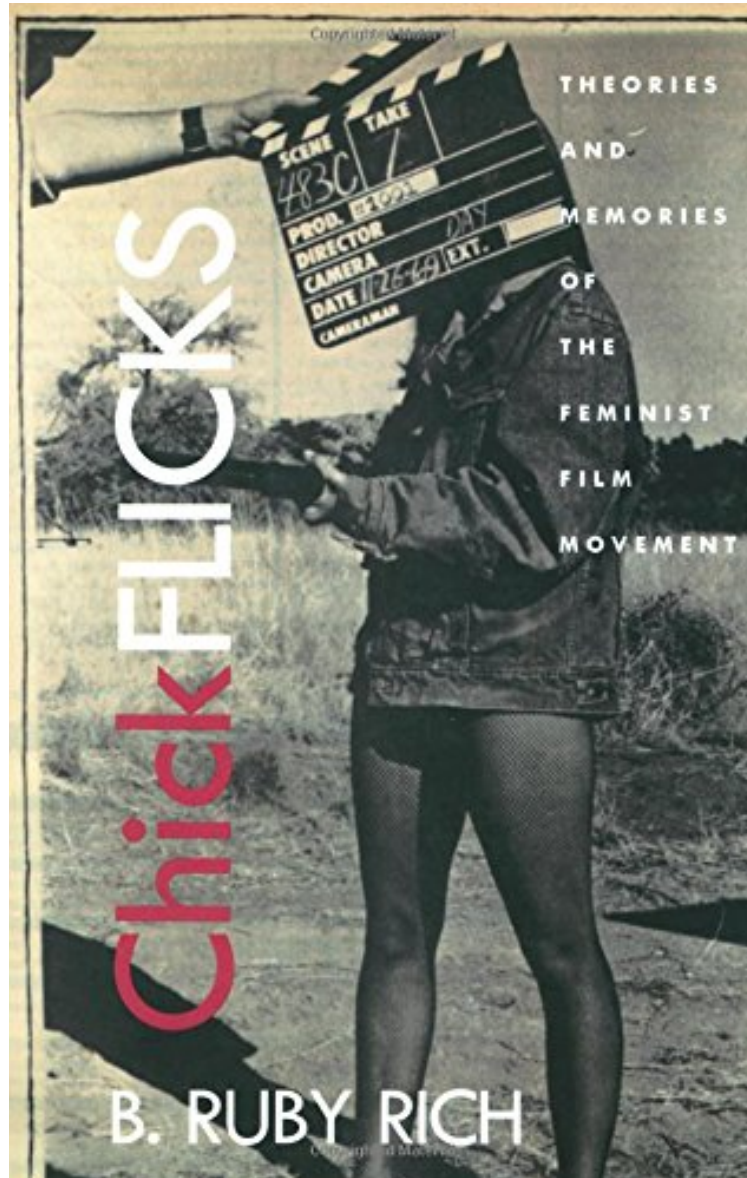


Chick Flicks : Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement

B. Ruby Rich

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B. Ruby Rich : Chick Flicks : Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chick Flicks : Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Review in The San Francisco Bay Guardian by Josh KunBy A

