



Chicks Dig Comics: A Celebration of Comic Books by the Women Who Love Them

Lynne M. Thomas (Editor) , Sigrid Ellis (Editor) , Seanan McGuire (Contributor) , Rachel Edidin (Contributor) , Jill Pantozzi (Contributor) , Sara Ryan (Contributor) , Delia Sherman (Contributor) , Sarah Monette (Contributor) , more... Elizabeth Bear (Contributor) , Mark Waid (Introduction) , Amanda Conner (Interview) , Louise Simonson (Interview) , Greg Rucka (Interview) , Terry Moore (Interview) , Tammy Garrison (Contributor) , Gail Simone (Contributor) , Carla Speed McNeil (Contributor) , Colleen Doran (Contributor) , Jill Thompson (Contributor) , Jen Van Meter (Contributor) , Kelly Thompson (Contributor) ...less

[Download now](#)

[Read Online ➔](#)

Chicks Dig Comics: A Celebration of Comic Books by the Women Who Love Them

Lynne M. Thomas (Editor) , Sigrid Ellis (Editor) , Seanan McGuire (Contributor) , Rachel Edidin (Contributor) , Jill Pantozzi (Contributor) , Sara Ryan (Contributor) , Delia Sherman (Contributor) , Sarah Monette (Contributor) , more... Elizabeth Bear (Contributor) , Mark Waid (Introduction) , Amanda Conner (Interview) , Louise Simonson (Interview) , Greg Rucka (Interview) , Terry Moore (Interview) , Tammy Garrison (Contributor) , Gail Simone (Contributor) , Carla Speed McNeil (Contributor) , Colleen Doran (Contributor) , Jill Thompson (Contributor) , Jen Van Meter (Contributor) , Kelly Thompson (Contributor) ...less

Chicks Dig Comics: A Celebration of Comic Books by the Women Who Love Them Lynne M. Thomas (Editor) , Sigrid Ellis (Editor) , Seanan McGuire (Contributor) , Rachel Edidin (Contributor) , Jill Pantozzi (Contributor) , Sara Ryan (Contributor) , Delia Sherman (Contributor) , Sarah Monette (Contributor) , more... Elizabeth Bear (Contributor) , Mark Waid (Introduction) , Amanda Conner (Interview) , Louise Simonson (Interview) , Greg Rucka (Interview) , Terry Moore (Interview) , Tammy Garrison (Contributor) , Gail Simone (Contributor) , Carla Speed McNeil (Contributor) , Colleen Doran (Contributor) , Jill Thompson (Contributor) , Jen Van Meter (Contributor) , Kelly Thompson (Contributor) ...less

In Chicks Dig Comics, editors Lynne M. Thomas (Hugo-Award-winning Chicks Dig Time Lords) and Sigrid Ellis bring together essays by award-winning writers and artists who celebrate the comics medium and its creators, and who examine the characters and series that they love. Gail Simone (Birds of Prey) and Carla Speed McNeil (Finder) describe how they entered the comics industry. Colleen Doran (A Distant Soil) reveals her superhero crush, while Jill Thompson (Scary Godmother) confesses to being a comics junkie. Jen Van Meter (Hopeless Savages) sings the praises of 1970s horror comics, and Seanan McGuire (the October Daye series) takes sides in the Jean Grey vs. Emma Frost battle. Other contributors include Marjorie Liu (Dark Wolverine), Rachel Edidin (Dark Horse Comics), Jill Pantozzi (Newsarama), Kelly Thompson (Comic Book Resources), and SF/F authors Sara Ryan, Delia Sherman, Sarah Monette, and Elizabeth Bear. Also featured: an introduction by Mark Waid (Kingdom Come) and exclusive interviews with Amanda Conner (Power Girl), Louise Simonson (Power Pack), Greg Rucka (Queen & Country), and Terry Moore (Strangers in Paradise).

