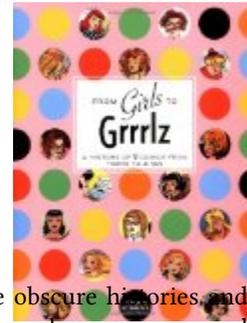


H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Trina Robbins. *From Girls to Grrrls: A History of Girls' Comics from Teens to Zines*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 1999. 142 pp. \$17.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8118-2199-5.

Reviewed by Jeff Williams (Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad Nacional de Cordoba)
Published on H-PCAACA (September, 2000)



Histories of comics often by-pass or gloss over the contributions made by minorities. One writer of comics history who has worked diligently over the years to rectify this omission from at least one contributing group, women, is Trina Robbins. She has given comics scholarship many valuable resources in this area. Her works, in addition to many published articles and interviews, include *Women and the Comics* (jointly written with Catherine Yronwode), *A Century of Women Cartoonists*, and *The Great Women Superheroes*. Her newest endeavor is *From Girls to Grrrls: A History of Girls' Comics from Teens to Zines*.

This work chronicles the history of women comics from 1941 until 1998. The chapters are arranged according to periods defined by Robbins, Girls' Comics (1941-1957), Women's Comics (1947-1977), Womyn's Comix (1970-1989), and Grrrlz' Comix (1990s). *From Girls to Grrrlz* details the many genres of comics for girls and women, social trends, and the background of authors and writers for these comics (who were not always women). The book contains many illustrations of covers and story excerpts from the comics discussed. The reader learns, among other things, that girls' comics began with *Archie*, in 1941, about the importance and influence of Katy Keene, and the fact that at one time girls' comics outsold boys' comics. Robbins also discusses the parallels between changing social movements, the rise of feminism, and changes in comics, including the undergrounds of the 1960s and 1970s and the alternatives of the 1980s

and 1990s. It also contains some obscure histories, and fills in some gaps from previous works on women and girls' comics.

If one were to find any fault with the work, it would have to be the absence of any reference information. The book contains no bibliography (which, according to Robbins was the editor's decision); the sources used, therefore, are not available to other researchers. Some bibliographical references and a sense of dialogue with other scholars in the fields of comics, history, sociology, etc. would have been most welcome and would have provided more resources to current researchers in comics scholarship.

Nonetheless, it is a valuable addition to Robbins' other works. The illustrations and story excerpts from rare and almost impossible to obtain comics provide an added value and importance to the work. Also, one would hope that this book would encourage other researchers and scholars to explore the area of girls' comics in particular and women and comics in general. To date, Robbins' is nearly a lone voice in this type of research and the area needs more voices in order for a true dialogue to take place.

Copyright (c) 2000 by H-Net, all rights reserved. This work may be copied for non-profit educational use if proper credit is given to the author and the list. For other permission, please contact H-Net@H-Net.MSU.EDU.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-pcaaca>

Citation: Jeff Williams. Review of Robbins, Trina, *From Girls to Grrrls: A History of Girls' Comics from Teens to Zines*.

H-PCAACA, H-Net Reviews. September, 2000.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=4526>

Copyright © 2000 by H-Net and the Popular Culture and the American Culture Associations, all rights reserved. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For any other proposed use, contact P.C. Rollins at Rollins@osuunx.ucc.okstate.edu or the Reviews editorial staff at hbooks@mail.h-net.msu.edu.