam dalam narasi. Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi persamaan dan perbedaan antara penggambaran peran gender dan ekspektasi budaya dalam film tersebut dengan yang berlaku dalam budaya tradisional Indonesia, serta memahami bagaimana keduanya berpotongan atau berbeda. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini menerapkan analisis semiotika Charles S. Peirce untuk mengkaji peran gender dan ekspektasi budaya dalam *Mulan*, sambil melakukan studi pustaka untuk mengeksplorasi peran gender dalam masyarakat Indonesia. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa ada kesamaan yang signifikan antara kedua konteks tersebut, terutama mengenai peran perempuan sebagai pengelola rumah tangga, loyalitas mereka terhadap keluarga, dan kepatuhan mereka terhadap ekspektasi patriarkal. Namun, kedua narasi tersebut juga mencerminkan tantangan yang berkembang terhadap norma-norma tradisional ini. Kesimpulannya, studi ini menyoroti kesamaan antara*

ekspektasi gender tradisional dalam Mulan dan budaya Indonesia, sambil mengakui adanya pergeseran bertahap menuju redefinisi peran gender di kedua masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: *jenis kelamin, peran gender, harapan budaya*

INTRODUCTION

Movies have long been recognized as a powerful form of entertainment and storytelling, offering a window into various cultures, values, and perspectives. (Arsyad A, 2003) defines movies as "a group of several pictures that appear in frames, where frame by frame is shown by a projector lens mechanically, making the images move and appear alive." This visual dynamism, coupled with the ability to convey complex narratives, has made films a beloved medium for audiences worldwide. Whether at the cinema or through movie-on-demand applications, people enjoy watching movies as they offer escapism, emotional engagement, and, often, reflections of societal issues.

Beyond entertainment, films play a crucial role in shaping societal constructs, including the understanding of gender. As Hariyanto, cited in (M. E. Dewi and C. Nugroho, 2017) points out, mass media, including movies, is one of the primary tools that influence the construction of gender roles. Media's wide reach allows it to reinforce or challenge stereotypes. In many films, women are portrayed as gentle, emotional, and submissive, while men are seen as strong, confident, and natural leaders. These portrayals often stem from societal stereotypes rather than inherent truths about gender roles.

Disney Pictures, as one of the most influential film production companies, frequently explores gender issues, particularly those related to feminism, in its animated and live-action movies. One notable example is *Mulan*, which presents feminist themes through the journey of its female protagonist. According to (IMBd, n.d.), *Mulan* tells the story of a young woman who, in defiance of her society's gender expectations, takes her father's place in the Chinese army. Her father, who is physically incapable of surviving the war, is still expected to fight due

to societal norms regarding honor and duty. Mulan, after failing to meet traditional expectations as a woman, such as securing a favorable match in marriage, disguises herself as a man to protect her family and country. As her journey progresses, Mulan faces numerous challenges, ultimately revealing her true identity but proving her worth as a warrior and leader.

The film *Mulan* offers a rich ground for examining gender roles and cultural expectations, particularly as it mirrors the Confucian values of Chinese society, where honour, family duty, and traditional gender roles are highly esteemed. These values are comparable to those found in Indonesia, another Asian country where societal expectations similarly emphasize family honour, patriarchal structures, and traditional gender roles. This study seeks to address the question: Are there similarities or differences between the gender roles and cultural expectations portrayed in *Mulan* and those in Indonesian society, and in what ways are they the same or different?

Definition of Gender

Gender is a complex, socially constructed concept that varies across different cultures and evolves over time. According to (Jhpiego, 2020), gender refers to the economic, social, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being men and women. It encompasses the roles, responsibilities, and expectations placed on individuals based on their perceived sex within a society. Gender definitions are not static; they are shaped by sociocultural contexts and fluctuate as societal norms evolve. This means that what it means to be a man or a woman can change according to the specific cultural, economic, and historical backdrop.