Chicks Dig Comics: A Celebration of Comic Books by the Women Who Love Them Details

Date : Published April 10th 2012 by Mad Norwegian Press (first published April 7th 2012)

ISBN : 9781935234050

Lynne M. Thomas (Editor) , Sigrid Ellis (Editor) , Seanan McGuire (Contributor) , Rachel Edidin (Contributor) , Jill Pantozzi (Contributor) , Sara Ryan (Contributor) , Delia Sherman (Contributor) , Sarah Monette (Contributor) , more... Elizabeth Bear (Contributor) , Mark Waid (Introduction) ,

Author : Amanda Conner (Interview) , Louise Simonson (Interview) , Greg Rucka (Interview) , Terry Moore (Interview) , Tammy Garrison (Contributor) , Gail Simone (Contributor) , Carla Speed McNeil (Contributor) , Colleen Doran (Contributor) , Jill Thompson (Contributor) , Jen Van Meter (Contributor) , Kelly Thompson (Contributor) ...less

Format : Paperback 208 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Sequential Art, Comics, Writing, Essays, Feminism, Anthologies, Graphic Novels

[!\[\]\(cead67df4d82d6c83effe4f8699a7d8f_img.jpg\) Download Chicks Dig Comics: A Celebration of Comic Books by the ...pdf](#)

[!\[\]\(1d3a1175dd4902218e694b9c098adb83_img.jpg\) Read Online Chicks Dig Comics: A Celebration of Comic Books by th ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Chicks Dig Comics: A Celebration of Comic Books by the Women Who Love Them Lynne M. Thomas (Editor) , Sigrid Ellis (Editor) , Seanan McGuire (Contributor) , Rachel Edidin (Contributor) , Jill Pantozzi (Contributor) , Sara Ryan (Contributor) , Delia Sherman (Contributor) , Sarah Monette (Contributor) , more... Elizabeth Bear (Contributor) , Mark Waid (Introduction) , Amanda Conner (Interview) , Louise Simonson (Interview) , Greg Rucka (Interview) , Terry Moore (Interview) , Tammy Garrison (Contributor) , Gail Simone (Contributor) , Carla Speed McNeil (Contributor) , Colleen Doran (Contributor) , Jill Thompson (Contributor) , Jen Van Meter (Contributor) , Kelly Thompson (Contributor) ...less

From Reader Review Chicks Dig Comics: A Celebration of Comic Books by the Women Who Love Them for online ebook

Nicholas Whyte says

<http://nwhyte.livejournal.com/2087652.html>[return][return]Mad Norwegian Press must be pretty pleased to have two books in the running for Best Related Work in this year's Hugos (the other being Chicks Unravel Time). It is less my cup of tea, to be honest; my knowledge of comics is rather inferior to my knowledge of Doctor Who, and this book is clearly for enthusiasts. (I was also a bit puzzled to find that the foreword is by a man, and there are two interviews with male creators, which seems to me to contaminate the "Chicks..." brand.)[return]However, there were some interesting pieces. Jennifer Margaret Smith's very political chapter (see quote above) spoke to me, though, and I found the two chapters on cosplay.(by Erica McGillivray and Anika Milik) very informative (perhaps because the authors did not assume much familiarity with the subject from the readership). Other chapters recounting the authors' love for this or that character or author I generally skipped. There are also some interesting stories about being female in a social environment that is male and not free of misogyny - though perhaps fewer than I had expected. This is generally a feelgood book by and for those who have stayed the course.[return][return]I'm afraid this won't be at the top of my Hugo ballot, but it may not be at the bottom either.

Skye Kilaen says

When I was offered an opportunity to review the anthology Chicks Dig Comics: A Celebration of Comic Books by the Women Who Love Them, I was thrilled.

I got completely hooked, because Chicks Dig Comics is a love letter to something I adore. It's about passion. It's comics readers and comics creators sharing why they adore the stories found in comics, from superheroes to horror to comedy to soap-opera melodrama. It shows quite clearly how much better comics fandom has gotten for women in my lifetime. So many of the essays pointed out that in years past, comics conventions were almost exclusively male - these days, women and girls are well represented. When some of the contributors in this book were growing up, it was impossible to find another female comics fan. Now with the internet, it would be hard not to. And there are enough fans, and enough interest in the topic, that Chicks Dig Comics can be a viable project.

