

# Exploring the “Zine”

Adam Romano

Adam Romano – Intern - 2023  
SALEM ART ASSOCIATION 600 Mission St. SE, Salem, Or 97302

## Introduction

This report was compiled for the Salem Art Association in Salem, Oregon by Adam Romano, acting as an intern, utilizing a relatively small collection of available research books and e-books on the subject of zine culture, humanities, and art history. These works, listed at the end of the report, were used as reference. They they do not encompass the entire history or even every aspect of zine culture, nor does this brief history compiled by Mr. Romano. As with all underground and counter-culture aspects of society, there exist many nuances and unique individuals/moments that cannot all be understood or found when compiling an overview such as this. With that in mind, please enjoy this short overview of zine history.

*Adam Romano - Intern - Salem Art Association*

*[www.SalemArt.org](http://www.SalemArt.org)*

*[www.AdamRomano.Art](http://www.AdamRomano.Art)*



## 1. What is a Zine?

I was first introduced to the idea of a “zine” through my involvement in the punk rock music scene of the early 2000s. At the time, I lived in a rural Arizonan town, four hours’ drive from any cultural hub, and I didn’t feel any real connection to other punk rock music scenes. I did, however, read books and watch videos about what other scenes were like. I especially gravitated to how the American 1980s and 1990s punk scenes and D.I.Y. (do-it-yourself) ethos made punk feel accessible to me.

Watching documentaries about that time and style made me feel like I could pick up an instrument and start a band. Punk made me feel like I could attend a show at the local small venue and be accepted. Punk made me feel as if I could create and develop my own anti-establishment culture. Without understanding what it was, I began to see and hear the word “zine” pop up in those books and videos I explored. Years later, after I dove headfirst into the tattoo subculture and traveled the country, I again encountered the “zine.” After being a tattooist for many years, I relished the opportunity to travel to visit conventions and mingle with large groups of artists and collectors. Tattoo conventions included rows of artists practicing their craft and selling their wares while throngs of fans, collectors, and curious observers walked the halls. At one such convention in San Diego, CA, I noticed a friend of mine selling small, self-published packets of his own art with no words except a title and name on the cover. There it was: a “zine.”

The term “zine” first appeared in the 1970s and has been confusingly and hilariously mispronounced ever since (Triggs, p.10). A “zine” (pronounced like *maga-zine*) is a self-published form of communication that enables people to creatively manifest and share their thoughts with others (Spencer, p.13). Zines can be both artistic and not, literary and not, political and not. They are underground, counter-culture, subculture, and anti-culture. Zines have been made by fans, artists, punk rockers, LGBTQ+ community members, critics, writers, sports enthusiasts, beatniks, activists, students,

and countless others. Professionals and amateurs alike have edited, published, and distributed zines. Zines “are forums in which their producers articulate their view of the world around them” (Triggs, p.12). Teal Triggs stated that zines share “a moment in time” (p.12). In this way, it can be argued that zines are an extension of the category of “genre painting” in fine art. Genre painting was developed in 17<sup>th</sup> century as painters created scenes that represented contemporary life (Davies et al., p.661). Painters represented life around them. And, as historians look back upon genre paintings, they are able to connect to what life may have been like in that time. A similar thing occurs when historians look back upon zines created in the 1900s. A biased “snapshot” of a person’s life and culture can be observed when flipping through the pages of a zines.

Zines have provided an outlet of communication for American fans of science fiction, music, and culture from the 1930s to the present (Wertham, p.38). Zines, in the form of the little magazine, provided a means for the beat generation writers like Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac as a way to promote themselves, the scene, and their writing while at the same time challenging authority (Dunn, p.163). Zine writers gave a voice to queer culture in New York City as early as the 1970s (Spencer, p.39). Zines were published by punks in the 70s and 80s (mainly in the U.S. and the U.K. but additionally all over the world) as a rejection of the post-hippie consumer culture and to connect the “dispersed scene” (Duncombe, p.61 & 111). Zines were published by “alternative” rockers and Riot Grrls in the U.S. and across the world in the 1990s, delivering a personal and bohemian counter-culture outlet (Spencer, p.199 – 201 & 292). Zines can also serve as a collection of student authors sharing their stories (“Ovis”). Going a little father back to the 1700s, Benjamin Franklin published a zine, although it was under a different label (Spencer, p.175). Franklin communicated with what was called a political pamphlet but had all the characteristics of a modern zine. In fact, due to the invention of cheaper printing options, countries all around the world have been self-publishing for the last 300 years (Bulson, p.268). Zines served as a way to connect members of various subcultures in the pre-internet world, and, interestingly,

still continue to be published in paper form and online as digital e-zines. It is important to note that zines began as a precursor to blog and internet communication, but still flourish in their physical form today (Spencer, p.70-93). People always seek a way in which to connect to community. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, writers such as Stephen Duncombe, Amy Spencer, and Fredric Wertham (plus others) had explored the zine culture in academic studies. During the 1990s, zine culture (led by these authors and other zinesters-turned-authors) had brought the subculture into the conventional media, as “*TIME* magazine reported that 20,000 [zine] titles were produced in the United States” (Triggs, p.7). The mainstream had caught up with the underground.

Categorically, there are various terms and genres that can apply, or are similar, to the term *zine*, including *little magazine*, *fanzine*, and *the underground press*, as I will discuss in detail later. Technically, zines are created by using a variety of printing techniques that change with the time—and with what is available. At times, photocopy machines and mimeographs were used, each a different way to recreate and reprint images (Triggs, 9). Other times, cutouts of collaged words and images were rearranged on paper to create new words and imagery. Sometimes, zines were hand-drawn and hand-written. One design aspect usually connects all zines: a bit of “chaos” mixed within the visual layout (Trigg, p.9). Design principles are applied in the graphic object of a zine and help to tell story in addition to the words that are chosen (Triggs, p.13). In this way, visual communication via the design included in zines can be linked to a similar design of comics and comic books.

When comparing the various forms of self-published collections, the zine and the fanzine might be most related. One important connecting aspect of the nature of modern zines and science fiction fanzines is that their creators sought to build a community of like-minded individuals by publishing readers’ letters in their publications and fostering extensive trade, exchange, and forming distribution networks (Wertham, p.97). Werthem emphasized the importance of communication in the zine community when he stated “they do not want to erect fences, but to build bridges” (p.38). People that

are marginalized from greater society or have anti-social tendencies still feel the need to connect to fellow humans.

