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Erasing the Lines between Leisure and Labor:
Creative Work in the Comics World

Abstract

One of the most remarkable features of comics creators is their overwhelming identification as fans, reflecting not only a generic tendency of creative industries to recruit from among subcultures but also the historical relationships between the comics industry and its fans. This article approaches comics as a media industry and site of creative labor, drawing on the results of a large-scale survey of comics creators. While high levels of affective engagement with work mean that many report themselves as satisfied with their working situation, the de-differentiation of labor and leisure presents a risk of self-exploitation.

Introduction

All things considered, the last few years have been good to the comic book industry. As relatively inexpensive entertainment commodities, comic books have traditionally been viewed as recession-proof,[1] and indeed sales have improved since a late-2000s slump. Despite some hiccups and controversies, the audience of comics readers is expanding beyond the core group of "comic book guys" who were the industry's primary market since the 1970s.[2] But, most importantly, licensing comic book properties for film, television, and video games has paid off for publishers, movie studios, and the media conglomerates that own them. However, all this success falls under the shadow of publishers' historic practices that assumed authorship and, thus, ownership of every work they commissioned. To put it another way, the comic book industry's main asset relies on acts of primitive accumulation.

This has long been a source of moral outrage amongst certain comic book fans. In 1938, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster sold a character they created for $130 and the promise of future work recounting his adventures in the pages of *Action Comics*. They could not have foreseen Superman's popularity and longevity when they signed that deal, though they perhaps should have realized that they could be replaced by other writers and artists. Thanks to informal pressures from without and within

Superman's publisher, DC Comics, Siegel and Shuster negotiated a number of compensatory deals over their lifetimes, but both died without fully participating in the material rewards their creation generated. Artist Jack Kirby was not recognized for his contributions as an originator of characters and story concepts at Marvel Comics during the 1960s, and much of his original artwork was simply stolen from him by Marvel, who claimed many pages were lost or stolen and withheld others until he signed documents relinquishing any claims to ownership of the stories he had made for them.[3] More recently, artist Russ Heath and the HERO Initiative, a charity that aids comic creators in financial distress, released a comic strip highlighting the fact that, although Roy Lichtenstein's comic book–style paintings can fetch millions of dollars at auction, artists whose work he appropriated (including Heath himself) need help to buy groceries.[4] It is no wonder, then, that Kirby is reported to have given the following advice to an aspiring cartoonist, "Kid, don't go into comics. Comics will break your heart."

Yet, despite these cases and others like them, the comics field continues to attract people who want to "break into the industry." At conventions and festivals, for instance, they attend workshops, show their portfolios to editors, and try to build an audience for their work. How are we to explain the seeming disconnect between the prima facie

injustice of work in comics and the passion and enthusiasm with which it is pursued? Using findings from a survey of 570 comics creators that I conducted in 2013–2014,[5] this article will explore one possible explanation, namely that comic creators' experiences and identifications as comics fans may influence their evaluations of work in comics. I shall begin by briefly providing some context on comics publishing as a media industry. I then discuss survey respondents' levels of work centrality and job involvement in the context of the larger history of fan and creator interactions in the field of comics. In a field where virtually every creator is also a fan, the boundaries between leisure and labor become virtually nonexistent. Creative labor is thus mystified as an extension of their fannish activity – that is, as something other than "work."

Comics as a Media Industry

The offspring of the pulp press and the newspaper comic strip, the American comic book burst onto the media landscape in the 1930s. By the mid-1940s, virtually all American children and a significant proportion of adults were regular readers.[6] However, sales declined precipitously during the 1950s and '60s, due not only to sensationalized controversies over crime and horror comics[7] but also to increased competition for people's leisure time, most notably from television. In reaction to the declining mass audience for comic books, publishers refocused their attention on dedicated comic book fans, whom they reached by marketing directly to specialty retail stores rather than through newsstand distributors.

In recent years, however, comics have become more tightly integrated into the entertainment industry through changes in ownership and new licensing strategies.[8] Meanwhile, Japanese *manga*, long-form comics ("graphic novels"), and digital comics have cultivated new audiences outside of the subculture of comic book fans. Contemporary comics is a transected, transnational, and transmedial field of cultural production.

