

WALTER D. PENROSE JR. : **The Unwanted Gaze? Feminism and the Reception of the Amazons in *Wonder Woman*.**

The ancient Amazons, the equals of men, were among the fiercest opponents faced by the ancient Greek heroes Achilles, Heracles, and Theseus. But were they heroes themselves? As the objects of Greek male anxiety, the Amazons were understood to be a threat to Greek civilization, in part due to their refusal to be subjected to the chief institution of patriarchy: marriage. In the Progressive era of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, authors repurposed the myths in order to unlock their feminist potential. William Moulton Marston, the inventor of Wonder Woman, used the Amazons in his comics to illustrate his theories of female superiority. Women were more loving than men, Marston argued, and would ultimately therefore make better rulers. While Marston's feminism was sometimes questioned due to his portrayal of themes of bondage and domination in the *Wonder Woman* comics, it must be viewed within his larger platform. Marston brought a feminist message to the masses through his deployment of the Amazons to illustrate the potential of women ruling the world through loving dominance. Marston's star Amazon, Wonder Woman, became the symbol that motivated the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, a vehicle for later authors such as Perez to bring forward third wave feminist messaging to the masses, and, ultimately, became the heroic protagonist of the 2017 film, *Wonder Woman*. While her revealing costume has been controversial over the years, and Wonder Woman has been subjected to the male gaze, the film, like the comics before them, utilized a female perspective to question the stranglehold that patriarchy has held over the population.

**Key-words :**

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