I found the whole thing so incredibly refreshing.

I'm not sure that any further description of which bits I personally liked is terribly useful to anyone else. There are 30 pieces in the book if you don't count the introduction and foreward, so everyone who reads the book is going to have their own favorites. The collection as a whole moves along quickly due to the length of each piece and the variety of subjects and approaches. Some pieces focus on the writer's personal experiences, while others focus on specific characters and books or describe working in the industry. Marvel, D.C., and indie fandoms are all well represented. Editors Lynne M. Thomas and Sigrid Ellis did a fantastic job mixing the essays together so that each piece feels fresh as you get to it.

I very much appreciated the inclusion of perspectives from women with disabilities and queer women. My only "wishlist" item was more voices of women of color, beyond comics writer Marjorie Liu and the amazing piece by Sarah Kuhn. For example, several of my "must read" bloggers on comics and pop culture

are African-American, so it felt strange to not see that perspective represented explicitly.

Would I recommend *Chicks Dig Comics* to anyone who doesn't read comics? Maybe not, though fans of any genre which has been considered "for guys" will find a lot of common ground with the contributors. For anyone who has been involved with comics, I would recommend this in a heartbeat. It's smart but not bogged down in academic jargon, which I appreciated as someone who's been away from academia for a long, long time. And it's a fun, energizing way to spend time on the issue of women in comics, which can often be as much about pain (Greg Land, augh!) as it is about joy.

Leilani says

Seanan McGuire's essay explaining why Emma Frost is more awesome than Jean Grey is worth the price of admission by itself - but I'm still looking forward to reading the others.

Upon finishing - I loved the variety of topics presented. Lots of reminiscing about discovering comics in the local comic shop of varying quality, reflections from prominent artists, editors, and other professionals in the field, a couple of interviews with male contributors known for writing excellent female characters, and celebrations of lots of favorite characters. Just about every essay had something to love in it, and they have inspired me to check out some artsy black & white indie comics in addition to my usual superhero favorites. Recommended for everyone who loves comics!

Robin Burks says

I was fortunate enough to get a review copy of *Chicks Dig Comics* and I have been reading it on my lunch breaks every day. It's full of essays by wonderful women (and a few men), including those in the industry and those who are just fans of comics, like me.

I'll have to admit that I fell out of comics fandom over 10 years ago, but re-discovered them recently thanks to digital versions. Collecting comics got so expensive back in those days and I initially had the intent to buy every single Vertigo title ever written. Needless to say, I ran out of money before that happened and lost interest.

I'm back in the game, though, thanks to Comixology and other comics readers. Right now, my favorite, without a doubt, is the *Locke & Key* series by Joe Hill and Gabriel Rodriguez. I've also recently been turned on to *Fables*, as well as *Alabaster*.

So back to the book. I'll admit that I related to almost everything these women had to say. My favorite essay had to be by Gail Simone (*Birds of Prey*, *Wonder Woman*, *Deadpool*), who stated that women have secretly won the war in the comics industry. When Simone says "They are going to have to produce product that the female reader enjoys to survive," I believe it.

I also related to Erica McGillivray's essay on being an accidental cosplayer. When referring to preparing for her first cosplay event, she attributed it to being more important than getting ready for the prom. And she's right. She goes into mentioning how more women are now being seen at both comic book stores and conventions and how we tend to embrace fandom at a higher participatory level. I was a first-time cosplayer

a few years ago. And now? I'm always actively planning outfits.

Sara Ryan (Me and Edith Head) writes her essay in the form of comic panels that goes through her life as a comic fan and then a comic creator. Tammy Garrison talks about her love of Batman and how she incorporates "What would Batman do?" into her daily life. Alisa Bendis, president of Jinxworld, Inc., gives advice about women interested in starting their own comics companies.

