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Women Warrior's or the She-Devil?

The development of feminism in comics, especially looking at the woman warrior genre .





The title of 'she-devil' conjures negative images of evil women with bad intentions who intend to create disturbances within their society. However, throughout this zine we have been able to explore different women warriors and their tendencies to fight for more justice in the world while also trying to define themselves as positive warriors. There are great similarities between all five characters, from saving sexual slave girls to fighting for those who are oppressed, these women have formed a genre in which feminism can grow and form into comics that can be read by all different genders, races, and ages. Ending with my main character, Niobe, she is the depiction of the future generation of change and justice. A woman who grows within her comics, from running away from her past to grabbing hold of her future and showing the world what a black heroine can do. Niobe is a fantasy comic character that is full of emotion and realism which relates to the other characters because we see their 'real-life' struggles with men, family, war, and much more. Women warriors are the undefeated characters every reader should know about.

THEY ARE THE FUTURE.

The importance of Weapons for these Women Warriors









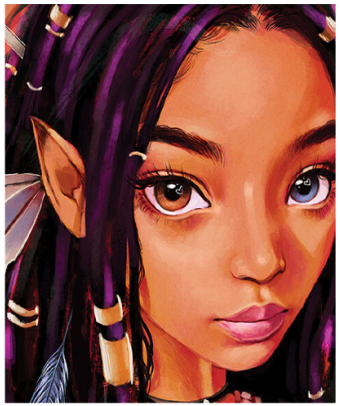
Weapons represent the type of warrior each woman is, and in each character I have chosen they utilize swords or daggers. For Nubia, the magical sword represents the "barbarity of her character due to her association to Mars" (Shindler, 36). This is compared to Wonder Woman's passive magical lasso. This is similar to the other comics, with these women secretly shown as barbarians using these swords or daggers. Perhaps bringing out the feminism of these comics = men & women are equal.

The Creation of Niobe

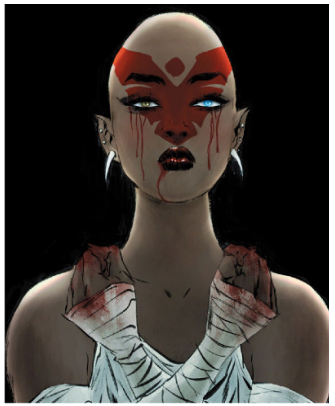


Niobe was created by Amandla Stenberg and Sebastian A. Jones. Niobe was born out of the prior comic: THE UNTAMMED.

SHE IS LIFE - Niobe Ayutami is an orphaned, half-elf and black female woman warrior. She is being chased by the DEVIL who we find out has a bigger role in Niobe's life than we, as readers, would have expected.







Making of History:

FIRST INTERNATIONALLY DISTRIBUTED COMIC WITH:

- **BLACK** FEMALE AUTHOR
- **BLACK** FEMALE ARTIST
- **BLACK** FEMALE HEROINE

Amandla Stenberg

"As I navigate the world and try to use my platform to bring people together, Niobe is doing the same thing, only in a much more badass way..."

Amandla is a FEMINIST (awarded feminist of the year) and an activist who places an importance on BLACK LIVES MATTER and other social issues into her work.



Experience as a Black female in this industry:

- HUNGER GAMES: AS THE CHARACTER OF RUE.
- THE HATE U GIVE: AS THE CHARACTER OF STARR.

What happens when two strong comic characters come together?

They form a women's warriors dream team, with Misty Knight and Colleen Wing, and fight off evil while doing it as a powerful duo. They bring feminism to the forefront of Marvel with a white and black woman partnering up who are experts in the skill of martial arts and becoming warriors in the urban world.



For Niobe, her hair was an important detail in the comic, thus she has falling dreadlocks in nearly all of the comic covers. For Daughter's of the Dragon, Knight has a full grown afro in every cover. This particular detailed similarity further connects these comics as becoming one against racism and genderism.



Why is Gwendolyn perceived as an **enemy** in this comic when she rescues a slave girl (similar to Niobe), and fights for the justice of her people.