Transected

There isn't really a single comic book industry but a complex ecology of creators, publishers, critics, and readers – a "comics world."[9] This field of cultural production comprises (at least) two major sub-sectors. It is common to speak of "mainstream" comics, on the one hand, and "alternative," "independent," or "art" comics, on the other. However, these labels are increasingly untenable.

Mark C. Rogers has suggested the key distinction is not between commercial or avant-garde *content* but rather between "industrial" and "artisanal" *modes of production*.[10] Although these labels might be seen as prejudicial, they capture important differences in the organization of the labor process. Production in "mainstream" comics is organized in a quasi-Taylorist fashion, separated into discrete job functions for writers, pencillers, inkers, colorists and letterers under the supervision of editorial staff, while "alternative" comics are more typically the work of a single writer/artist who may also take on production functions as a self-publisher.

In the survey, these sectors were represented by rough proxy. Questions asked about the main way that respondents' work was made available to the public – through a publisher under a work-for-hire relationship (31.1% of respondents), through a publisher under a creator-ownership arrangement (18.8%), self-published in print (25.3%), and self-published digitally (22.8%). Those producing work for hire most closely accord with Rogers's industrial mode, while the other categories (to varying degrees) offer a mix of industrial and artisanal features, combining, for instance, division of labor with profit sharing or outright ownership by the creator(s).

Transnational

The so-called "American" comic book industry is in fact highly globalized. It participates in what Toby Miller has called the New International Division of Cultural Labor. Miller's concept can be applied to the field of comics in two distinct ways. First, *works* of comic art circulate around the world, with American comics available in international markets and vice versa. But second, and for my purposes more importantly, cultural *workers* residing in other countries are employed producing comics for US-based publishers.

While comic book publishing, like other print cultural industries, was historically associated with New York City, fast, reliable courier service and digital file transfers have deterritorialized production.[11] This has enabled US-based publishers to enter or even to cultivate artistic labor markets around the

world. While the majority of respondents reside in Anglophone countries – the United States (71.5%, including 13.7% of respondents who specifically identified New York or New Jersey as their place of residence), Canada (10.6%), the UK and Ireland (7.1%), and Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa (1.4%) – the market for creative labor has outposts in Latin America (1.7%), non-Anglophone Europe (5.8%), and Asia (1.9%). Creatives' different locations will presumably influence their working conditions, even when they do the same job for the same publisher. For instance, different levels of social support are available in different countries – notably, freelance workers in countries with universal health care have an advantage over those who must purchase even basic health insurance on the private marketplace. Furthermore, the dispersal of workers across space, into different jurisdictions, and into relative isolation (87% do most of their work in a home office or studio) presents barriers to collective organization.

Transmedial

Henry Jenkins popularized "transmedia" as part of the construction "transmedia storytelling": "a transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole."[12] This implies an intertextual network of "adaptations" without an "original." Due to the level of strategic co-ordination among media organizations that it requires, transmedia storytelling can be seen as a cultural logic arising from the technological and institutional convergence of recent decades,[13] but comics were transmedia *avant la lettre*. Jared Gardner has traced the intertextual networks around early American comic strips, while Ian Gordon has documented the role of comic-strip characters in the development of branding in the early twentieth century.[14] Comic books built upon these developments. Superman's various iterations across media – comic books, comic strips, theatrical cartoons, radio, television, character merchandise, and so on – is a notable example. Indeed, key elements of the Superman franchise (Perry White, Jimmy Olsen, kryptonite) premiered in the 1940s radio serial before being integrated into the "source material" of comic books.