And the list goes on and on. With over 20 contributors, Chicks Dig Comics has a little something for every female comic fan. I found myself nodding emphatically with many of those contributions and even caught myself finding an emotional connection with much of what was written. I'd say this is a must-read if you have ever loved comics.

Christy Stewart says

The good was overshadowed by the bad. One piece was only about how women in the X-Men fandom argue about who is better between Jean and Emma (in relation to who is a better MATE for Scott) and the author spent the whole time feeding into it and insisting that Jean needed to stay dead.

Really? In a community where women are sent rape threats for simply being openly female comic book fans and you want to perpetuate this girl on girl rivalry when given a public platform to talk about this industry?

And the editors signed off on this shit? Disgusting.

Melissa says

Chicks Dig comics for me was a amazing collection of essays and interviews from a wide variety of comic industry contributors and fangirls. I have to say this was the fourth installment of "female empowerment" in essay form I had picked up by the collection of authors. Other works including Chicks Dig Time Lords, Chicks Unravel Time; both on females in Doctor Who, and Whedonistas a series dedicated to Joss Whedon and his works. Having taking on all of those prior to this I was aware of what to expect, essays, interviews, wit, and to get a new perspective on things I had once looked at a different way.

My love for superheroes started when I was eight and my dad and I watched Adam West as Batman reruns together. Since then I have always been a Batman fan. My love of comics spread as I grew so this book was just a fan letter that was able to reach out to me. As with all the other similar installments, this collection is strongly geared towards women, which is nice. The collection has some stories of coming into the comic fold; using cosplay to meet Greg Rucka who helped created characters like Batwoman. Some of humors of the comic universe; why women can relate better to Batman than Batgirl, which made me, laugh out loud. Some of, how comics helps define people; like Dexter from Red Lantern Corp who by the way is a cat, there are other stories there by that was my favorite. Of course there is a story of how comics have evolved over the years and how far comics have come.

Needless to say Chicks Dig Comics is wonderful, funny, touching, and inspiring. Any females who enjoy comics could pick this up and read it enjoy it. Women who haven't come to comics could pick this up and go, well maybe I need to read into this who Jean Grey or Emma Frost issue; or into, They did what to Barbra Gordon? Overall this was a great read and has reminded me I have some comic book friends I need to revisit and some of us are about to get into some real world debates.

Sunil says

Chicks Dig Comics makes a statement that shouldn't need to be made but clearly does: chicks dig comics. The book is a celebration of comics and the women who love them, as the subtitle reads, and it's an incredibly strong collection, with hardly a dud among the 25 essays and 5 interviews, which is truly impressive.

The majority of the essays take the form of personal stories about how this chick learned to dig comics. What was fascinating was the common themes that emerged throughout the book, the recurring mentions of Kitty Pryde and Jean Grey, the influence of *Sandman*, the impact of the Dark Phoenix Saga, and so on. The personal stories form a tapestry of the history of comics and their impact on these young women. It was sad to see each growing girl run into the "Girls don't like comics" phenomenon despite quite clearly loving comics, yet it was heartening to read tales of comic book store owners who supported and nurtured their love. Each individual story has something worthwhile and unique about it, and although from a holistic viewpoint, it got kind of repetitive, I never actually got tired of reading them.

A few essays deal with cosplay and cosplay culture, and a couple are critical examinations of specific comics (these felt out of place, even though I had initially expected more such pieces). I was surprised that weren't more pieces really biting into the male-dominated culture and examining comics and comics culture from a feminist viewpoint; most pieces acknowledged that things had definitely improved, though we still had a ways to go, and left it at that. It does make for a more uplifting book.

The interviews with Alisa Bendis, Amanda Conner, Greg Rucka, Terry Moore, and Louise Simonsen give nice insights into the industry. They speak pretty candidly and have good stories to share.

Overall, this is a pretty fantastic read for any comics fan, if only for recommendations. Some essays end prematurely, but very few wear out their welcome. I could have used more variety, but that's not to say the book is boring. I loved the writers who took a more creative take on the personal essay format, but those with more straightforward tales also told compelling stories.