Since access to the computer has become increasingly prevalent in modern society, a further connection may be made between modern blog writers and zine creators. When comparing previous zine culture to the blog culture of 2007, Stephen Duncombe, however, argues that the blog culture does not build community as well as the zine subculture (p.212). Regardless, the physical creation of zines still flourishes despite, or perhaps in spite of, today's digital atmosphere.

To explore more about the different groups of people that create zines, see page 162 of Kevin Dunn's *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life* or search through modern online databases and/or ask your local librarian. To read a more personal account about an author's connection to the zine culture, visit pages 6 and 7 of Stephen Duncombe's *Notes from the Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture*. To experience a small, yet well-represented, presentation of zine imagery without having to dive into record store and library collections, take a look at the large number of photocopied zines in *Fanzines: the DIY Revolution* by Teal Triggs, including the non-American art zines on page 224 and 225. One can even visit the New York State Library to see the zine archive's collection of "tens of thousands" of zines (Duncombe, p.7). Whatever your form of access: seek, and you shall find.

## **2. A Brief History of Zines**

While self-publishing has a history that spans hundreds of years, the history of the zine (for our purposes) may be said to only span nearly 100 years (Dunn, p.163). In the United States, for example, there existed self-published literary magazines from Benjamin Franklin in the 1700s and self-published political pamphlets from Thomas Paine around the same time period (Dunn, p.163). The zine does have connections to these historical examples, however, the format and art style of the contemporary zine

can more closely be credited to the Dada art movement in Europe of the early twentieth century. (Dunn, p.163; Spencer, p.101-2). The Dadaists were a group of international intellectuals that, protesting World War I and acting as pacifists, met in Zurich, Switzerland and went on to create a new artistic subculture (Dickerman, p.19). This avant-garde art movement was first formed to create ridiculous art as a way for the artists and writers to protest, and come to terms with, the mass influx of new technology and the grim war-filled life of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Dickerman, p.2). The movement spread to many different cities (Berlin, Hannover, Cologne, New York, Paris) but first started in Zurich as independent thinkers of all kinds met in the neutral country of Switzerland during the horrors of the war (Dickerson, p.19). Further understanding of this new art form can be found in Amy Spencer's thorough explanation: "Dadaism (whose name derives from the baby-talk syllables 'da-da') was a radical international movement in literature and art that called for a complete break with tradition and the systemic destruction of culture and of civilization" (p.123). Spencer is astute in her description, and the dada movement has been credited as the main influencer of many later avant-garde styles of art. While only active from 1915 - 1922, these Dada artists experimented with many styles that would later be adapted by future artists that wanted to push the limits and challenge contemporary art world standards. Dada techniques included styles that would later be adopted by zine makers in the punk rock music scene of the 1970s: collage, detournement, and appropriation (Spencer, p.123). The latter two terms are similar to collage, yet they involve "subverting established ideas" and adapting "mainstream culture for their own purposes," respectively (Spencer, p.123). John Held Jr. also notes that the lettering styles adapted in later zines is very reminiscent of the style used in "pre-revolutionary Russian avant-garde, especially in their use of the rubber stamp in producing artists' books" (Spencer, p.135). The Dadaists, however, did create small self-published art zines (Dunn, p.164). There also are roots of zine culture communication in the Dadaist movement, as Marcel Duchamp (a Dadaist and artist) first used the post to mail art and his artistic ideas to others, forming rich networks (Spencer, p.129).

Another art group of the 1950s to 1970s, known as “The Situationist International,” created small magazines of extremely abstract art and text that they distributed randomly through the mail to names chosen out of a phone book (Spencer, p.126; Dunn, p.164). One key note of interest, this group of Situationists displayed the characteristics of trying to form deep roots of community and communication by applying an “anti-copyright notice” to their works, allowing anyone at all to use their art and text (Spencer, p.126). The anti-mainstream and anti-establishment act of using this anti-copyright notice displays their interest in building community, as well as their interest in creating a community that does not follow the same rules as the mainstream - a crucial component to later zine culture, especially of the punk and political zines of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. It should also be noted that art and creativity appear in all zines, in some form or another, be it crude stick figures, interesting cut and paste lettering, elaborate fantasy imagery, or comic strips (Wertham, p.107; Spencer, p.122). Art and zine culture are interconnected.

The literary “little magazines” also have much in common with the format of the contemporary zine. Eric Bulson stated that little magazines originated in Japan, Argentina, European countries, the Caribbean, and African countries to share literary works from locals that detested the publishing status quo and to “accommodate independent national literature” (p.267). Bulson pointed out the worldly origins of the little magazine and their connection to India’s political pamphlets of the 1940s when he stated that little magazines were “not born in the west, we identify it [little magazines] as being bred in the birth of European modernism, yet little mags have their birth in non-west countries - like Japan and Argentina” (p. 268). The little magazines were literary based self-publications, consisting of reviews, small poetry, and stories. For national writers in African and Caribbean countries, they served as a way to share their own stories, away from the racism and tokenism of the larger European and American based publishing companies, with people in their own countries (Bulson, p.267-68). Little magazines can



help describe the basis of what a zine is (small press), but do not provide an exact definition. However, it could be stated that the little magazine is another terminus of the zine.

It is perhaps the fanzine that acts as the most direct precursor to the modern zine. The first fanzine was published in 1930 as a way for fans to gush over and discuss science fiction and fantasy literature.<sup>1</sup> The term originated as “fan-magazine” and “fan-mag,” evolving into the work “fanzine” coined by Louis Russel Chauvenet in the 1940s.<sup>2</sup> Fanzines were generally science fiction and/or fantasy based while the content consisted of: sharing critiques on literature, television, music, and movies; articles ranging from science, collections, hobbies, nostalgia, other zines, literature, and comics; and “discussion forums,” announcements, and reports from conventions (Wertham, p.91-123). These “discussion forums” were fan-written letters to the editors that were published in the pages of the fanzine and began the community-based aspect of fanzine culture, as the editors would publish the return addresses of these letters, building a network for fans to communicate amongst themselves (Spencer, p.94 -95). Usually, fanzines of this variety also contained a large amount of satire, reflecting the way in which the fanzine subculture of the time connected to the mainstream (Wertham, p.110). Fanzines were created by the maker to directly share their fandom with others. Fanzines were created as a form of communication (by, to, and within the subculture) directly opposed to (and outside of) the commercial world (Wertham, p.123). Fanzine creators had no interest in commercial profits, they only sought creativity and community. After all, as Amy Spencer wrote, “why would anyone spend their entire week’s wages producing a zine?” (p.97). Fanzine creators cared only for the love of their particular interest and in spreading that love with others. Fredric Wertham stated that fanzines creators

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<sup>1</sup> Fredric Wertham describes on page 38 of *World of Fanzines: A Special Form of Communication* that “according to Linda Bushyager, in *Granfalloon* 9, quoting Bob Tucker, and an authority on early fantasy amateur publications, the first one came out in 1930. It was called *The Comet* and dealt with science and science fiction.”

