

Masculine Memory in the Creation of a National History: Fandom and Historiography of Western Comics through a Case Study of Romance Comics

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By using the historical treatment of romance comics as a case study, this paper demonstrates how the current use of both collective fan-based memory and the individual memory of comic book creators in comic book scholarship affects the Historiography of Western comics. Ultimately, this paper argues that it is problematic to historical understanding and the production of a national history. It perpetuates long-held epistemic injustices and historical fallacies by privileging certain voices and silencing others.

The romantic subgenre of comic books was extremely popular in both the US and the UK during the post-war era. However, today the historical importance of these publications is frequently discounted due to the masculinization of comic book history. By relying on the memory of the male comic book creators and collective fan-based memory, dominant scholarship valorizes and privileges masculine narratives.

Comic book history, itself, has become part of the predominantly male-based national memory that excludes and silences female-focused publications and the voices of women in comic book history. This paper ultimately challenges this masculine notion of the history of the comic book and asserts the importance of the feminine forms of the comic.

Biography:

Sydney Heifler is a comic book historian, who specializes in romance comic books created during the Cold War. She is a Regent's Scholar and a Provost Undergraduate Fellow of UC Davis, where she received highest honors for both her honors thesis and for her historical scholarship. She recently completed her MSt in Women's Studies at the University of Oxford and is currently working on two book projects.