However, from today's point of view, much of this activity seems haphazard and ad hoc. As a result, most examples have exhibited only a weak form of transmedia storytelling:

> The current licensing system typically generates works that are redundant (allowing no new character background or plot development), watered down (asking new media to slavishly duplicate experiences better achieved through the old), or riddled with sloppy contradictions (failing to respect the core consistency audiences expect within a franchise).[15]

Yet comics have become much more tightly integrated into the cultural industries since Jenkins wrote that definition. As a component of Disney and Time Warner's overall revenue streams, comics publishing is minuscule, but the intellectual properties held by DC and Marvel are absolutely vital to their larger strategies. The central element here is the character as franchise. Today, comic book characters are brands tying together multi-platforms franchises that draw on but do not necessarily presuppose knowledge of narrative worlds that are selectively reconfigured in each iteration.

As John Thornton Caldwell has argued, franchises mask the role of "fundamental entities" such as workers and employers in media production:

> Franchises shift the focus away from the identity of either the bigger corporation (studio or network) or the workforce (that produces the franchise) in order to cultivate, overproduce, and perform the identity of marquee signature behind the blockbuster (Stan Lee for the Spider-Man and X-Men sequels; J.R.R. Tolkien / Peter Jackson for the Lord of the Rings franchise).[16]

That is to say, long-running comic book characters like Spider-Man and the X-Men are not only visible, recognizable brands – with their own logos, to boot – but their "iconic" nature obscures the work of their creators (and other creative workers). In contrast with comic strip authors like R.F. Outcault, "who retained control of his creation

Buster Brown, and licensed companies' use of the character,"[17] comic book creators typically fall under the work-for-hire doctrine.[18] Creators working in the industrial mode are, by and large, independent contractors rather than employees, but these comics' *collaborative* nature means that they are, by default, works created for hire, so the commissioning publisher is their legal author and owner:

> Outcault's legal rights in Buster Brown derived in part form his personal rights as the character's creator. Detective Comics ownership of Superman rested on their registration of the character as a business symbol and the successful denial of Siegel and Shuster's authorial rights.[19]

Although eighty-three percent of surveyed creators own at least some share of the rights to some of the work they have done in comics, only forty-five percent have ever received royalties for their work.

These dynamics are certainly more prominent in the industrial subfield – and particularly the vertically integrated "Big Two" publishers – but artisanal comics production also takes place in a transmedial world. Lesser-known creators must become entrepreneurs and even brands in order to advance their careers, and many cartoonists working independently online have adopted a merchandising model to support their artistic output.[20] Well-known graphic novelists like Art Spiegelman, Alison Bechdel, Marjane Satrapi, Dan Clowes, and Chris Ware themselves "perform the identity of marquee signature" that authorizes the franchise that is their own *oeuvre*. (Not to mention the possibility of adaptation from indie comic to indie movie: Satrapi co-directed a feature-length version of *Persepolis* [2007] and Clowes stories were turned into *Ghost World* [2001] and *Art School Confidential* [2006].)

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While certainly competitive, the comics field has relatively low barriers to entry compared with other cultural industries. At minimum, one can quite easily print up a minicomic of their work at Kinko's or scan and post it on Livejournal, Tumblr or a personal portfolio website. These forms of self-publishing have enabled a number of creators to maintain long, if modest, creative careers (e.g., James Kochalka or John Porcellino), and even produced a handful of bona fide stars (e.g., Kate Beaton). But comics produced for public consumption at whatever scale are intimately tied into markets, whether mass markets mediated by large publishers and distributors or direct economic transactions between author and audience at a convention or festival. To put it bluntly, comics publishing is a media industry, and that means that making comics is not merely a labor of love, but also plain old labor.

In the Leisure-Labor Nexus

Angela McRobbie, Miranda Campbell, and others have noted that many creative and cultural industries draw their workforce from subcultures.[21] Subculturalists, quite naturally, have the motivation, know-how, and connections to pursue these jobs – as rare, precarious, and poorly remunerated as they may be. As Barry Shank writes of music scenes, "Spectators become fans, fans become musicians, musicians are always already fans."[22] Comics only presents another example of this dynamic, but it is a particularly clear one, given the tight relationships between comics fandom and the comic book industry together.