Chicks dig comics? After reading this, *anyone* would dig comics.

Stephanie says

Essay anthologies have their positives (each essay presents the reader with a different viewpoint, a unique voice) and their negatives (obviously, not *every* essay is going to be brilliant; there are always going to be a few duds in a collection). But, there is something so great about finding an anthology that focuses on something you love, regardless.

I love that this collection was essentially framed around the "origin story". In comic books, the origin story outlines how a superhero got his or her powers or the reasons why he or she turned to a life of fighting crime (or, like, a life of stirring up trouble in the case of a villain). The essayists in *Chicks Dig Comics* share their own origin stories--how they came to be involved in the comic book industry or the moment they fell in love with comics. The latter was really of interest to me, especially given that I got into comics at the start of this

year. But, in reading all of these stories, I started to remember other, older, comic-book-related memories...the stacks of *Richie Rich*, *Casper the Friendly Ghost*, and *Beetle Bailey* comics that were once (unimaginably, to my seven? eight? year-old mind) my dad's. And then, the *Betty & Veronica* digests I would buy with my own money at the tabagie in the mall. Then graphic novels borrowed from the library...*Persopolis* and *Maus* and Alison Bechdel. Comics have always been there...just at different levels of intensity.

But, back to *Chicks Dig Comics*. The collection suffered a bit because of its primary focus on superhero comics. Don't get me wrong, I love me some Batwoman (and was happy to see that she was the topic of a number of essays in the anthology), but there is so much more out there. I loathed Colleen Doran's essay (unless it was meant to be taken in jest?), implying that the comics industry "get a clue" and make way for women because they all have hearts-in-their-eyes-crushes on superheroes (ugh). Sarah Kuhn and Kelly Thompson both wrote very smart, stand-out pieces that I will go back to and read again.

It does seem like a lot has changed in the three years since *Chicks Dig Comics* was published...many of the comics I read are written and drawn by women; the titles available more diverse. The idea that women read comics seems to have become more of a given. This collection of essays introduced me to a lot of the women who fought to get us to this point (and who will continue to fight) and for that I am grateful.

Cathy says

I really liked this book. I've been floating around the boarders of graphic novel reading for a few years. My original entry point was trying to read books by authors who's novels I'd liked, then adaptations of urban fantasy novels I'd enjoyed. It took me a long time to train my eyes to follow the format and to enjoy it, but it finally sunk in this year and I've been on a graphic novel binge, so when I saw the title of this book, it seemed like a natural fit. To be honest, it only sort of was. I'm not really any of these women. I came to it late and I don't dig superhero comics yet. Most of these women adore superheroes, that the major theme of the book. Most of them had issues with being one of the few or only women or girls they knew who liked comics and faced a lot of discrimination because of it. I was hoping to find some entry points into the big convoluted mess of superhero comics. I saw a few openings perhaps. So I came away thinking that I'm just not really one of this particular handful of women after all. Traditional superhero comics probably aren't going to float my boat. But it's remarkable how much so many of these women moved me. I finished almost every one of these essays just saying, "Good for her," or just feeling really touched or kind of thrilled or really just moved by their experiences. I'm not that woman, but I'm honored to have been let into a bit of her experience.

One thing that I really loved was that three of the women compared comics to soap operas. Seanan McGuire mentioned it briefly, Sue D went into it a greater length, bringing up specific references to Another World, comparing soap and comic supercouples (Luke and Laura vs. Scott/Emma or Scott/Jean, what's the difference?), and Colleen Doran briefly referenced it as well. Because what else can you compare them to? What other media has stories that continue for generations, with rotating writers and producers, characters who continually die and get resurrected, and that kind of loyal fan base? I'm sure the men who stymied these women would hate it this comparison. The only thing they'd hate more is my sports/soap analogy. But it's true nevertheless. Sports, comics and soaps fulfill the same slots in our hearts as multi-generational ongoing

escapist dramas. And chicks like sports too, guys. Just saying.