Moreover, gender involves the assignment of characteristics and expectations based on sex, where attributes like leadership, strength, and assertiveness are often assigned to men, while nurturing, gentleness, and submissiveness are often attributed to women. However, these social definitions are fluid and frequently challenged by feminist and gender equality

movements. Gender thus operates on a sociocultural level, deeply affecting how individuals interact with societal norms, institutions, and their own identities.

Definition of Gender Roles

Gender roles refer to the societal expectations that govern how individuals should behave based on their gender. (Eagly, 2000) defines gender roles as shared expectations applied to individuals who occupy certain social categories. These roles exist at the intersection of individual experience and cultural perceptions of what it means to be a man or woman in a given society. Gender roles are shaped by "injunctive norms," which determine appropriate behaviour for men and women, and breaking these norms often leads to social disapproval.

In many societies, men are expected to exhibit behaviours such as confidence, strength, and leadership, while women are often expected to be nurturing, emotional, and submissive. These roles serve as social scripts that guide individuals in how they should present themselves and behave in public and private spheres. However, like gender itself, gender roles are subject to change, particularly with the rise of gender equality movements and shifting social values.

Cultural Expectations

As human beings, our environment plays a pivotal role in shaping our behaviour, largely because the need to belong is deeply rooted in our survival instincts. This desire for social inclusion drives much of how we react to the world around us, as we seek the protection and acceptance of the groups, we are part of. According to (Wilson, 2019), "Cultural expectations are the messages we internalize about what is and is not acceptable, given the standards of behaviour and cultural norms put forth by our social systems. Social groups come in many forms, including our family, community, friends, workplace, and even affinity groups. Within each of these groups are a set of expectations that dictate how one should behave to preserve unity" (Wilson, 2019).

In alignment with this, cultural expectations are also described by Bev Philip as "the unwritten rules that shape our behaviour, telling us what is acceptable or not within a society." These expectations, she explains, are learned through various social influences, and they can be

communicated directly or indirectly, guiding how we think and act (Phillip, 2023). This constant interaction with societal norms influences our judgment and decision-making as we internalize these rules, often without conscious awareness.

These expectations, which are often communicated through explicit rules or rituals, also manifest subtly through language, non-verbal cues, and behavioural patterns. Members of social groups must then interpret these signals, which can sometimes be ambiguous, and draw conclusions about what is expected of them. The way individuals perceive and internalize these cultural cues is crucial, as their understanding may not always align with the actual expectations, yet it strongly influences their decision-making process.

By recognizing the profound impact of these cultural signals, we can better understand how individuals navigate their social environments and the degree to which cultural expectations shape both personal and collective behaviour.

Semiotic Analysis of Gender Roles

The semiotic analysis of gender roles in media, such as the character of Hua Mulan in *Mulan* (2020), offers a nuanced way to explore how gender is constructed and represented. Charles S. Peirce's semiotic theory provides a useful framework for analysing the signs and symbols used to convey gender roles. According to Peirce, a sign (or representamen) can take various forms: it can be a qualisign (a quality that functions as a sign, such as the colour red symbolizing danger or love), a sinsign (an individual instance of a sign, such as Mulan's scream during battle), or a legisign (a sign based on conventional rules, like language or cultural symbols).

Here is the detail of the semiotic analysis theory by Charles S. Peirce:

1. Sign (Representamen) is a physical form or anything that can be perceived by the senses and refers to something else. This is divided into three types:

- Qualisign: A sign that functions as a sign based on its qualities. For example, the color red is a qualisign, as it can signify love, danger, or prohibition depending on the context.
 - Sinsign: A sign that operates as a sign based on its actual form or appearance in reality. All individual expressions can be sinsigns. For instance, a scream may represent surprise, joy, or pain.
 - Legisign: A sign that serves as a sign based on a general rule, convention, or code. All linguistic signs are legisigns because language is a code. Each legisign contains a sinsign, which links a "second" (the specific instance) to a "third" (the general rule that applies universally).
2. Object: Signs are classified into icons, indexes, and symbols.
- Icon: A sign that resembles the object it represents or a sign that uses similarity to what it refers to. For example, a map resembles the geographical area it depicts, and a photograph resembles the person or object it represents.
 - Index: A sign whose meaning depends on its direct association with the object it represents. In Peirce's terminology, this is called *secondness*. An index is thus a sign that has a direct link or proximity to what it represents.
 - Symbol: A sign where the relationship between the sign and its denotation is determined by a general rule or agreed-upon convention.
3. Interpretant: Signs are divided into rheme, dicisign, and argument.
- Rheme: When the sign's interpretant is a "first," and the meaning of the sign can still be developed.
 - Dicisign (dicentsign): When there is a truthful relationship between the sign and its interpretant.
 - Argument: When the sign and its interpretant hold a general, universal characteristic (this is known as *thirdness*).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method, which aims to understand phenomena by providing in-depth descriptions and analysis. According to (Moleong, 2017) qualitative research is intended to explore and interpret the experiences of research subjects, focusing on how they perceive and engage with specific phenomena. In this study, the phenomenon being investigated is the depiction of gender roles in the movie *Mulan* (2020), particularly through the main character Hua Mulan.

Research Object and Subject

The object of this research is the *Mulan* (2020) live-action movie, produced by Disney. This film is analyzed as a cultural product that reflects gender roles and expectations within its narrative.

The subject of this research is the gender roles of Hua Mulan, the protagonist of the film. The analysis focuses on how her character challenges or conforms to traditional gender roles and expectations, as depicted in the movie.

Data Sources

The study utilizes both primary and secondary data:

1. Primary Data: The primary data source is the *Mulan* (2020) movie, including its visual and narrative elements, dialogues, and scenes.
2. Secondary Data: The secondary data consist of journal articles, theses, books, and credible websites related to gender roles and semiotic analysis. These sources provide a theoretical framework and support the interpretation of Mulan's gender roles.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection process involves several key techniques:

1. **Movie Analysis:** A detailed examination of *Mulan* (2020), focusing on character interactions, dialogue, and visual representations of gender roles.
2. **Movie Script Analysis:** The movie's script is analyzed to extract key dialogues and actions related to gender roles.
3. **Documentation:** The findings from the movie analysis and literature are documented and categorized based on gender role representations.
4. **Library Research:** This involves gathering relevant literature on gender theory, media studies, and semiotic analysis from books, journal articles, and reputable websites.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data are analyzed using semiotic analysis theory developed by Charles S. Peirce. This theory identifies and interprets signs (representamen), objects, and interpretants in the movie. Specifically, the analysis focuses on:

1. **Signs (Representamen):** Identifying signs in the movie that represent Mulan's gender roles.
 - **Qualisign:** Identifying symbolic qualities, such as Mulan's physical appearance when disguised as a man.
 - **Sinsign:** Observing individual instances where Mulan exhibits masculine or feminine behaviors.
 - **Legisign:** Identifying the cultural conventions and norms related to gender roles that are depicted in the movie.
2. **Object:** Classifying these signs into icons, indexes, and symbols that reflect Mulan's gendered actions and their cultural implications.
3. **Interpretant:** Interpreting how Mulan's actions and decisions reflect broader gender role expectations and how they resonate with feminist perspectives.

Through this semiotic analysis, the research aims to explore how Hua Mulan navigates traditional gender roles and expectations, both adhering to and challenging them. The analysis also includes a comparative perspective, drawing parallels between the gender roles in the movie and those found in Indonesian society.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Gender Roles and Cultural Expectations of Women in Mulan

To analyze Hua Mulan's gender roles in *Mulan* (2020) using Charles S. Peirce's semiotic analysis theory, we can break down the analysis into the three core components of Peirce's theory: Sign (Representamen), Object, and Interpretant. This will allow us to explore how Mulan's gender roles and cultural expectation of the society are represented, what they signify, and how they are interpreted within the movie and in the context of broader cultural expectations.



