

A Scene in Sequence: Australian Comics  
Production as a Creative Industry 1975-  
2017

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Arts

Discipline of Media

University of Adelaide

June 2017



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# Abstract

From 1975 until the present Australian comics production has existed as a creative industry which is comprised of various clusters and social networks. These social networks consist of creative practitioners (stakeholders), cultural intermediaries, and public institutions, and are sustained through reciprocal social capital, knowledge, and innovation. Within this thesis I will be presenting the argument that the Australian comics industry is a case study into how a creative industry which relies on collective labour within scenes can contribute to creative economies on a global scale.

This thesis is modelled after a chain narrative, with chapters focused on funding, production, distribution, retail, and marketing. I adapted the chain narrative framework from Cunningham and Higgs' (2008) 'Creative Chain', this framework providing a comprehensive analysis of all agents involved in production and circulation. Throughout this narrative there is primary data in the form of ethnographic field notes and interviews, and my methodologies include Bourdieu's theory of the cultural field and critical discourse analysis.

My research has found that stakeholders and cultural intermediaries in the Australian comics industry are strategic in how they form clusters and networks to continue their practices and strengthen their markets. These strategies include knowledge brokering, as individuals and collectives, with state institutions and the corporate sector. Stakeholders and cultural intermediaries are also connected to other creative and comics industries through contractual labour, cultural tourism, and media convergence. This individual and collective agency is the key to the Australian comics industry's resilience and growth, as stakeholders and cultural intermediaries increasingly occupy different physical, cultural and virtual spaces.

Through entrepreneurialism and adaptation, stakeholders and cultural intermediaries convert social capital into cultural and economic capital. These practices are at once unique to the Australian comics industry, but are also reflected in various creative industry models. This thesis is the first case study which presents the theory that comics production could be considered a creative industry through shared economic structures.



# Acknowledgements

I would first and foremost like to thank my supervisors, Dr Sal Humphreys and Dr Michael Wilmore. Throughout this project you have offered constant inspiration and support, and I could not have done it without you.

To my parents and siblings – thank you for picking me up when I was down, and never losing faith that I could finish this project.

To my nieces and nephews – Alannah, Ethan, Hope, and Amity – I know at this stage you are too young to understand what Aunty Amy does for a living. But I want you to know when you read this in the future that you were a constant source of joy in some of the hardest years of my life.

To my colleagues at the University of Adelaide, thank you for your advice and empathy when times were hard. To my friends, thank you staying by my side as I dedicated my life to what at times seemed to be an insurmountable goal.

Lastly, but by the very means not least, I would like to thank the people involved in Australian comics production. You have built up a wonderful community which welcomed me in, and I have learned so much from you. In particular I would like to thank my interviewees:

Alice James, Alisha Jade, Ben Hutchings, Benzin Bullock, Bernard Caleo, Brendan Halyday, Dave DeVries, Dave Follett, David Blumenstein, Frank Candiloro, Gary Chaloner, Greg Holfeld, Josh Santospirito, Mal Briggs, Mandy Ord, Martin Trengrove, Matt Emery, Mitchell Davies, Nick Abdilla, Paul Abstruse, Paul Mason, Philip Bentley, Scarlette Baccini, Scott Fraser, and Simon Hanselmann.

This thesis could not have been written without your knowledge and kindness, and so to you I offer my sincerest gratitude.





Pat Grant (2015)