As for a few specifics, Marjorie M. Liu's essay was perfect. "Indeed, our obsession with the end of the world in popular media is as much an obsession with heroes." These apocalyptic or scary books, movies, stories are about what scares us most, but the heroes inspire us, empower us, give us hope. "Hope is our superpower." She made me see many of the books and movies I've been enjoying for years (her's included) with new eyes. Fantastic.

Elizabeth Bear's was great too. Not just because she was one of the very few to write about books that aren't about traditional superheroes, which made me feel a bit more included (Warren Ellis's *Fell* and *Global Frequency*). She just got to the heart of things, that each of us kind of hopes to be a hero and Ellis gets that by making his heroes sort of everymen and women.

But really, I enjoyed the entire book. I'm not a non-fiction reader. I'm not a biography reader. But I really enjoyed these essays, what frequently kind of amounted to origin stories. I might not be these women, but I liked getting to know them. I appreciate their experiences. And who knows, maybe I'll get into their favorite comics someday too.

Nominated for the 2013 Hugo Award for Best Related Work

Chantaal says

Originally posted at Girls Read Comics Too.

First off, a huge congratulations to Lynne M. Thomas and Sigrid Ellis, who managed to not just get together an impressive list of names, but also put each piece where it seemed to belong. There's an amazing range of talent here, and there's no denying that this book is what someone like me has needed for so long. I don't even enjoy non-fiction that much, and I read this in one sitting.

There's a great range of interests and pieces here. From interviews with Amanda Conner and Greg Rucka (yes, there are male contributors, and they are awesome) to wonderful pieces on creating comics, a journey into cosplay and everything in between, it feels like there's something for every comic book lover here. These women not only create and work with comics, but they love them, and you can see it with every word they write.

My favorite piece is Tammy Garrison's I'm Batman, where she doesn't apologize for how much of a dick Bruce Wayne is, but explains how he can be inspiring in other ways. Anika Dane Milik's Captain America's Next Top Model, which talks about the art of stealth cosplay, is a favorite of mine. So is Jill Pantozzi's dissection of the Green Lantern corps and how it relates to comic fans, Sara Ryan's poignant comic panel vignettes, and Marjorie Liu's love for stories.

Every single piece is worth the read, and I'm so glad Chicks Dig Comics exists.

Moogigon says

I picked this up because of the piece by Gail Simone, but it was far from alone among the highlights for me. The essays can be a bit Marvel/80's X-Men-centric at times, but each comes from a distinct perspective and has a different goal, making them feel fresh and inviting. That slight quibble aside, the essays and interviews included really are quite diverse in scope, and they really reinforce the absurdity of the notion that "girls don't read comics." They do. And they have done since the beginning. There's a lot of history, both personal and from the industry, in these pages, which makes this book a must read for any comic book fan. Somewhat surprisingly, it was an interview (with Greg Rucka) that was my absolute favorite part of the book. I found myself nodding along with his perspective on writing and on female characters, seeing myself reflected in his thoughts. It really resonated with me and helped me to more fully accept that it wasn't weird or shameful to relate better to female characters more than male ones despite my gender.

Lani says

This is the rare anthology where I liked almost every single essay. There were still some I enjoyed more than others, but most of the selections were so short that it wasn't hard to skim through the ones I wasn't enamoured with.

The book includes the views from fans, creators of all types and several generations, and several professional critics. I found a few comics that were referenced over and over again and may end up trying a few based on the recommendations. (Notably Sandman, Batwoman, and Strangers in Paradise. Kitty Pryde also gets a lot of love in this book.)

Some of the points do get repetitive, but the 'origin stories' and personal anecdotes of fans and creators are the real selling point for me. It's a variety of experiences - how people broke into the industry, the discrimination faced (or not), and how the love of comics started.

It's a good variety, with a common theme. Something I was surprised didn't come up much... race in comics. Lots of mentions of homosexuality and queer comics, but little acknowledgement of the mostly white world of comics. Granted, this is a book primarily about gender, but it still seems like a topic that would come up when discussing the rampant 'tokenism'.