CustomerPerhaps Chick Flicks' greatest strength is the number of ways in which it can be read: as a professional retrospective strewn with delicious gossip, a personal diary of hindsight recollection and revision, a copious document of 70s and 80s feminist film culture, a historical memoir and a memoir of history. But more than anything, it is a textbook for the very reeducation Rich has so enthusiastically championed. ... Chick Flicks is a model of politically rooted, socially conscious, intellectually challenging--but not intellectually alienating -- cultural criticism. ... The interplay of Rich's personal reconstructions and past and present criticism turns Chick Flicks into Rich's own proactive feminarrative, her own contribution to feminist history that propels itself forward by remembering the past in empowering detail, naming names, giving voice, claiming experiences.³ of 3 people found the following review helpful. A compelling read bringing together many aspects of feminismBy A CustomerRich's book is a riveting collection of her essays about film and feminism, but it is much more than that too. Introducing each essay is a memoir that tells us what was happening in her life at critical moments as feminism and women's film were developing in the sixties and seventies. This mix makes the history personal and compelling and adds life and context to her classic essays. B. Ruby Rich is a journalist, cultural critic and professor of film whose articles have appeared in the Village Voice, Elle, Mirabella, The Advocate, Out, Time Out New York and many other places. She is funny, engaging, and wonderfully brings the history of feminism and film up to the present moment.⁴ of 5 people found the following review helpful. Review from WOMENS REVIEW OF BOOKSBy A CustomerWriting about women as spectators of Hollywood cinema, B. Ruby Rich once protested that the choices have been "to identify either with Marilyn Monroe or with the man behind me hitting the back of my seat with his knees." I love that description not just for its immediacy and visceral thump, but because it originally appeared in the New German Critique, a formidable academic journal. Since B. Ruby Rich is neither a Ph.D. nor a full-time academic, her appearance in this journal and her respectability in film scholarship are reasons for optimism about the inclusion of multiple voices in and about feminist film criticism. Rich introduces her book Chick Flicks: Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement with a heartening invitation for such inclusion. "I sincerely believe," she says, "that the people who read GLO: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies (the academic journal where I have edited film and video reviews) and the people who mob the Sundance Film Festival (where I serve on the selection committee) have something to say to each other." This statement reveals Rich's facilitating voice and her remarkable comfort in very different cultural locations. Rich has earned the right to reminisce about the feminist film movement because she has "been there," from Sundance to academic editorial boards, but has not camped permanently in any chic or safe spot. Rich's reviews and essays have appeared in widely-used film theory anthologies and in popular media, including public radio, the Village Voice, Sight and Sound, the Advocate, and Elle. For nearly three decades, she has worked with both filmmakers and theorists, with arts-council bureaucrats and radical culture workers, at consciousness-raising women's film "happenings" and at prestigious academic conferences--that is, not solely with film or film theory, but with the larger feminist movement she names in her title. Chick Flicks is a selection of her essays from 1974 to 1991, each introduced with a prologue situating it in several histories: the independent women's film movement, feminist film criticism, American politics, and the author's own personal history of changes in scenes, careers, lovers, and friends. The latter strategy affiliates this book with recent autobiographical feminist criticism which, at its best, illuminates the continuum of life and scholarship, intellectual and emotional passion; Patricia J. Williams' *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (1991) comes to mind, as well as Patricia Mellencamp's *A Fine Romance: Five Ages of Film Feminism* (1995) and Jane Tompkins' *A Life in School: What the Teacher Learned* (1996).

If there was a moment during the sixties, seventies, or eighties that changed the history of the women's film movement, B. Ruby Rich was there. Part journalistic chronicle, part memoir, and 100% pure cultural historical odyssey, Chick Flicks with its definitive, the-way-it-was collection of essays captures the birth and growth of feminist film as no other book has done. For over three decades Rich has been one of the most important voices in feminist film criticism. Her presence at film festivals (such as Sundance, where she is a member of the selection committee), her film reviews in the Village Voice, Elle, Out, and the Advocate, and her commentaries on the public radio program *The World* have secured her a place as a central figure in the remarkable history of what she deems cinefeminism. In the hope that a new generation of feminist film culture might be revitalized by reclaiming its own history, Rich introduces each essay with an autobiographical prologue that describes the intellectual, political, and personal moments from which the work arose. Travel, softball, sex, and voodoo all somehow fit into a book that includes classic Rich articles covering such topics as the anti-porn movement, the films of Yvonne Rainer, a Julie Christie visit to Washington, and the historically evocative film *Maedchen in Uniform*. The result is a volume that traces the development not only of women's involvement in cinema but of one of its key players as well. The first book-length work from Rich whose stature and influence in the world of film criticism and theory continue to grow Chick Flicks exposes unexplored routes and forgotten byways of a past that's recent enough to be remembered and far away enough to be memorable.

From Library Journal Although the title leads readers to expect a titillating look at Caged Heat-type exploitation films, this book is instead an exploration of "cinefeminism" and autobiography, an attempt to "interrogate changing interests

and shifts in popular culture." The author, a cultural critic who has been published in the *Village Voice*, *New York*, and *Out*, ruminates on her experiences working the feminist film society and festival circuit in the heady days of the 1970s, shares her thoughts on the controversial legacy of Nazi documentarian Leni Riefenstahl, and discusses the knotty issues of sex, politics, and pornography in a review of *Not a Love Story*. Rich also gives her slant on the lesbian classic *Maedchen in Uniform* (1931), and two chapters describing time spent interviewing and hanging out with Julie Christie are the book's highlight. On the other hand, these collected essays need a tighter focus, the autobiography could be pruned by half, additional essays on recent noteworthy films should have been added, and declarations that the author was "dazed, possessed, virtually levitated" by a film don't add to the reader's appreciation. The book's appeal is limited to large academic collections on the feminist film movement. Stephen Rees, Levittown Regional Lib., PA Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. Ruby Rich reinvents both herself and her approach to film criticism, in a fascinating book that alternates autobiography and theory. She is wise and funny at the same time, never dogmatic, always allowing her discovery process to remain in clear view. Roger Ebert