<sup>2</sup> Spencer, page 95, referencing Don Fitch of [www.zinebook.com](http://www.zinebook.com).

have an “urge to create and thereby to communicate in a special way with others who are like-minded” (p.119). Fanzines of the 1930s to 70s, just like later zines, were primarily a form of communication between and among members of the subculture. Fanzines are, however, a distinct branch of self-publishing that is different than the zine.

There does, as well, seem to be a distinction between fanzines, zines, and “underground press,” as the latter deals with socio-political issues and is generally “anti-establishment” (Wertham, p.77). Fredric Wertham also made note that there is wide distribution of underground press and that the label of “underground” is a bit of a misnomer (Wertham, p.77). Underground press and newspapers deal with socio-political issues of anti-consumerism, generally share counter-establishment ideologies, and are fairly widely distributed, especially when compared to the distribution of the zine—a job which is also done by the zine creator/editor. It can be very difficult for the zinester (the zine-creator) to create a single issue, as they must have means to create, raw material, time, and ability to distribute via created or existing distribution channels. Creating a zine is usually a sole endeavor, as opposed to the group effort that entailed creating an issue of an underground press newspaper, little magazine, or a commercial magazine. Underground press, therefore, is a more group involved activity.

Starting with the fanzine, the main mode of distribution for some of these self-published works was direct trades and swaps, something that still proliferates within the zine culture today (Spencer, p.15). This direct trade resulted in a “code of ethic” in regards to *wanting* to swap zines and *wanting* to publish letters from readers; a specific culture of the zine was formed (Spencer, p.15). This culture of community was not as prevalent in the world of the little magazine, which existed mainly as a way for writers to share their literature via self-publishing (Spencer, p.99). Word-of-mouth, record stores, mail order, and direct connections at symposiums and conventions are another effective mode of zine distribution and awareness (Triggs, p.7). Zinesters used, and continue to use, the D.I.Y. approach to

create and re-create a variety of forms of distribution. Zinesters will use whatever means necessary to self-distribute their material.

One must realize that when categorizing aspects of underground culture, members of that scene are bound to disagree on terminology. The underground is about crafting one's own culture against the mainstream. Therefore, any clear labels of definition will place members within mainstream values and customs, which the underground so adamantly works against. However, categorization and terminology can be helpful when examining aspects of the self-publishing world, as specific differences do exist between each form. These ascribed labels should be understood as fluid, but applying them to the exercise of understanding can allow the reader to further gather a deeper understanding of all aspects of the zine culture.

### **3. Exploring the Format and Origins**

Fredric Wertham claimed that the fanzine was different from the little magazine created and used in America, Europe, Caribbean, and African countries (p.78). First and foremost, the little magazine was a strictly literary form of self-publication as compared to the fanzines' exploration of various science-fiction and fantasy medium including television, movies, *and* literature (Wertham, p.76). The little magazine was used to share literature from writers that could not, and did not want to, be apart of the publishing culture that came mostly out of Paris, London, and New York (Bulson, p.267 - 274). The little magazine also had its roots in the subculture of political pamphlets from the 1940s India, a culture whose writers were able to contest many wrongs that they had witnessed (Bulson, p.268). Just like later zines, the pamphlets of India were able to be spread easily. Herein lies the main draw of editors to create self-published work: They are easily created, and easily spread. The distribution line can be vast (by strange connections) or it can be small, sometimes centered to one city or neighborhood. In this

way, the creation of the pamphlet was a political act of connecting to and building a community, much like zines of the 1970s, 80s, and 90s in the U.S. punk rock culture (Dunn, p.165).

Fanzines from 1930 up until the 1970s in America consisted mostly of science fiction, sword & sorcery, and fantasy writings and “discussion forums” via reader’s letters that were published. These “discussion forums” and analysis-based writings gave the editor, writer, and creator (often the same person) a playground to develop ideas that were first touched upon *within* science fiction, sword and sorcery, and fantasy literature. For an example of popular literature explored, works by H.P. Lovecraft and J.R.R. Tolkien held a “prominent place” in fanzines of this time (Wertham, p.55). Fredric Wertham stated that fanzines are “Americana,” pointed out that they exist in other countries, and downplayed that existence (p.66)<sup>3</sup>. Wertham often approached his research with a bias, so his work must continuously be re-examined. Wertham’s research, however, is a good place to begin when examining the culture of fanzines and little magazines.

The fundamental difference that Fredric Wertham makes when comparing fanzines to little magazines is that fanzines gave a place for fans of these genres (and authors) to disseminate and build upon mythologies, while the little magazine focused on “mainstream” literature (the little magazine was also political in that it allowed people to freely read and distribute their own national literature—a point that Wertham fails to mention) (p.78). The fact that Wertham downplayed the political aspect of the little magazine is substantial when one understands the elitist and powerful control over literature that

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that Wertham’s other writings have been contentious, as his book “Seduction of the Innocent” has had criticism from Carol L. Tilly who stated that Wertham “manipulated, overstated, compromised, and fabricated evidence” to make his point that comics were the cause of teen violence (p.47).

major publishing companies had at the time. In this way, the little magazine is more related to the fanzines, zines, and the underground press, than Wertham gave them credit for.

