

ACADEMIC READING GUIDE

WONDER WOMAN: EARTH ONE VOL. 1

Grant Morrison | Yanick Paquette

In this new installment of the *New York Times* best-selling EARTH ONE original graphic novel line, Grant Morrison (THE MULTIVERSITY) joins with Yanick Paquette (SWAMP THING, BATMAN INC.) to reimagine Wonder Woman for a new era. Encompassing the vision of her original creator, William Moulton Marston, Morrison presents a Diana who yearns to break free from her mother and the utopian society on Paradise Island to learn about the forbidden outside world. Her dreams may come true when Air Force pilot Steve Trevor crashes on their shores, and she must defy the laws of the Amazons to return him to Man's World.

THEMES Utopia, feminism, authority, truth, mercy, resistance, rebellion, exile, alienation, strength & power, language & interpretation

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How do you interpret Morrison's decision to frame the narrative around Diana's trial, testimony and self-defense? As a structural/formal strategy, how might it shape a reader's interpretation of the story's content?
- 2 At first glance, Paradise Island is depicted as a utopia that has flourished under the leadership of women. In what ways does the narrative simultaneously complicate this vision, and what do you think is the story's ultimate verdict on the concept of such a society? What type of feminist argument is the text attempting to build? Does it succeed?
- 3 How does the text both challenge and celebrate the concepts of strength and power?
- 4 Diana's experience in Man's World is recalled and narrated from multiple perspectives. How does Morrison's strategy of presenting these events through a variety of lenses impact our understanding of those events and our interpretation of the characters involved?
- 5 What are some of the story's recurring visual motifs? How do they contribute to building some of its broader arguments?
- 6 Why might Morrison have chosen to highlight Diana's acquisition of the English language? In what other ways does the text emphasize speech, communication and interpretation—and how are these themes connected to Diana's resistance?
- 7 Continue to explore the theme of resistance in WONDER WOMAN: EARTH ONE VOL. 1. What different types of rebellion or resistance are portrayed, and what does the text argue about those moments? Do you think the depiction of opposition is simplistic or nuanced? How so?
- 8 What is the significance of Steve Trevor's institutional affiliation with the U.S. Air Force?
- 9 What types of interpersonal relationships does the text emphasize, and what arguments does it try to build about those interactions? To think about this in more detail, consider the story's centralization of the turbulent relationship between Diana and her mother, Hippolyta. Is the text more critical of or sympathetic to Hippolyta—and how does this affect your interpretation of other relationships throughout the narrative?
- 10 Why is Diana intent on submitting to the "loving authority" of her mother? In these scenes and elsewhere, what commentary does the text attempt to make about authority and agency?



WONDER WOMAN: EARTH ONE VOL. 1

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ESSAY AND PROJECT PROMPTS

Depictions of Wonder Woman have dramatically evolved since her introduction in 1941, and her success or failure as a feminist icon has been hotly debated by cultural commentators for decades. Determine where you stand on the issue: first, develop an argument about Morrison's Diana in *WONDER WOMAN: EARTH ONE VOL. 1*; then, research another published representation of her and provide a comparative analysis explaining how it either supports or departs from Morrison's vision.

The conflict in *WONDER WOMAN: EARTH ONE VOL. 1* hinges on a sharp separation and distinction between Man's World and Paradise Island. Develop an argument about the visual characterization of these worlds. How does Paquette's art add nuance to our interpretation of these different settings? Is the art somehow neutral, or does it convey a bias toward a single narrative agenda? That is, does our ability to "see" Man's World through Paquette's art cause us to sympathize with one character or cause over another?

GUIDED CLOSE READING

The page to the right illustrates the first confrontation between Diana and her mother, Hippolyta, after Diana has disrupted tradition on Paradise Island—and just as she is beginning to vocalize her dissatisfaction. This pivotal scene shows Diana finding a voice that resonates throughout the text, so it's important to analyze how her transformation is visually represented. Use the following prompts to help your students interpret the visual information on the page:

- Start with the big picture: compare the layout of this page to those of surrounding pages. How is this page organized? Pay attention to framing, borders, and the number, size and spacing of the panels. How does this particular layout enhance and help to effectively deliver the textual content?
- Now, study each frame individually. How does each frame command visual interest? Does any one in particular stand out immediately, or are they all given equal weight? Why do you think this is?
- This page only includes dialogue between Hippolyta and Diana, yet several other women appear prominently on the page. Analyze their inclusion: how are these women characterized? How does their presence on the page impact your reception of the argument between mother and daughter?
- Many of the character illustrations on this page seem to be making direct eye contact with the reader. How do you interpret this artistic choice?