Picture 1. Semiotic Theory Data 1

1. 00:00:40,791 --> 00:01:26,461

"There have been many tales of the great warrior, Mulan. But, ancestors, this one is mine. Here she is. A young shoot, all green. unaware of the blade. If you had such a daughter. her chi, the boundless energy of life itself, speaking through her every motion. could you tell her that only a son could wield chi? That a daughter would risk shame, dishonor, exile? Ancestors, I could not. "

In the scene where Mulan practices martial arts and the monologue refers to her chi, this moment can be analyzed through Charles S. Peirce's semiotic theory in the following ways:

- **Qualisign:** The description of Mulan's chi, the "boundless energy of life itself," represents a quality that is typically associated with martial prowess and power. In this scene, her fluid and powerful movements while practicing martial arts reflect this inner strength. The **qualisign** here is the inherent quality of her chi, which is perceived through her every motion and is traditionally viewed as masculine.
- **Sinsign:** Mulan's act of practicing martial arts serves as a **sinsign**, a specific and individual expression of her character and abilities. Her physical practice is a real-world demonstration of her inner strength and potential, embodying the unique tension between her natural abilities and the restrictive gender roles imposed by society.
- **Legisign:** The monologue itself reflects a **legisign**, as it refers to the broader societal code or rule that only sons are considered worthy of wielding chi. This cultural belief, which views men as the rightful possessors of chi and relegates women to inferior roles, is a general law or convention that Mulan defies through her actions and natural abilities. The monologue challenges this legislated norm, questioning the fairness of restricting chi to sons and the consequences for a daughter who possesses such power.



Picture 2. Semiotic Theory Data 2

2. In the scene where Mulan chases a chicken, running everywhere and even climbing up to the rooftop, this action can be analyzed through Charles S. Peirce's semiotic theory in different layers:
- **Qualisign:** Mulan's action—running wildly after a chicken—exemplifies traits that are seen as inappropriate or unusual for a young woman in traditional Chinese culture. The quality of her actions, which are energetic, bold, and unconventional for a girl, contrasts with the cultural expectation that girls should be gentle and composed.
 - **Sinsign:** Mulan's actual act of chasing the chicken is a specific instance of her defiance of societal norms. This scene represents her unique personality and behavior that sets her apart from others in the village. Her actions are concrete and real, and through this, we see her individuality clashing with traditional expectations.
 - **Legisign:** The community's reaction, including her mother's disapproval and the people's shocked stares, operates as a legisign. It reflects the broader social code or rule that girls are expected to behave in a restrained and proper manner. The community's reaction is based on societal conventions about gender roles, which dictate that women should not exhibit such wild and physical behavior.



Picture 3. Semiotic Theory Data 3

3. 00:04:00,824 -->00:04:17,841

"You forget, Mulan is a daughter, not a son. A daughter brings honor through marriage. I ask you, what man will want to marry a girl who flits around rooftops, chasing chickens?"

In the scene where Mulan's mother says, "Mulan is a daughter, not a son. A daughter brings honor through marriage. What man will want to marry a girl who flits around

rooftops, chasing chickens?" this moment can be interpreted through **Charles S. Peirce's semiotic theory** in the following categories:

- **Legisign:** The statement reflects a **legisign**, as it emphasizes a societal convention or cultural rule. In this case, it refers to the traditional Chinese belief that a daughter's primary role is to bring honour to her family through marriage, and that her value is defined by her conformity to these established norms. The idea that a woman's worth is tied to marriage is a general rule that applies universally in this cultural context.
- **Sinsign:** The specific mention of Mulan's actions (chasing chickens, flitting around rooftops) serves as a **sinsign**. These individual behaviours are expressions of her unconventional nature, which contrast sharply with the expected behaviour of a young woman in her society. Her actions signify her resistance to the norms represented by the cultural expectation of marriage.
- **Index:** The mother's comment also functions as an **index**, as it points directly to the cultural and familial pressures Mulan faces. The question, "What man will want to marry her?" reflects an indexical relationship between Mulan's actions and the shame or dishonour her family fears she will bring, linking her behaviour to the concept of societal reputation.