The zine is fundamentally different from other forms of self-publishing previously discussed mainly because of one factor: the zine is raw. Freedom can be found in the creation of a zine, as can the freedom of expression. One is able to put together a series of words, pictures, anything really, and allow others to peer into their mind. In this way, the raw format, even with bad punctuation and spelling, is celebrated. Readers are alright with errors because they know that the zine was created with love, with anger, and with purpose. Zines allow one to create “their own space” within a culture that they don’t connect with (Spencer, p.16). The zine culture of the 1970s, 80s, and 90s flourished because people sought a sense of connectivity. Previously, connectivity was achieved for people in the underground through the fanzine from the 1930s to the 1960s, when they began to become less popular. In the 1960s, connectivity in America was achieved through the underground press, yet governmental and political opposition crushed that budding subculture, an aspect of history that will be discussed in further detail in an upcoming chapter. One key difference found when comparing the underground press to the zine is that the underground press in America during the 1950s and 60s was generally socio-political, while the zines created around that time were literary and artistic (Wertham, p.77). However, zines *can* be political, literary, *and* artistic. One key point when discussing zine culture is the connection that all zines have with art via their graphic representation.

The artistic aspect of zine culture (in terms of the 1970s punk aesthetic and today’s hand-created zine) still celebrates the previously mentioned Dada-inspired “cut and paste” method of production. Modern zines even used a similar aesthetic in the e-zine versions of their issues (Triggs, p.181). The aesthetic is collectively bleak, simple, and almost utilitarian. It conjures images of anti-governmental authority as well, as another precursor to this zine style can be found in the “pre-revolutionary Russian avant-garde...rubber stamp...artist books” (Quote from John Held, JR. via Spencer,

p.136). This style of art was a “revolt” against Russian government and authoritarianism, showing up as a direct influence to Americans by as early as the 1980s (Quote from John Held, JR via Spencer, p.136). Nothing in the art world, or modern culture for that matter, is “new.” One can often find much earlier connections to vibrant “anti” styles that develop later mainstream success. The zine culture, therefore, is an amalgamation of many different aspects of high and low culture, from all over world.

#### 4. An Exploration of Punk, D.I.Y, and Queercore

The punk rock music scene of the late 1970s and early 1980s championed the D.I.Y. mentality. Zines flourished at this time and appropriated the Dada and Russian avant-garde influence of “subverting established images” of culture (Spencer, p.123 & 135). Their imagery represented dissent and rebellion against the established norm (Triggs, p.12). Some of the first photocopied and hand-made punk zines include *Punk*, in New York City, and *Back Door Man*, in California (Dunn, p.165). Another of these seminal punk zine publications was *Sniffin’ Glue* from the U.K. It’s maker, Mark Perry, stated that “nobody can define punk-rock” (Triggs, p. 45; *Sniffin’ Glue*, Issue 1). Punk rock was a musical style and culture that was so anti-consumer and anti-mainstream, they even rejected labels. Punk began, depending on who you ask, in the late 1960s, early, 1970s, or late 1970, coinciding with the formation of bands like The Stooges in Detroit (1960s), the Ramones in New York City (early 1970s), or the Sex Pistols in England (late 1970s) (Triggs, p.45). Beyond music, punk culture had an influence on “fashion, fine art, film, comics, novels, and, of course, fanzines” (Triggs, P.45). The zine in punk culture became *the* main form of communication between scenes and where the most amount of information was spread, as the mainstream initially rejected the culture.

The zine was the “only reliable way of disseminating information about the music and the movement itself,” as D.I.Y. was the mantra of the movement (Triggs, p.45). Zinesters interviewed band members, shared new and upcoming band information and tour schedules, and proliferated the visual style of the “graphic language of punk fanzines” (Triggs, p.45 & 46). The term “punk” was even

supposedly coined by a zinester, as Legs McNeil (co-founder of the zine *Punk*) claims that his zine was the first to use the term (Dunn, p.165). The graphic style of the punk zine was also influenced by Situationist-inspired zinester Jamie Reid during the early years of the 1970s, with his zine *Suburban*, effectively acting as a “bridge between the hippie press and punk fanzines” (Triggs, p.46). Triggs points out that “Reid established the connection visually between Dada, Situationism, and punk” (p.46) As much as punk claimed to be original, individualist, and unique, their negative identity was formed by a rejection of previous mainstream culture and also borrowed from earlier counter-culture elements.

In the early, pre-internet days of punk, zines served as a way to build a network of community (Spencer, p. 188). The widely dispersed and segregated groups of punks popped in in little clusters all over the world, not just in America and the United Kingdom. Stephen Duncombe coined the term “bohemian diaspora” to describe the way in which marginalized members of counter-culture movements are dispersed in little clusters throughout rural areas as well as in city-specific locations (p.60). During the time of the early punk scene (and during every “scene” in the past 300 years that utilized self-publishing) zines acted as “virtual cafes” to connect and link dispersed cultural groups with each other (Duncombe, p.61). The punks were truly a “dispersed scene” and they used the format to stay in contact, and learn from, one another (Duncombe, p.61). Connection was achieved pre-internet via zines.

Punks of the 1970s and 1980s were definitively non-conformist and anti-establishment, yet, with the rise in popularity of aggressive “hardcore” beats and misogynistic lyrics, there slowly began a homogenization of style, aesthetic, and mindset that was very much elitist. Not *inclusive*, but *exclusive*. There existed a subgroup of queer people that were not fully included in the punk rock scene. They were anti-establishment, anti-conformist, and were experienced in pushing the boundaries of societal norms, but were often excluded in the punk community. In the punk world of non-conformity, there evolved a tribalistic mentality that, at times, was extremely exclusionary, despite its original inclusive mentality.

The punk scene of the mid 1980s (and even into 2023) began to develop a machismo atmosphere, creating a vibe that alienated fellow fans of the genre that weren't "punk" enough (Spencer, p.41). Just as humans do, many in the subculture began to look at other members with a critical eye. They began to see some (queer, weird, or different from what the created idea of "punk" was to them) as the "other." In a world of misfits, some were pushed to the fringes; a "disenfranchised minority within a minority" (Bruce LaBruce qtd. in Spencer, p.41). Zines began to be produced by the marginalized members of a marginalized subculture.

