

**Book Review: Jill Lepore, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*. New York: Knopf, 2014. ISBN: 9780385354042 (Paperback). 432 Pages. \$16.95.**

**Reviewed by Robert Brenner<sup>1</sup>**

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I didn't grow up reading Wonder Woman comic books when I was an adolescent in the 1960s. I was too busy reading the Amazing Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, the Incredible Hulk, the Invincible Iron Man, the Mighty Thor, the Uncanny X-Men—the whole Merry Marvel Marching Society. Wonder Woman—along with Superman, Batman, Green Lantern, the Flash, Aquaman, the Atom, et al—was DC, Marvel's "Dastardly Competition." Besides, she was a girl. Who wanted to read a superhero comic book about a girl?

I didn't really get into Wonder Woman until the 1970s, when I was a teenager, and then only through the live-action TV show. Again, I was less interested in the character, per se, than the way Lynda Carter filled out her breast plates. What was there to know about Wonder Woman except that she looked good in hot pants and a halter top?

Well, plenty, as it turns out, judging from *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*, Jill Lepore's wonderful new book. Although several scholarly tomes have already been published about Wonder Woman, Lepore's research uncovered some startling new facts that put the character's whole history in a new light.

Lepore is a bit of a Wonder Woman herself. She is the David Woods Kemper '41 Professor of American History at Harvard University and a staff writer at *The New Yorker*. She is the author of six previous books of cultural criticism, and her most recent, *Book of Ages*, was a finalist for the National Book Award.

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