Picture 4. Semiotic Theory Data 4

4. In the scene where Mulan is dressed up with thick makeup and emerges to the admiration of others, signifying she is finally conforming to the expected behaviour of a "lady," this can be interpreted using **Charles S. Peirce's semiotic theory** in the following ways:

- **Qualisign:** The heavy makeup and traditional attire function as a **qualisign**, representing the qualities that society deems appropriate for women. The makeup,

though physical, symbolizes femininity, submission, and beauty according to cultural norms. It is the quality of appearance that suggests the desired feminine traits.

- **Sinsign:** Mulan's physical appearance in makeup at that moment operates as a **sinsign**, as it is a unique, individual instance in which her outward transformation aligns her with societal expectations. Her specific behavior and dress are expressions of the broader societal expectation for how a woman should appear and act.
- **Index:** The reaction of the people (amazement and approval) serves as an **index**, linking Mulan's appearance to her perceived conformity to gender roles. Their approval directly signifies societal validation of her behavior as finally "appropriate." The admiration reflects the association between physical beauty, traditional attire, and female propriety.
- **Legisign:** The makeup and attire are part of a **legisign**, as they are governed by societal codes that dictate how women should present themselves to be accepted. The makeup represents the cultural rule or convention that a woman's worth is often tied to her appearance and ability to conform to feminine ideals.



Picture 5. Semiotic Theory Data 5

5. 00:16:30,616 --> 00:16:54,348

"Quiet. Composed. Graceful. Elegant. Poised. Polite. These are the qualities we see in a good wife."

In the scene where Mulan is serving tea to the matchmaker, and the matchmaker lists traits such as "Quiet, Composed, Graceful, Elegant, Poised, Polite" as qualities of a good wife, the dialogue and the scene can be analyzed using **Charles S. Peirce's semiotic theory** as follows:

- **Qualisign:** The qualities that the matchmaker mentions (quiet, composed, graceful, etc.) are **qualisigns** because they refer to the ideal traits expected of a woman in that society. These abstract qualities represent the cultural ideals for how a "good wife" should behave. The words themselves signify the traits that are valued in women.
- **Sinsign:** Mulan, sitting in front of the matchmaker, dressed and behaving in line with these qualities, represents a **sinsign**. Her actual appearance and behavior during the tea ceremony are individual manifestations of these traditional gender expectations.
- **Legisign:** The matchmaker's statement functions as a **legisign** because it refers to societal conventions and rules that dictate what is expected of a woman who is to be considered suitable for marriage. The traits she mentions are governed by a broader cultural rule that defines the ideal behavior for women in Chinese society at that time.
- **Index:** The matchmaker herself serves as an **index**, as she directly signifies the societal authority or pressure that enforces these gender norms. Her role and approval are crucial for a woman's place in society, making her the indexical sign linking personal behavior to societal acceptance.

Gender Roles and Cultural Expectations of Women in Indonesian Traditional Culture

In Indonesia, traditional gender roles and cultural expectations have historically positioned women primarily as wives and mothers, limiting their responsibilities to domestic tasks. This view, deeply rooted in patriarchal values, dictated that women should maintain the household, care for children, and support their husbands (Wikipedia, n.d.). Over time,

however, there has been a shift as women increasingly move away from these traditional roles, seeking greater independence and engagement in both family and professional spheres (Daulay, 2017).

Historically, Indonesian women were often confined by customs such as early marriage and polygamy, which restricted their rights and reinforced their subordinate status. Their roles were seen as inferior to men, with societal expectations limiting them to simple domestic duties (Stuers, 2008). Even today, many women experience what is known as the "double burden," where they are expected to balance household responsibilities, child-rearing, and income-earning activities, often in the context of a career (Huda, K., & Renggani, 2021).

This expectation reflects a continuation of patriarchal norms, where women's contributions are still largely viewed through a domestic lens. Javanese women in the past, for example, were expected to engage in tasks like cooking, childbearing, and assisting their husbands in farming, with little room for social mobility or broader participation in society. This "double burden" persists in modern Indonesia, although women today are challenging these traditional roles and pushing for greater equality in both personal and professional realms (Huda, K., & Renggani, 2021).