Ralph Hall was a champion for the queer scene in New York City in the 1970s and produced the first queer zine (Spencer, p.39). Ralph was a gay man and an activist in the Gay Activists Alliance whose representation of queer culture in self-produced media influenced later queer writers such as Bruce LaBruce and GB Jones (Spencer, p.39). LaBruce and Jones (a gay punk man and a punk lesbian, respectively) were friends that felt disconnected with both subcultures, barely finding their place in either (Spencer, p.39-40). Their friendship was against contemporary norms of the 80s gay scene of Toronto, Canada, and the aggressive "jock" mentality of the mid-1980s punk scene also turned them off to the punk world (Spencer, p.39). In 1985 and 1986, adhering to the D.I.Y. ethos, they created the zine *JDs*, which, Amy Spencer claimed, "is seen by many to be the catalyst that pushed the queercore scene into existence" (Spencer, p.39 - 41). *JDs* was incredibly successful and distributed widely throughout the world, finding an audience in the hands of thousands that felt the same as LaBruce and Jones. The success of a zine, if not judged monetarily, is judged by how well it connects people—by how well it builds community. Monetary aspirations are not of interest to the zine maker, as it would limit the zinesters ability of freedom of speech. Fredric Wertham quoted the editor of a fanzine called *Critique* as once stating that "I think that a fanzine should not be published for the money or for a profit, but rather just to say whatever *you* want" (p. 75). In observing this through-line, one can connect the fanzine of



earlier times with zine culture of the 1980s, seeing how the pursuit of self-expression (and implicit communication) champions the personal challenges that develop when one decides to create a zine.

*JDs* served as a way to communicate with, and to, others that felt the same as Bruce LaBruce and GB Jones. The zine succeeded in its purpose to connect individuals that are marginalized. Individuals that felt alone and isolated were able to create and distribute a zine detailing their creative manifestation of culture, and others gravitated towards it. Hopeful of the future of queercore zines and self-expression through this form of communication, GB Jones stated that “new zines continue to surface, preventing the stagnation that would occur without the influx of new ideas” (Spencer, p.44). After the emergence of *JDs* and many other queer-oriented zines of the 1980s, marginalized members of the LGBTQ+ community continued to find an outlet and means of communication via the D.I.Y. method of zine production and distribution. In the D.I.Y. culture, “everyone is encouraged to create” (Spencer, p.198). Zinesters can be *both* fans of popular culture, *and/or* active creators of new cultural outlets, allowing the mainstream to change and manifest new modes of culture (Spencer, p.198). The active creation of new culture through self-publication can alter the consciousness of mainstream popular culture.

##### **5. Zines for Political Expression, Feminist Expression, and Anti-Consumerism**

By the 1950s and 60s, with the further advancement of technical aspects of printmaking, newsprint became “quick, easy, and cheap” for self-publishers to produce (Spencer, p.140). Beat generation bohemians, in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and the U.K. (including elsewhere in the world) began to voice their unhappiness with post-war politics by coming together and self-publishing underground newspapers (Spencer, p.140). Even anti-war protesters drafted into the U.S. Army created self-published works to criticize their effort in Vietnam (Spencer, p.143). People were beginning to use their voice to celebrate youth culture and combat the status quo of modern politics. The underground press is the term that can best describe the mass amount of media that was published during this era of

political critique. However, the use of political pamphlets throughout the world are not a phenomenon that developed only in this era, and not only in America and the U.K.. As previously mentioned, Eric Bulson stated that the use of the political pamphlet in India in the 1940s influenced change during a revolutionary time (p. 268). In Pre-Revolutionary America, Thomas Paine's political publication *Common Sense* saw between 100,000 and 250,000 copies printed and distributed (Duncombe, p.32). In that same time period, Ben Franklin also self-published political underground press (Spencer, p.175). These examples demonstrate that the political aspect of self-publishing newspapers in the underground press has existed since the technology was available. People use self-published works to criticize government and popular culture. Zines, however, are more of a "personal" account of political ideals (Duncombe, p.33). While zines are not always political, the act of self-publishing can be seen as a political act.

The main difference between zines and the underground press is that the zinester "puts a human face on what are often presented as abstract social forces" (Duncombe, p.34). Since zinesters generally work alone on their zines and cover topics from an "editorial" point of view, the personal is celebrated when these writers discuss political issues. Creators of underground press, however, generally worked with a group of people to accomplish their printing and publishing goals. Additionally, there were financial backers of underground newspapers and, even if an anti-establishment mentality was fostered, the backers ultimately decided what could and what could not get published (Spencer, p.157). Financial backers of underground press censored stories. A zinester can be fully uncensored and provide a free exploration into their personal view of politics and culture. There may have been a personal point of view in underground press, at times, but the format was more closely related to a deviation of popular newspapers than the anarchy-inspired D.I.Y. approach and graphic visual language that is used in zines.

In the late 1960s, roughly 9 million readers were tuning in to underground press for their political information (Duncombe, p.145). Stephen Duncombe's research<sup>4</sup> tells one that the United States government systematically used censorship laws (claiming that the underground press was "un-American") to shut down many publishers (p.145- 147). In the 1970s the underground press was virtually dead. The anti-consumerist style and values of the beat generation were silenced, with many aspects of their bohemian culture adopted and co-opted by mainstream companies to soften their political discourse and mold what was once anti-culture into a mainstream and marketable product. The zines beginning to be produced in the 1970s were formed (not only as a way to discuss music and personal identity) but as a reaction to a silenced political usurpation. Zines returned not in the form of underground press, but in the form of personally created manifestos re-challenging the societal norm of a watered-down culture that took the hopes of political equality and change in the 1960s and regurgitated them into a mushy amalgamation of bell-bottom pants, post-hippie culture, and government corruption. With the underground press essentially dead, the United States government was able to silence unrest and repackage the "cultural revolution" to a capitalist culture. The zinesters of the 1970s, 80s, and 90s were ready to protest.

