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# The New Face Of Feminism For The New Millennium

By Michelle C. Thomas

*Breathing deeper and harder than usual, this mother of six yearns for something, anything to calm her nerves. Not knowing how she will feed her children, she begins to tremble. Walking toward the bathroom to splash some water on her face, sodden with sweat, she stares - only to find old eyes encompassed by a sea of wrinkled despair in the mirror that never lies. Shrill shrieks resonate through her ears as a constant reminder of a hunger that never dies. Weakened by malnutrition, the cries stop; silence abounds . . . Tears stream down the contours of her face as she realizes that once again, her financial incompetence affords her only a pot of empty promises to feed her six children. Groveling for a handout here, some charity there, she encounters the grimace of unremitting rejection. Wiping her tears away, she consoles her children. Maybe next month will be different; maybe one of their daddies really will come home . . .*

In all too familiar societal depictions of Black women, like the narrative above, lies this widespread belief that all Black women excel at is making babies they cannot afford, then expecting others to bear their financial burdens. In that regard, white America tends to promote the notion of perpetual irresponsibility as a common thread among all Black women, most commonly under the guise of "the welfare mother or welfare queen." Moreover, white America has stigmatized Black women as uneducated whores and devalued them to subservient positions as a direct result of the dehumanizing power dynamics between "MAS-SAS" and Black women prevailing during slavery. Ironically, Black women themselves perpetuate this same debasement today. Black feminists, or "Womanists"



Photo: BSM Archives

as author Alice Walker coined it, counters the traditional feminist movement that strove to remove women (specifically, white women) from the home and to the workforce in positions commensu-

rate with that of their male counterparts (white males, that is). Meanwhile, Womanists desire to remove the Black woman from her traditionally menial job, and place her into the domestic sphere where