Similarities of Gender Roles and Cultural Expectations of Women in the movie, *Mulan* and in Indonesian Society

The gender roles and cultural expectations of women in the movie *Mulan* (2020) and in Indonesian society share several similarities, particularly in their traditional patriarchal structures.

In *Mulan* (2020), women are expected to be gentle, submissive, and obedient, reflecting traditional Chinese cultural norms. Mulan's outward appearance and behavior at the beginning of the film align with these expectations, which also emphasize that women should prioritize loyalty to their families. These cultural expectations extend to women being confined to

household roles as mothers and caretakers, obediently following their parents' wishes, and marrying at an early age to secure family honor. Mulan challenges these roles by taking her father's place in the army, thereby defying societal norms, though her actions are still tied to the values of family loyalty and honor.

Similarly, in traditional Indonesian culture, women have historically been confined to the roles of wives and mothers, with their responsibilities centered around domestic tasks such as maintaining the household and supporting their husbands. As in China, Indonesian women were often expected to marry early and remain subordinate to men, as illustrated by customs like early marriage and polygamy. Though Indonesian society has evolved and women are increasingly stepping into roles outside the domestic sphere, many still face the "double burden" of balancing household duties with income-earning activities, reflecting persistent patriarchal expectations. Women's roles in Indonesia, much like those portrayed in *Mulan*, are deeply rooted in family obligations and the need to maintain societal harmony, while also being constrained by traditional gender norms.

In conclusion, both *Mulan* and Indonesian society highlight the cultural expectations that women remain confined to domestic roles, obedient to family traditions, and loyal to their households. However, both narratives also reflect a growing challenge to these norms, as women strive for greater independence and agency.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The gender roles and cultural expectations of women in the movie *Mulan* (2020) and traditional Indonesian society share striking similarities, as both are shaped by patriarchal values that prioritize familial loyalty, domesticity, and submissiveness for women.

In *Mulan* (2020), traditional Chinese society expects women to embody gentleness, obedience, and submission, with their primary roles being that of mothers and household keepers. Mulan's

struggle to conform to these expectations is portrayed in her reluctance to fulfil these roles, especially in the scene with the matchmaker, where she is pushed to secure family honour through marriage. Her decision to take her father's place in the army defies these societal norms, but her actions are still grounded in filial piety and loyalty to her family. The film highlights the tension between these gender expectations and Mulan's desire to prove her individual worth outside of traditional gender roles.

Similarly, in traditional Indonesian culture, women have historically been confined to roles as wives and mothers, responsible for managing the household, raising children, and supporting their husbands. These roles were reinforced by customs such as early marriage and polygamy, which limited women's rights and opportunities. Although Indonesian women today are challenging these traditional roles by entering the workforce and balancing multiple responsibilities, they still face the "double burden" of fulfilling both domestic and professional duties, which reflects the ongoing influence of patriarchal values.

Both *Mulan* and Indonesian society reflect the deep-rooted cultural expectations that women should be obedient, loyal to their families, and largely confined to household roles. However, both narratives also demonstrate a growing resistance to these norms, as women seek to assert their independence and redefine their roles within society.

Suggestions

1. Further Research on Cross-Cultural Gender Studies: Future studies could expand upon this research by conducting a deeper comparative analysis between *Mulan* and other cultures outside of Asia. Investigating how gender roles are represented in different cinematic cultures, especially in Western and African contexts, could provide a richer understanding of global gender norms.
2. Incorporating Intersectionality: The analysis would benefit from exploring the intersectionality of gender, race, and class in *Mulan* (2020). Intersectional approaches

may offer insights into how Mulan's experiences as a woman are shaped by additional social factors, further enriching the understanding of gender representation in media.

3. Expanding the Feminist Lens: While the study has highlighted feminist themes in *Mulan*, it would be valuable to explore different feminist perspectives—such as radical, liberal, and postcolonial feminism—to gain a more nuanced view of the film's portrayal of gender and power dynamics.

By continuing to investigate how media like *Mulan* reflects and challenges societal norms, future research can contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender equality and cultural representation in film.

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