+ She is seen with two major horns stemming from her head which resembles those of a devil.

Gwendolyn – The Spurned ex-fiancee of Marco

First seen in Saga #8 in 2012.



Similar to Niobe, even as a warrior she does not intend to kill others. Here she feels responsible for her actions and heightens the idea of a woman warrior.

Sebastian A. James

"I wanted Niobe to kind of be that 'weeping Buddha'...it was very important for me that she was black and she had dreadlocks and that she's a very unapologetic character, but she's also flawed and she has her own growing pains, so we can all grow with her"

Stranger comics began 10 years ago - Sebastian wanted to create comics where they all SHARE a world. '*The Untamed*' led to the creation of Niobe: a black girl in a scary world.







Why pick Niobe for her own set of comic books?

- SEBASTIAN WANTED A BLACK TEENAGE GIRL TO HAVE HER OWN STORY.
- "THE ORIGINS IS A BEAUTY AND THE BEAST...A YOUNG GIRL RETURNING TO HER ANCESTORS TO FIND HER FAITH"

Where Did This Warrior Idea Begin?



"Not even girls want to be girls so long as our feminine archetype lacks force, strength, and power. Not wanting to be girls, they don't want to be tender, submissive, peace-loving as good women are.

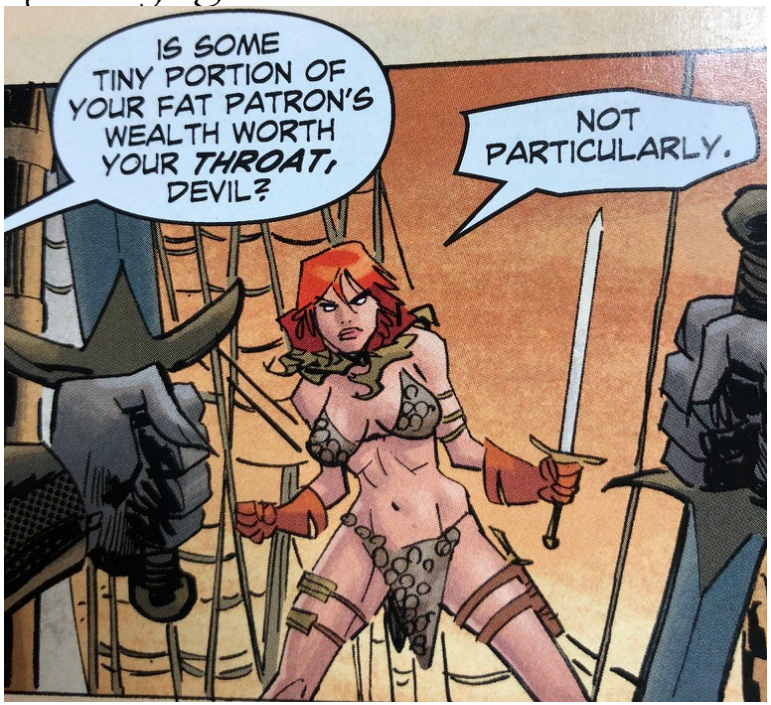


And Why did they do this?



Does her armor effect her reputation of a strong woman warrior?

The assumption that this other female warrior has a male captain creates the illusion that she has been trained by a strong, wise individual. Thus, I believe Sonja's outfit highlights her femininity while also portraying her warrior and masculine side. Showing her female attributes, such as her breasts and hips, resides in the readers thoughts about her manly physical abilities.





Red Sonja is a major leading woman warrior for the fantasy comic genre and was created in 1973.



Although the stereotype of a she-devil is referenced to black women, we can see in this comic cover of Red Sonja the subheading reads: 'She-devil with a sword'. She is referenced to a devil a lot, and perhaps because she has such strong abilities and is the only fantasy warrior character who has no supernatural aid. Similar to Niobe, Sonja is strong mind but can be seen to have an emotional side to her which brings out her humanness

However, unlike the other characters Red Sonja's 'bikini armor' places a sexualization to this character.