Interaction between producers and audiences has long been a routine feature of comics publishing. Comic book fandom, like science-fiction fandom before it, grew out of the correspondence culture in letter columns, where fans could distinguish themselves by the commentary they provided back to publishers. Most major publishers, including now defunct companies like EC and Fawcett Comics, organized official fan clubs that simulated contact with creators,[23] even as fan-created publications sprung up to discuss comics and their creators.[24] Finally, the convention circuit provides spaces for creators to meet their publics. With numerous opportunities for readers to interact and communicate with their comics' creators and the relatively low barriers to entry referenced above, it is perhaps easier for them to imagine becoming (if not actually to become) a comics producer than in large-scale, highly capitalized cultural industries. There were, moreover, numerous, celebrated examples of

fans who had already made this transition, providing a template for their prospective careers.

Superman creators Siegel and Shuster and influential editors like Schwarz and Mort Weisinger came out of science-fiction fandom, while many of the second generation of comics creators, beginning with Roy Thomas's tenure as a writer/editor at Marvel, were dedicated comic book fans. Gordon has traced the biographies of regular contributors to the *Superman* and *Action Comics* letters columns to show that the discursive community of fans nurtured many careers – "creative" or otherwise – in and around comics. Echoing Shank, Gordon writes, "Fans could aspire to be professionals. Fans who became professionals looked to the fan community for emerging talent."[25] We might conceptualize the comic books themselves as "boundary objects,"[26] simultaneously objects of both artists' creative-productive and fans' creative-interpretative practices. Their mutual-orientation to the same objects, their dependence on the same institutions (e.g., Diamond Comics Distributors and specialty retailers[27]) and, ultimately, on one another, generates a dense knot of activity. Within this nexus, the distinction between leisure and labor fades away like the Fantastic Four's Invisible Woman.

Among survey respondents, an overwhelming majority identified themselves as fans. Nine out of ten people agreed with the statement, "I am a comics fan."[28] This general pattern holds across publishing sectors and most occupational roles. Pearson's chi-square test suggests that fan identity and job satisfaction interact in some way,[29] but there is no clear trend to the relationship: on the one hand, between forty and fifty percent of respondents say they are satisfied or very satisfied with their work situation regardless of level of fan identity; on the other hand, half the people who are very dissatisfied with their work still strongly identify as fans. "Fan" is typically a term used to describe forms of consumption and leisure, but comics creators do not construct this identity in opposition to work, which is not surprising given that, on average, respondents derive only thirty-five percent of their income from creative work in comics.

Nonetheless, eighty-four percent of surveyed creators agree that making comics is their "dream job," versus only one-third who describe it as "a job like any other." It is also worth noting that nearly

ninety percent of respondents agreed that their work in comics is "creatively fulfilling." But the merging of fannish leisure with professional labor is most clearly indicated by remarkably high levels of *job involvement* and *work centrality* exhibited by survey respondents. Paullay et al. define the former as "the degree to which one is cognitively preoccupied with, engaged in, and concerned with one's present job," and the latter as "the beliefs that individuals have regarding the degree of importance that work plays in their lives."[30] Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with various statements about the importance of work.[31] Figure 1 displays distribution of responses to some of these measures of work centrality and job involvement. The picture that emerges is of a creative workforce heavily invested in their jobs. For instance, three-quarters of respondents say that most of their personal goals are connected to work, while seventy percent agree that they are so involved in their work that "it is often hard to say where work ends and leisure begins." Distinctions between kinds of work – affectively engaging and fulfilling work in comics, on the one hand, and uncreative "day jobs," on the other[32] – may be more salient than the conventional opposition between work and leisure.

In general, respondents are satisfied with their work and with their overall life situation. Perhaps most tellingly, only sixteen percent would go into a different occupation, given the choice. More research remains to be done on how comics creators
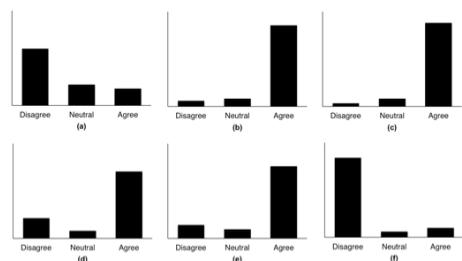

Fig. 1: Comic creators are affectively engaged with their work, based on agreement with the following statements: (a) "My leisure time matters to me more than work"; (b) "I take an interest in current developments in comics"; (c) "I am proud to tell others that I work in comics"; (d) "I'm so involved in my work it is often hard to say where work ends and leisure begins"; (e) "Most of my personal goals are connected to work"; and (f) "If you have money, there's no reason to work. In each chart, the maximum value on the y-axis is 100%.

weigh the risks and rewards of their careers, but it is nonetheless clear from the data that, for good or ill, respondents are affectively invested in their work as comics creators.