Reading this immediately after Girl Comics, both purchased at DragonCon and featuring several of the same creators, leaves Girl Comics looking terrible. The real stories from the (mostly) women who love and create comics shows a variety far greater than what I found in the collection from the industry itself. This book definitely benefits from its fan-based beginnings.

Ben Babcock says

I don't read comic books that much.

Given my reading habits, and how quickly I read, I find it difficult to go out and get every issue of a serial. I've read some collected works, like *Sandman*, and enjoyed them—storytelling is storytelling, whether it's in words or art on a page. Digital editions might help, once we finally give up on that DRM nonsense.

However, even with that hurdle cleared, I'll admit I'm not a very visual person. Pictures, whether they are paintings or prints or ink drawings, do not communicate with me the same way words on a page do—they don't, as I explained to a friend while we saw Picasso at the AGO, convey as much semantic information to me. This is why, above any other literary form, I am so drawn to the novel: it's a word-dense method of storytelling, and that appeals to me.

Nevertheless, I think I "dig" comics. I appreciate them, perhaps not as fervently as other fans, but with an eye towards their cultural and artistic significance nonetheless. Even if that weren't the case, after Lynne M. Thomas' excellent *Chicks Dig Time Lords*, pre-ordering this from Amazon was a no-brainer. Besides, we nerd genres need to stick together!

At first, I was a little disappointed with *Chicks Dig Comics*. It might be that I'm less excited about comics than I am about *Doctor Who*, so perhaps that dampened my enthusiasm for the subjects of these essays. However, I was expecting more of the focused critique of the medium that I saw in *Chicks Dig Time Lords*. Many of the essays therein were personal, yes, but they always referred back to the show, its production, and its delivery. It was an edification for me, as a fan who came to the series through its 2005 regeneration, to read those accounts. *Chicks Dig Comics* definitely has a more personal feel to it; almost every essay is about a female fan's involvement with comic books and how this has enhanced or intersected with her other identities and roles in life.

In that sense, this book doesn't disappoint—it just wasn't quite what I expected at first. The essays and interviews are thoughtful, well-written, and above all, insightful. As I continued through the book, my initial disappointment evaporated and then condensed into approval. Because as I kept reading, I started to realize that *Chicks Dig Comics* isn't actually "a celebration of comic books" like its subtitle claims. It's a celebration—and a confession—of the experiences women have with comic books, their relationship to comic books over time. Hence, while the discussions of how most comic books seem aimed and young men are certainly there, they aren't the focus here.

The value of *Chicks Dig Comics* comes from the fact it provides space for minorities to speak up about what comics mean to them. The value comes from a reader getting to hear about an experience and say, "Yes, I understand what you mean completely—I've had a similar one." It's that instant connection to the authors, that sense that you are not alone. It's putting into words what other fans have felt but could not express. It's a celebration of women who love comics by women who love comics—and that's awesome.

The moment this clicked didn't come until all the way on page 129, during the interview with Greg Rucka. In response to writing so many series with women as the leads, he says this:

But, I think, in all honesty? In all sincerity? I female-identify. I like writing about female characters. I can even go back through my writing—and here I'm talking about the stuff I wrote when I was in my teens ... and those stories almost universally have female leads.

And then, to the follow-up question regarding his conscious choice to portray genderqueer characters:

Also, inasmuch as I have always been aware of feminism and interested in feminist politics, I've been very aware of sexual politics and issues of sexuality. And, not to be glib about it, but if I female-identify and I'm in a heterosexual relationship, what does that make me? I've

always been comfortable in my own body, enough that I'm pretty content being biologically male. But certainly intellectually, and emotionally, I'd say that I've always identified far more as female than male.

This resonates with me quite a bit. I very carefully reached up to the top left corner of the page and deliberately folded it down into a neat triangle. I don't dog-ear pages! I annotate; I underline, but to crease the *page*? I did it anyway.

