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Naked Ladies and Macho Men: A Feminist Content Analysis of a Burgeoning Graphic Novels Collection

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Jessica H. Zellers, Naked Ladies and Macho Men: A Feminist Content Analysis of a Burgeoning Graphic Novels Collection. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. March, 2005. 50 pages. Advisor: David Carr

Graphic novels are often accused of exploiting women and being excessively violent. To date there has been little research on graphic novels, but this relatively new medium is rapidly increasing in popularity. This study examines graphic novels at a crucial point: they are circulating widely but they have not yet been subjected to revised collection development policies in most libraries.

To determine whether graphic novels collection development policies need to be adjusted, this study used a feminist framework to analyze the content of ten percent of the graphic novels collection at the School of Information and Library Science (SILS) Library at the University of North Carolina (UNC). The content analysis results indicate that more men than women are protagonists, men are likelier to commit physical violence, and women are more likely to be suggestively clad or naked. Recommendations for collecting pro-feminist books to supplement existing graphic novels collections are included.

Headings:

- Graphic novels -- Evaluation
- Graphic novels -- Selection
- Feminism
- Collection Development -- Evaluation
- Women in literature

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Abstract

Graphic novels are often accused of exploiting women and being excessively violent. To date there has been little research on graphic novels, but this relatively new medium is rapidly increasing in popularity. This study examines graphic novels at a crucial point: they are circulating widely but they have not yet been subjected to revised collection development policies in most libraries. To determine whether graphic novels collection development policies need to be adjusted, this study used a feminist framework to analyze the content of ten percent of the graphic novels collection at the School of Information and Library Science (SILS) Library at the University of North Carolina (UNC). The content analysis results indicate that more men than women are protagonists, men are likelier to commit physical violence, and women are more likely to be suggestively clad or naked. Recommendations for collecting pro-feminist books to supplement existing graphic novels collections are included.

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