Discussion

"Do what you love, and you'll never work a day in your life." In recent years, the ideal of the creative life – as encapsulated in this slogan – has become yet another way that workers, and especially those whose work has a significant affective, emotional or creative component, have been encouraged to undervalue their labor. That is to say, the neoliberal project has involved not only changing the *conditions* under which work is performed and remunerated but also the normative underpinnings of wage labor as such. Weber's Protestant ethic has given way to a Romantic one. Colin Campbell was concerned with how Romanticism might provide the cultural basis for the development of consumerism,[33] but the Romantic imperative to seek self-realization in creative expression – live one's life as a work of art – and the figure of the bohemian artist also impact the sphere of work and production.[34]

When the subjective rewards of work are highly valued, one may accept objectively poor conditions, including excessive amounts of un- or underpaid work, in order to "follow your bliss." The great cloud of aspiring and pro-am workers constitutes a reserve army of creative labor, exerting downward pressure of wages and working conditions. In the media work literature, this phenomenon has been labeled "self-exploitation." There are good reasons to be cautious of this terminology, reminiscent as it is of the "false consciousness" discourse, yet it names a real phenomenon. To put it in a Weberian rather than Marxian vocabulary, individual commitment to the value-rational proposition or end of creative fulfillment can distort formally rational evaluations of means and, thereby, result in less satisfactory collective outcomes. The dreams and passions ignited by participation in fan communities are an obvious source of such "distortions."

While discourses of craft labor have long coexisted with and challenged the Romantic conception of artistic genius, the problem of fannish self-exploitation is relatively new. Building on the more general antinomy between production and consumption, the "do what you love" discourse implies that leisure is an entirely separate sphere from labor, one of freedom rather than necessity. It simultaneously offers creative work as the exception that proves the rule, transcending the binary of work and play. Perversely, this devalues both creative and "uncreative" work – the former because, aligned with leisure and hobbies, it is presumptively something that the worker would do anyway for non-commerical motivations; the latter because it is mere drudgery and, therefore, not supposed to be fulfilling. As Sayer suggests, the distribution of good and bad, creative and "uncreative" work is a question of justice.[35]

Conclusion

One reading of the precarization thesis is that the future of creative work (and, if McRobbie is correct, work in general[36]) looks an awful lot like the past and present of work in comics. But even bad jobs can *feel* rewarding and fulfilling. As John Locke teaches us, to mix one's labor with something is, in some primitive sense, to make it "yours." This feeling of ownership and involvement, even in the absence of legal status as author or rightsholder,[37] should be familiar to the creators and fans of comics alike.

Criticizing self-exploitation and the "do what you love" ethic would seem to put one in the awkward position of being against this deeply felt sense of involvement. But, as Miya Tokumitsu writes, this misses the point:

> No one is arguing that enjoyable work should be less so. But emotionally satisfying work is still work, and acknowledging it as such doesn't undermine it in any way. Refusing to acknowledge it, on the other hand, opens the door to the most vicious exploitation and harms all workers.[38]

Creative jobs – like most jobs – offer a mix of good and bad qualities,[39] but as Jason Toynbee, drawing on Wayne, suggests, creative work is "special" insofar as it points to what work *could* be: autonomous, fulfilling, and above all free.[40] Yet we live and work under conditions of unfreedom, and if a price is to be put on our labor power, then we ought

to negotiate that price with eyes wide open. Thus, the challenge is to advance a notion of creative labor *as labor*, rather than as an expression of passion, in order that creators might better evaluate the costs and benefits of the jobs they take.

