

# EDITORIAL

No matter the curriculum or medium of education, schooling is deeply flawed in our country. It's clear every time we take a daringly honest stroll down memory lane, it's clear in every pitch meeting we have at SHOUT, where all the participants are either about to get out of school or just fresh out of it. Over the years, we've learned more and more about these systemic problems and the reasons behind it, but we've realised another important thing. It doesn't have to be this way.

When I was in school, one of the common pieces of advice teachers gave me was that as a student, I should be like a sponge, absorbing knowledge everywhere. I want to pass this advice back to schools. Schools need to start looking at themselves with increased introspection, and they need to involve fresh graduates and recent alumni in that process. People who have been in school in the last 5-10 years have a unique perspective here, one that is honest and pointed at issues that are detrimental to students. In light of the recent incidents of sexual violence, some prominent schools have taken commendable steps to involve alumni in scrutinising their sexual education curricula. It is our hope that more schools follow.

-- Azmin Azran, Sub-editor, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH

### MOVIES



# Why Mulan is my favourite Disney princess

**ANUSHA MOURSHED**

The new live-action adaptation of the 1998 Disney animated film *Mulan* generated a great deal of controversy and criticism. Part of the film was shot in a region of China where Muslims are believed to be detained in internment camps. As a result, many demanded that the new movie be boycotted.

Respectful of the reasons and dismayed by the insensitive approach, I chose to abide by the plea. However, I did go back to the original animated film to relive a part of my childhood and fell in love with Mulan's character all over again. Here's why Mulan is my favourite Disney princess.

#### MULAN BREAKS GENDER ROLES

Unlike most Disney princesses, Mulan is not solely defined by romance or beauty and does not wait for a prince charming to change her life. She defies all odds, breaking gender roles as she joins the army disguised as a man and eventually proves herself to be equal to her male comrades. In quite a few instances, she even surpasses their wits with her intelligence and outsmarts the enemy in unexpected ways. In a film way ahead of its time, *Mulan* proves that strength and intelligence do not depend on gender, but who you are and on how hard you are willing to work. An eccentric character, Mulan has a lot more to offer than be a damsel whose principal purpose is to exist for the other male characters to win over.

#### MULAN COMBATS MISOGYNY

Instead of pretending that chauvinism does not exist or that it is trivial, the movie distinctly depicts the hapless misogyny around us. Mulan is often met with comments such as "men want girls with good taste – calm, obedient, who work

fast-paced with good breeding and a tiny waist" through numerous songs and dialogues. The extent of such bias can further be seen when Mulan's father is told to teach his daughter to hold her tongue in a man's presence.

Besides, throughout the film we also see that honour for a woman directly correlates to "striking a good match" for herself and getting married. Towards the end, Mulan finally succeeds in bringing honour to her family, however, not by finding the perfect match for herself but by being a war hero in her father's place.

#### MULAN COUNTERS CULTURAL STEREOTYPES AND CHAMPIONS DIVERSITY

For a franchise that has millions of children watching their content from all across the globe, Disney has strangely lacked cultural representation. It is a delight to see a non-traditional Disney princess of colour which is a general step forward.

#### MULAN DISPLAYS THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY BONDS

In most Disney princess movies, the protagonists either do not have living parents or are not in touch with them, hence failing to show any familial connections. Contrary to this, *Mulan* depicts the importance of family bonds and displays the extent to which people are willing to go for their families when she risks her life to save her father. In addition, we also find that love and respect are not limited to just parents but also go as far back as their ancestors who they even worship and seek blessings from.

*Anusha often has a lot on her plate. Send her memes and motivation at anusha.mourshed11@gmail.com*