My exploration of feminism and involvement in feminist discourse has been as much about exploring my own gender identity, and the way I perform gender, as it has been about critiquing gender roles in wider society. A lot of what Rucka says above applies to me—and I've said it in various bits and pieces to people at one time or another, but I don't know if I've ever put it all together so succinctly. I too am straight and pretty comfortable in my body (my teeth could be better). But I tend to form stronger friendships with women than I do men. Like Rucka, my stories often involve women protagonists or at least very important women main characters. And I'm intensely interested in what it's like *to be a woman*. (I'm not sure whether the relationship between these last two things is cause-and-effect or effect-and-cause.) It is a perspective I cannot, owing to my biology and socialization, realize myself; I have to seek it vicariously through literature and discussions with female friends. For me, personally, my involvement with feminism has been a quest for empathy.

The bottom line here, though, is that this is a book about women and comics, about women who love comics, and all the awesomeness that results. It crosses generations and occupations—there are essays and interviews here from fans, from authors, from editors, from artists. Rather than presenting a prescriptive, monolithic definition of what it means to be a female fan, *Chicks Digs Comics* embraces a diversity of perspectives. There are differing opinions on what makes a female character *empowered*, for instance, or the nature of Barbara Gordon's transition from able-bodied Batgirl to the disabled Oracle. As with so many things viewed through the lens of feminism, I think it can be tempting to simply condemn comics for being bastions of the male gaze or otherwise demeaning to women—and some of the contributors note the surprised reactions they receive when other women learn of their self-professed feminist fandom. *Chicks Digs Comics* belies this approach to feminism by exposing the nuance that makes comics worthwhile.

I don't always read comics. But I do occasionally read books *about* comics! Because sometimes, things about comics aren't *just* about comics, in the same way that comics aren't just about spandex and onomatopeia. There's something good here, something human and true. It's academic, and meaningful, and personal. So if you like comics, even if you don't read them all that often, read this. And if you don't like comics? Maybe this will lift the cloud of confusion over why so many women do.

Will says

There are a couple of targeted essays (notably on the Jean Grey / Emma Frost identity breakdown), but for the most part this is a book of essays detailing how women like comics. Guess what? The women who like comics, like them for the same reasons that men like them, and like them the same way that men do. In fact, the women who like comics are just as mystified at the women who don't like comics as the men who like comics are.

The big difference? If you're a woman who likes comics, not only did you not find anyone who looked like you, but you had to deal with men who tell you that you don't exist. Repeatedly. And this lasted for decades, until Neil Gaiman got on the scene and then Bone, and the movies happened and then the floodgates opened and the world accepted that women could like comics, as proven by the millions of women who like comics.

I think the saddest essay was the one where a comic book creator talks to one of the writers and she slowly realizes that she is the first woman he's ever spoken to about comic books. Ever. Ouch.

So yeah. I was actually expecting more of an examination of male-gaze centered discussions (and yes, Power Girl is mentioned) and the tendency for men to not recognize that their male characters are power fantasies rather than female love interests... but reading the essays reminds me that it's so much better than it used to be.

Michel Siskoid Albert says

Chicks Dig Comics does for comics what Whedonistas and Chicks Dig Time Lords did for other geekly pursuits, but a little better, I think. Perhaps it's the breadth of the subject matter. There are only so many ways a female essayist might have gotten into Doctor Who, so CDTL became a bit redundant after a while. Comics is a medium, not a franchise, and the stories are consequently more varied (although you'd be surprised how many women had a thing for the Dark Phoenix Saga). But whether the writers came into comics with superheroes, indie books or Archies, what I most appreciated was that the collection didn't dwell only on autobiographical "gateway drug" stories and dared to go the Chicks Unravel Time route with strong, insightful analytical essays about the medium, fandom and/or specific books, and not necessarily from a "gender issues" angle. Among the 30 pieces are a few interviews with comics writers known for their portrayal of strong female characters - Gail Simone, Greg Rucka, Terry Moore and Louise Simonson. I hope that #1 on the cover isn't just a piece of comics design. I'd read a second volume.