Recent scholarship has pointed to elements of fan activity that are labor-like,[41] but I have shown one way fandom – a key concept in audience and reception studies – can be linked with the labor turn in media studies. Making sense of creative labor today means mapping the ways that people circulate between media fandom and media work.

We can and should attend to the material and immaterial labor by which fans add value to cultural commodities, but we can and should also turn this question around: what happens when wage labor (or work done "for exposure") is experienced as an expression of one's fandom? The cultural field is never only a field of cultural production in the narrow sense. No matter how enjoyable it may be, everything that creates value is work, so for the sake of fans and creators alike, we need a more holistic picture of how it is generated, captured, and directed within the leisure–labor nexus.

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Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Bart Beaty, "The Recession and the American Comic Book Industry: From Inelastic Cultural Good to Economic Integration," *Popular Communication* 8, no. 3 (2010), doi:10.1080/15405702.2010.493421.
2. As Suzanne Scott and others have noted, measuring the audience of comics has proven notoriously difficult, with self-serving corporate research and impressionistic accounts from retailers and participants being our primary sources of information. However, a series of posts by Brett Schenker on the blog *Graphic Policy* (http://graphicpolicy.com/tag/facebook-fandom/) provides some insight into the make-up of comic fans using Facebook "likes" as a metric. Certainly, non-male and to a lesser extent non-white and non-heterosexual audience members have been making themselves more visible recently. On the other hand, Mel Stanfill suggests that conventional images of geeky consumers as straight, white men have always obscured actually existing diversity within fandom. Scott, "Fangirls in Refrigerators: The Politics of (In)Visibility in Comic Book Culture," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 13 (2013), http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/460/384, ¶2.6; Stanfill, "Doing Fandom, (Mis)Doing Whiteness: Heteronormativity, Racialization, and the Discursive Construction of Fandom," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 8 (2011), http://journal.transformativeworks.com/index.php/twc/article/view/256/243.
3. In 2014, Marvel and the Kirby estate announced a settlement of their legal dispute. As a result, Marvel announced that it would begin including a "created by Jack Kirby" credit on works featuring characters or teams he originated.
4. The strip can be viewed at: http://comicsalliance.com/russ-heaths-comic-about-being-ripped-off-by-roy-lichtenstein-will-give-you-a-new-appreciation-for-the-hero-initiative/.
5. A note on the survey: This is the first systematic study of labor in English-language comics production. Respondents were recruited from a number of channels (including creators credited in comics listed for sale in randomly selected issues of the *Previews* catalog, creators exhibiting at one of five 2013 comic conventions or festivals, and through social media referrals); however, without a reliable sampling frame probability methods had to be abandoned. 570 responses were submitted through the project website between November 2013 and February 2014. The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board approved the recruitment procedures and the survey instrument.
6. Harvey Zorbaugh, "Editorial," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 18, no. 4 (1944); Zorbaugh, "The Comics—There They Stand!" *Journal of Educational Sociology* 18, no. 4 (1944).
7. Amy Kiste Nyberg, *Seal of Approval: The History of the Comics Code* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998); Bart Beaty, *Fredric Wertham and the Critique of Mass Culture: A Re-Examination of the Critic Whose Congressional Testimony Sparked the Comics Code* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005).
8. Beaty, "Recession."
9. Bart Beaty, *Comics versus Art: Comics in the Art World* (University of Toronto Press, 2012).
10. Mark C. Rogers, "Understanding Production: The Stylistic Impact of Artisan and Industrial Methods," *International Journal*

of Comic Art 8, no. 1 (2006).

11. Glen Norcliffe and Olivero Rendace, "New Geographies of Comic Book Production in North America: The New Artisan, Distancing, and the Periodic Social Economy," *Economic Geography* 79, no. 3 (2003).

12. Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 95–96

13. Göran Bolin, "Media Technologies, Transmedia Storytelling and Commodification," in *Ambivalence towards Convergence: Digitalization and Media Change*, ed. Tanja Storsul and Dagny Stuedahl (Göteborg: Nordicom, 2007), 245.