- Women in history have been known to become warriors by impersonating or dressing like men.
- They needed to do so because women warriors were taboo and contradicted in the patriarchal world.

Women's strong qualities have become despised because of their weakness. The obvious remedy is to create a feminine character with all the strength of Superman plus all the allure of a good and beautiful woman."

- Joan of Arc: 15th Century female Crusader who dressed male and led the troops.
- Deborah Sampson: disguised as a man, served in the American Revolution

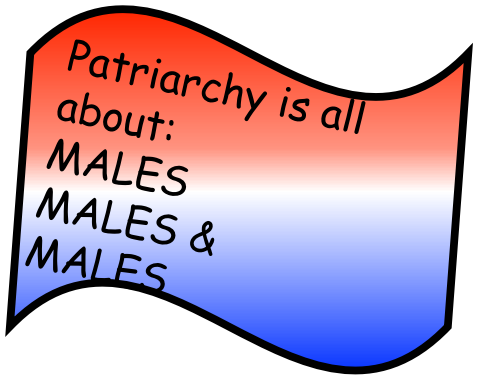




Patriarchy In society?

Or

Our society is a Patriarchy?









Slaughter Island VS Paradise Island

Contrast to Wonder Woman's Paradise Island, Nubia's home is filled with black men who are characterised with identical facial features and clothes. Their 'savage spears' can be "extended to the men and their homeland" (Shindler, 41).

"Perpetually girdled by concealing fog"

"Savage Domain"

Does the context of Nubia's location effect her representation as a warrior?

Does living on slaughter island make Nubia seem like a representation of a she-devil rather than a warrior?

Nubia was first seen in issue #204

Nubia as a women warrior

The Amazons are known to tell stories of legendary women warriors.

Unlike in the western society.

Nubia, similar to Niobe, was taken by the Greek God of War (Ares). Niobe is being chased by Devil Father.

Definition: Patriarchy is a social system in which **men** hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property.



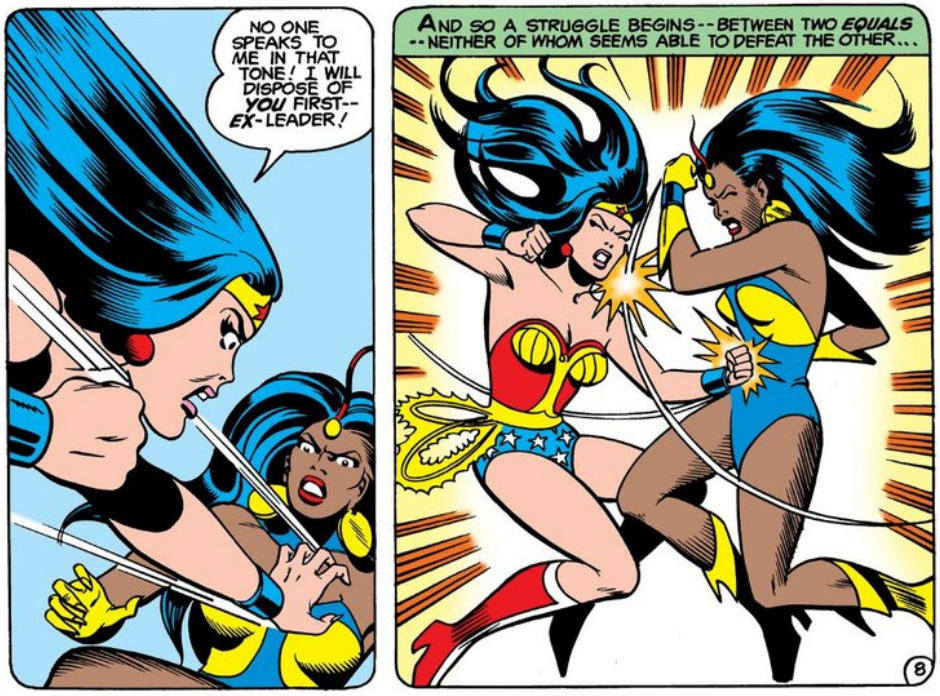
In each character I chose, their worlds were based on patriarchy but we can watch this disappear while reading these comics. However, there is still some characters that portray the patriarchal thoughts. We can see this with less educated characters.