The act of self-publishing to protest corporate backed media is in itself a political act (Spencer, p.179). Political zines are created to protest policies that the zinesters feel passionately about. Whether it be pro-change or pro-status-quo, zinesters turn to political zine creation as a way to tell their own stories and to illustrate how a certain policy affects them. After the downfall of underground press, mainstream media eventually began to cover topics that were once reserved exclusively for underground outlets. Topics like animal rights, anti-war protests, and sexual liberation are now covered

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<sup>4</sup> Armstrong, David. *A Trumpet to Arms: Alternative Media in America*. (Boston: South End Press, 1981); and Leamer, Lawrence. *The Paper Revolutionaries: The Rise of the Underground Press*. (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1972); and Glessing, Robert J. *The Underground Press in America*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana State University Press, 1970); and Johnson, Michael L. *The New Journalism*. (Wichita, KS: University of Kansas, 1970).

in mainstream media sources, attesting to the fact the underground press actually did make a change in the mainstream culture (Spencer, p.175). The main drawback to the new coverage in media, notably beginning to occur in the 1990s, was that corporate financial backers could ultimately choose what “spin” they wanted to apply to the story – they could determine how a political issue should be portrayed to the public. Increasingly, zinesters of the 1980s and 90s, tired of being “culturally passive consumers,” decided that they wanted to create their own media in protest to these corporate-backed outlets and mass consumerism (Spencer, p.181). Zinesters chose to reject commercial press and the “fetishism” of mainstream society by publishing their own information, without a corporate mission and without advertising (Duncombe, p.118). Zinesters were again able to practice self-expression.

Teal Triggs stated that the “politics of resistance is communicated through graphic language” (p.12). In this way, the format of the zine was perfect for political activism, feminist expression, and anti-consumerism. This form of visual “resistance” was evident in the 1970s punk zine, but also in the pro-feminist zine of the 1990’s Riot Grrrl subculture (Triggs, p.12). While some early feminist zines and glossy magazines *were* published in California and Washington in the 1970s (Spencer, p.47-48). By the 1990’s, this approach seemed too academic. In the early 1990s, the Riot Grrrl culture was founded to promote representation and empowerment of feminism through the self-publication of media via the D.I.Y. approach (Dunn, p.171). There are conflicting stories regarding the formation of Riot Grrrl, yet Kevin Dunned stated that it started life in 1991, as a zine (created by members of the all-female punk band Bratmobile: Allison Wolfe, Molly Neuman, and Jen Smith) *and* as the name attributed to weekly “Riot Grrrl” meetings (organized by Kathleen Hanna of the band, and zine, Bikini Kill and the band Le Tigre) to discuss third wave feminist ideals and to seek representation in the punk scene - representation that existed in the 1980s but had since vanished (p.41). Riot Grrrl (sometimes capitalized by authors and at other times represented in less-formal lowercase) then grew nationally as founding members lead a chapter in Olympia, WA and other members led a chapter in Washington, D.C. (Dunn, p.41). Not only a

strictly zine-based format, Riot Grrrl served as a way to connect women and began to be co-opted by feminists all over the world as the small group that founded the original publication quickly began to head their separate ways (Dunn, p.116). Riot Grrrl-inspired zines and Riot Grrrl culture sprouted up in various communities, all with a focus on identity development, comradery, activism, and feminist representation (Dunn, p.116). In terms of aesthetics, many of the Riot Grrrl zines were influenced by the punk zine and earlier Dada art design, co-opting and subverting mainstream imagery and advertisements to act as a counter to the dominant view (Spencer, p.49). The way in which third wave feminist support had spread (and continues to spread) through Riot Grrrl culture around the world is representative of how sub-culture can grow through the creation of (and network created by) zines and zine culture.

Some aspects of zine culture can also begin in the underground and grow to become mainstream, utilizing many different forms for media. *Maximunrocknroll* is one such example. *Maximunrocknroll* began as a radio show to cover the punk rock music scene in San Francisco in 1977, but eventually became a zine and then, later, morphed into a glossy magazine (Spencer, p.203 & 204). This outlet for the mainstream to approach the punk music scene especially became relevant to popular culture during the “grunge” era of the 1990s. The unique aspects of punk music were redistributed through the grunge scene and into mainstream culture, via channels like *Maximunrocknroll*, which was still in publication when Amy Spencer wrote about the culture in 2011 (p. 204). Low culture, or rather popular culture, can at times begin in the underground and then develop to be accepted on a more mainstream level. Zines even became popular enough, in the 1990s, that a front-page article about the culture was written in *The Wall Street Journal* (Spencer, p.202). Popular culture rose to be recognized by high culture.

There can arise a complication when one’s created identity shifts based on what a society deems as underground or mainstream. Stephen Duncombe noted that there is a contradiction in

building ones' identity around underground culture that rejects mainstream culture, as by rejecting that culture one still allows it to define their existence (p.90 – 91). The negative association becomes more complicated for the zinester when comparing the anti-consumerist mentality of some zinesters with the “mainstream-ization” of zines in the 1990s, as many lower-production-value zines became glossy magazines and began to turn a profit (Triggs, p.8). Commercial and mainstream companies like Urban Outfitters and Warner Brothers even began to produce their own zines (Triggs, p.8). As noted previously, even the punk scene came into mainstream fashion. If zines are only about creating culture around anti-consumerism, where does a zinester fit in when their underground culture becomes mainstream? Do zines only exist to oppose the status quo? No necessarily. Teal Triggs defends zine creation in all forms by stating that anti-consumerism is not the only basis for zine creation, and that sometimes zinesters create only to share small accounts of their experiences and fandom with others (p.10). Zines exist as a form of creative expression and community development, regardless of their content.

## **6. Pre-Internet and Post-Internet Communication**

Fredric Wertham stated that fanzines were traded amongst creators and collectors (p.75). This allowed the culture to grow organically. It was quite the same with zines from the queer community, punk community, and Riot Grrrl community, in addition to other forms of self-published and underground-published media. In today's world, where the internet makes anything available to everyone at the click of a mouse, that organic network represents a certain nostalgia that many in the modern underground hope to reclaim. The fact of the matter is, however, that many early zine makers would have loved the connection and access to community that the internet allows. *Their* community connection just so happened to occur not with keyboards and screens, but with ink and paper. Exchanging zines and letters through a mass underground network was *their* way to connect to community. A pre-internet discussion forum that encapsulated the globe (or at least the extent of that zine's distribution network) was at the tip of the pen for a zinester. One could tap into this network by

receiving a zine in the mail through a direct subscription (Wertham, p.84). Then, the reader could find contact information for other fans and connect directly with them by writing them a letter. This evolved into connections happening between readers *within* the pages of the zine, as creators would publish letters that were in response to other letters (Wertham, p.97). This grid of connection carried over from fanzines to the zines of the 1970s, 80s, and 90s.