14. Jared Gardner, *Projections: Comics and the History of Twenty-First-Century Storytelling* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012); Ian Gordon, *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture, 1890-1945* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998)

15. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 105.

16. John Thornton Caldwell, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 264.

17. Gordon, *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture*, 133.

18. Walter R. Sadler, "Free Lance Artists, Work for Hire, and the Copyright Act of 1976," *UC Davis Law Review* 15 (1981); John Molinaro, "Who Owns Captain America-Contested Authorship, Work-for-Hire, and Termination Rights under the Copyright Act of 1976," *Georgia State University Law Review* 21 (2004); Catherine L. Fisk, "Authors at Work: The Origins of the Work-for-Hire Doctrine," *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities* 15 (2003).

19. Gordon, *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture*, 133–34.

20. Paddy Johnston, "*Bad Machinery* and the Economics of Free Comics: A Small Press Case Study" (paper presented at the Fifth International Graphic Novel and Comics Conference, London, July 18–20, 2014).

21. Angela McRobbie, "Clubs to Companies: Notes on the Decline of Political Culture in Speeded Up Creative Worlds," *Cultural Studies* 16, no. 4 (2002); Miranda Campbell, *Out of the Basement: Youth Cultural Production in Practice and in Policy* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013).

22. Barry Shank, *Dissonant Identities: The Rock'n'Roll Scene in Austin, Texas* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 131.

23. Gardner, *Projections*, 99.

24. Fredric Wertham, *The World of Fanzines* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973).

25. Ian Gordon, "Writing to Superman: Towards an Understanding of the Social Networks of Comic-Book Fans," *Participations: Journal of Audience & Reception Studies* 9, no. 2 (2012): 123.

26. Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, "Institutional Ecology, 'Translations' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907–39," *Social Studies of Science* 19, no. 3 (1989).

27. Benjamin Woo, "The Android's Dungeon: Comic-Bookstores, Cultural Spaces, and the Social Practices of Audiences," *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 2, no. 2 (2011).

28. A comparable proportion also identify as "artists," while 75% agree that they are a craftsperson. These three identities might be seen as mutually exclusive, but a large proportion of respondents apparently do not share that view.

29. The fan identity question had dimensions reduced in order to increase the count in each cell. One cell (or 5%) still had an expected count less than 5. The test statistic (χ^2 = 25.832) was significant at the .05 level.

30. Irina M. Paullay, George M. Alliger, and Eugene F. Stone-Romero, "Construct Validation of Two Instruments Designed to Measure Job Involvement and Work Centrality," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 79, no. 2 (1994): 225.

31. Items were adapted from Robert R. Hirschfeld and Hubert S. Feild, "Work Centrality and Work Alienation: Distinct Aspects of a General Commitment to Work," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 21, no. 7 (2000).

32. Paddy Johnston, "Comics and the Day Job: Cartooning and Work in Jeffrey Brown and James Kochalka's *Conversation #2*," *Comics Forum*, 2013, http://comics forum.org/2013/12/17/comics-and-the-day-job-cartooning-and-work-in-jeffrey-brown-and-james-kochalkas-conversation-2-by-paddy-johnston/.

33. Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

34. Sarah Brouillette, *Literature and the Creative Economy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014), chaps. 2 and 3.

35. Andrew Sayer, "Contributive Justice and Meaningful Work," *Res Publica* 15, no. 1 (2009).

36. Angela McRobbie, *Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Culture Industries* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, forthcoming)

37. Matt Stahl, "Privilege and Distinction in Production Worlds: Copyright, Collective Bargaining, and Working Conditions in Media Making," in *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, ed. Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks, and John Thornton Caldwell (New York: Routledge, 2009).

38. Miya Tokumitsu, "In the Name of Love," *Jacobin*, 2014, https://www.jacobinmag .com/2014/01/in-the-name-of-love/.

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41. See, e.g., the articles in Mel Stanfill and Megan Condis, eds., "Fandom And/As Labor," spec. iss., *Transformative Works and Cultures* 15 (2014), http://journal .transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/issue/view/16.