

## Paradise, Bodies, and Gods: The Reception of Amazons in *Wonder Woman*

This summer's epic block buster, *Wonder Woman*, is a feast of visual delights, epic battles, and Amazons. The young Diana, "Wonder Woman," is, we quickly learn, no ordinary Amazon. As Diana is a god, her superhero feats are not surprising, but even the rank and file Amazons of Wonder Women's Themiscyra live up to their ancient reputation of being faster, smarter, and better than men (Lysias 2.4). In ancient Greek lore, Amazons fought like other mortals, even though they were called the "daughters of Ares," the god of war. This epithet is probably metaphorical, telling us of the bellicose nature of the Amazons. The Amazons of ancient Greek lore seemingly existed to make war, whereas their counterparts in *Wonder Woman* have been put on earth by Zeus for a different purpose: to bring peace by defending all that is good in the world. In fact, rather than being the "daughters of Ares," they are his sworn enemies. In this paper, I will explore the reception of the Amazons in *Wonder Woman* by comparing and contrasting Greek texts and imagery to the film's depiction of the Amazons. I will discuss the controversies surrounding whether the film, through its depiction of powerful women, embraces feminism or exploits women by exposing their bodies to the viewer's gaze. I will assert that, regardless of one's stance on the said controversy, the movie's portrayal of Amazons' bodies is not unlike that of ancient Greek art, which is even more revealing. Additionally, I will discuss the liberties taken by the film, via the *Wonder Woman* comic book series, by turning Themiscyra into "Paradise Island" and the Amazons into sworn enemies of Ares.