There also existed zines dedicated strictly to this network, allowing others to find published zines that connected directly to their culture. One could label these types of zines as pre-internet search engines. One such publication was *Factsheet Five*, a zine review published by Mike Gunderloy starting in 1982 (Spencer, p.28-29). In the 1980s, there was a surge in the community of zine creation, as many zines came into existence (Spencer, p.29). *Factsheet Five* scaled up so that Gunderloy could issue more copies and review more zines. As this happened, many people were introduced to the zine community specifically through *Factsheet Five* (Spencer, p.30). People would skim through *Factsheet Five* to find other zines of interest, and community around specific zines was grown organically. Amy Spencer was keen to observe that these types of connections were a precursor to the modern age when she stated that, “the networks that developed through zine distribution mirror in many ways the internet communities that exist today and can be viewed as one means that people found to spread information before the arrival of the internet” (p.33). A community of interconnected people connected through zines existed long before the internet’s influence on mass culture. The internet did, however, bring many more people into the culture in ways that could not be previously foreseen.

In 1993, the E-Zine List website was published on the internet (Spencer, p.31). By 1999, this site, which originally had shown only 25 zines, had grown to list over 4,000 (Ibid.). It’s publisher, John Labovitz, was on the forefront of the internet revolution that zines were increasing influenced by (Spencer, p.31). Today, small and large zine collections can be found on many sites online. Additionally, there are zine fests and conventions all over the world, each usually offering their own zine lists and

guides. A curious person need only to sit for a few hours on a search engine and they will be flooded with a plethora of zine outlets.

In our post-internet world, people need not find a paper zine (or even an e-zine) to connect with each other, they need only to access apps on their phone. Social media apps are photo-sharing and text-sharing platforms where individuals can share what makes their neighborhood or region interesting. People are able to share photos and text about beautiful natural wonders, interesting local dive-bars and restaurants, home concerts, and art galleries. People can share stories about locations that are “underground” and not a part of mainstream society. However, by publishing an underground spot online, it no longer becomes underground. Because of the nature of the internet, one’s online post or share has the opportunity to be viewed by thousands, even millions of people. A shared local underground spot is then mainstream, but still celebrated as underground, even though it becomes something else. Natural wonders become overblown with visitors and sullied with the trash of tourists, prices for dive-bars and restaurant go sky-high, and home concerts and art galleries become trendy. These examples are not always negative, when looking at the world through a consumerist or economic perspective, but the *feeling* of a place or event does certainly change. Before the internet, the zine world was the place that connected people to underground places and events (Duncombe, p.65). Places and events could still be underground and still popular, without becoming mainstream institutions. In today’s age, modern fans of underground culture still exist, and creating physical zines is a way in which these people, in a post-internet world, can still share information yet keep a place or event underground. By connecting various members of a dispersed culture to unique ideas, zines act as a way to connect community, regardless of place or cultural significance (Duncombe, p.66). Zines can connect people with mainstream culture, but can also continue to be bastion of underground rebellion, it just depends on the content, the medium with which the zine is created, and the mode of distribution. The



dichotomy of zine creation is often time mixed, a “both-and” categorization. Zines can be *both* a way to proliferate modern pop culture, *and* a way in which to spread underground information.

What are the main differences between zines and blogs, e-zines, web forums, and podcasts?

The web journal, e-diary, or blog, as it is most commonly known (a term coined in 1998 by Jon Berger), is a modern equivalent to the self-published zine (Spencer, p.72). Blogs are published daily, from peoples of all walks of life. They are easier to create than paper zines (as there is less overhead), and sometimes have followings as large (or larger) than the most popular zines, with hopeful readers anxiously awaiting new entries. Sometimes blogs have little readership, again similar to zines, as not every zine is popular. The blog does not allow graphic visual representation or Dada-esque aesthetic art styles to be applied to it, as it is a strictly text-based communication. That is where e-zines come in. There is an entire generation of zinesters that have only published their zines as e-zines through online forms. No paper, countless copies. Some are presented as PDFs that can be downloaded, some exist only on websites. Web forums are perhaps the most internet-centric of this list, as they serve to connect community via text input that is updated extremely quickly. Forums allow community members to openly discuss culture in a quick fashion, similar to letters published in earlier zines. Podcasts are the least literary form in this list, but they do allow community members to observe culture (and at times take part in it by creating their own podcasts). As Amy Prior stated, “the U.S. magazine called *BOMB*... includes people from different art forms interviewing each other” (Spencer, p.119). This can be labeled as a literary precursor to a popular modern podcast format. Podcasts, therefore, can be seen as an audio equivalent to the zines. Zines are interrelated, and developed similarly to, these four formats. Therefore, the zine revolution of the 1980s and 1990s, can be argued, was a precursor in sub-culture that lead to the rise in these new formats.

Many zines were (and are) published in dual formats online while also keeping and creating paper editions. The editors of *Punk Planet*, for instance, continued to sell the physical copies of their

zine but allowed limited information from their editions to be printed via their website (Spencer, p.87).

The appeal of mass viewership via the internet is still a big draw for many zinesters. It can, however, be argued that online zine production is limiting when it comes to direct social and community engagement (Spencer, p.82). A prominent zinester and creator of *Pander Zine Distro*, Ericka Bailie, stated that:

While the internet has made it easier to get information on zines out in the world, it has also hindered personal contact. When I started Pander, I didn't have a computer and none of my fellow zinesters had email addresses, we wrote each other actual letters.

(Spencer, p.82)

The modes of connection in the analog world of pre-internet zines was a source of personal connection that developed community while allowing individuals to exert autonomy in the creation of their own culture. Community and identity were found in the hours spent searching for and physically creating connections. The D.I.Y. mentality of community growth was nurtured far greater in analog zine culture before the rise of the internet.