Welcome to the Slaughter Island





Is the stereotype of a She-Devil negative or contradictory?

1 The 'she-devil' was associated with the "degree of resistance of black women against 'slave labor'' (Bush, 762). In many cases, this stereotype goes against the erotic '**Sable Venus**' image of eroticism but is conveyed as the troublesome, resistant woman.

2 Unlike the **Sable Venus** which was created by the "fantasy of the white male libido", the she-devil "reflected white men's fears of black women's resistance" (Bush, 778)

= This description of a strong minded female who is fighting her way through a distorted society can be seen as a good description for a

Woman Warrior

What Is Niobe's Race and/or Ethnicity?

Please tick the appropriate box.

- ☐ Half Elf
- ☐ Half Human
- ☐ Half Devil
- ☐ Half White

More like a She-Devil

And why does this mater?

Race is presented in a positive way with the representation of a black heroine who is strong-minded and determined. However, characters such as Temshen (one of the warriors) resents her mixed background.



This parallels the ideas and feelings towards mixed race & ethnic people in western society.

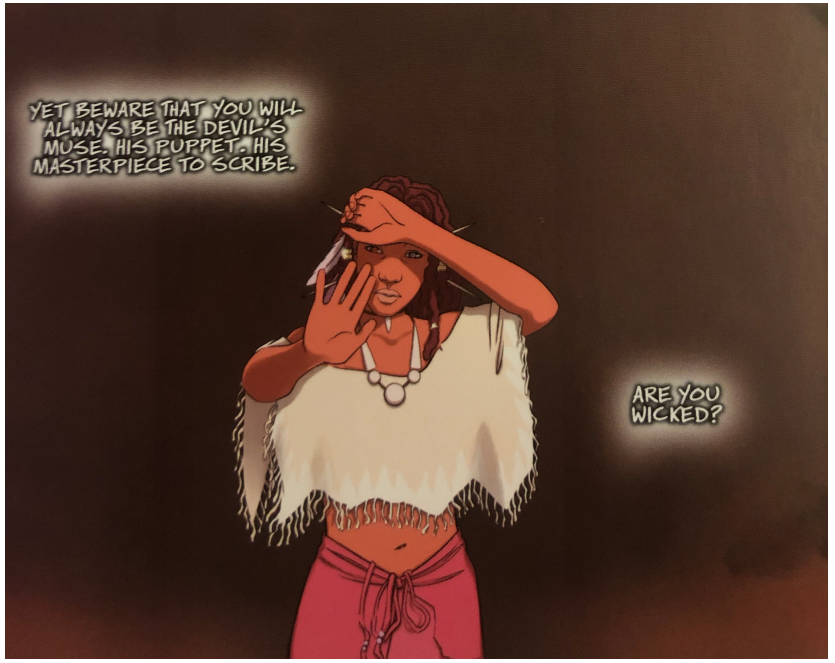
Speaking up: Mixed Race Identity in Black Communities –

The history of those classified as mixed race among African Americans is one both negative & positive. Surrounding their blackness, the negative can be seen with how interracial sexuality stemmed from slavery and oppressions (Speaking up, 426). In Lydia Maria Child's two short stories that introduced the 'tragic mulatto', we see a woman who is the offspring of a white slaveholder and black female slave. This character tried "believe herself to be white and free" (Pilgrim, 95).



Some historian writers have argued that mulattoes "were privileged relative to dark-skinned blacks" (Pilgrom, 98). E.B. Reuter has expressed that "in slavery days…they were considered by white people to be superior in intelligence to the black Negros and came to take great pride of their white blood"

"Don't come for me. If you see me in the street, don't speak to me. From this moment I am white. I am not colored. You have to give me up." (Peola from the film *Imitation of Life*).



Niobe is battling being mixed race but is she also fighting between being a she-devil or a warrior?



She-devils are known in history as a negative stereotype of the black female…