### **7. Fostering Community and Building Identity**

The networks of distribution and connectivity within the zine culture (and within the self-publishing culture in general) are linked to the human need for social interaction. Self-publishing has long been a way for people to connect to others who express the same values as themselves. Identity is created and shaped by observing and understanding one's culture, through shared experiences and emotion and by examining and reflecting upon one's culture when compared to other cultures (Martin & Nakayama, p. 209, 210, 215, & 220). By creating a physical manifestation of inner feelings and allowing others to learn from and add to those experiences, zinesters are forging their own cultural identities. Stephen Duncombe even argues that one can "escape their own identity" and "manifest" a new one, one that more easily connects to how they feel inside (p. 42). In this way, zines are hopeful

manifestos of personal identity, even if that identity is not fully fleshed out yet. Zine creation and distribution allows the zinester to mold their future and find their community. Other self- and small-published newsletters can do the same. In the 1960s, the Chemehuevi indigenous tribal members of California and Arizona were not recognized by the federal government as a distinct tribe; they were a part of another collection of indigenous tribes. To foster community and allow the space for the federal government to recognize the Chemehuevi as a sovereign nation, a vote from tribal members was needed. The collective group had been dispersed, so officials worked together to connect the various members of the tribe via pamphlets that were distributed with active classified spaces calling for addresses of other members. The initiative was a success, and the members were able to reconnect and vote to become a sovereign, federally-recognized tribe. The small publication created to connect natives and discuss important issues (like when, how, and why to vote for sovereignty) eventually became the “Chemehuevi Newsletter” published in 1968 (Snodgrass). By using small publishing norms, community was re-established and cultural identity was allowed to reignite itself, forming a richer bond between members of that small community.

The zine, and (it can be argued) self-publishing in general, is not about the physical product, it is more about the human contact created by “the personal network that had [has] developed around them [it]” (Spencer, p.15). People find each other, and themselves, in the pursuit of zine creation and zine fandom. Distribution is vitally important, as the members of a subculture work together to create and build distribution networks that reach far and wide (Spencer, p.27). Zine distribution networks and zine reviews (like Mike Gunderloy’s *Factsheet Five*) served as avenues for the community to grow and thrive (Spencer, p.28). The routes taken by zines that allow people to experience another’s culture (or reexamine their own) is a vital part of the development of community in subcultural context. Any time that a community must rely upon themselves to grow and to identify their own personal identities, zine culture flourishes.

A byproduct of increased social interaction, or perhaps the initiate of it, is the human's need to self-identify. Shearer West, in her book *Portraiture*, claimed that "self-consciousness about identity" and self-portraiture, in terms of art history (and, by extension, in terms of our modern society), stem from the "production of autobiography and other forms of self-narrative" in "fifteenth- and sixteenth century Europe" as well as the mass production and availability of the flat mirror as produced by Venetians and spread throughout the world (p. 164). People were able to physically see themselves and mentally construct what that appearance meant. Royalty, high society members, and people in the growing middle class, began commissioning artists to paint portraits of themselves to create their own identity and to reflect that identity for other people to view for a variety of reasons. Portraiture was used to create the identity of self and then to share that identity with others. In a similar way, zine creation does the exact same thing. When a zinester creates a zine, it becomes an extension of themselves to represent their thoughts to others. The complicated question then arises: what is one's true self?

Stephen Duncombe explained that zinesters "manufacture themselves" in opposition to corporate and mainstream society (p.42). It can be argued that people in modern America continue to manufacture themselves in various social interactions, including in social media apps. People want to represent themselves in an idealized way. A form of self-creation, self-representation, or self-identification is apparent in all aspects of modern American society, as people want to project themselves a certain way so that people can view them as they view themselves. The way people view a person is, however, not determined by personal representation completely. Zinesters (and people representing themselves on social media) are able to curate exactly what they want to show of themselves to the rest of the public. Additionally, people may try to control the means of distribution as to limit the exposure of themselves to community (and in social media people do this via "privatization" of accounts). Moreover, there is a disconnection that occurs whenever someone exposes material to the public. Zinesters (and people on social media) want to control and self-represent their identity.

However, their identity will be closely related to the personal *perception* of the observer. To complicate the idea of self-representation and “authentic identity” even further, Stephen Duncombe explained that this “manufactured identity” (in terms of the zine culture) is closely related to the mainstream culture to which the person belongs (p.46). By “construct[ing] who they are and what they do in opposition to the rest of society,” zinesters are creating a negative identity (Duncombe, p.46). The underground culture of the zine and the zinester is directly related to the mainstream they try to avoid. With the mainstream culture present, the negative identity is therefore dependent upon what the mainstream culture represents. The zine culture of community development is, therefore, a further extension of mainstream culture. When zinesters are upset about the crossover that occurs when mainstream culture represents the zine culture, their frustrations are slightly unwarranted. Any culture (be it underground, mainstream, artistic, punk, LGBTQ+, literary, sport, beatnik, activist, or student) is reliant upon the culture in which it is created, even when it is created in reaction to that culture. The need for people to connect with others is, therefore, an aspect of human cultural heritage. The zine culture is, moreover, not a subculture at all, but another mode of communication which people utilize to foster community while building their own identities.

## **8. The Future of the Format**

The internet has created a flourishing breeding ground of zine culture. However, despite the internet’s cultural domination, a backlash to the digital world has created an unforeseen rise in analog culture, leading to more interest in physical objects and resulting in a new rise of hand-created personal zines. Libraries are even printing physical copies of digital zines and digitizing printed zines through Creative Commons licensing, allowing them to be distributed to a wide audience online and off-line (Roper). The Mohave Community College Library, in Mohave County, Arizona, has even created its own zine (*Ovis 5th Year Anniversary Zine*) and, through Creative Commons Licenses, is adding more volume to this new distribution system. Other zine fanatics can pick up, redistribute, and share zines of this

designation with others, carrying on the tradition of community building, without having to worry about the fear of violating copyright.

Another unique connection can be made between zines and the modern phenomenon and popularity of the aforementioned podcast. While a podcast is neither a physical creation or a literacy creation, they do allow creators to self-publish *and* they allow community to be formed over subgenres of culture. Some podcasts are in the form of interview-based conversations, a format that appeared in the U.S. zine *BOMB* (Amy Spencer in conversation with Amy Prior, Spencer p.119). If people of the past were interested in such various forms of exploration into personal culture through the zine, the new forms of internet communications (such as blogs, forums, podcasts, and yet-to-be-determined formats) are an extension of self-publishing and, ultimately, an extension of zine culture.

In an epilogue to Stephen Duncombe's *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* published in his 2008 second edition (originally published in 1997), the author reexamined the relevance of zine culture in the post-2000s internet age (p.209). Duncombe concluded that the aesthetics and content of the zine did not vary much from his evaluation from eleven years prior (Ibid.). An examination of the effects of computers on physical zine publication led Duncombe to assert in his first edition of the text that the computer was key to future of zines (p.210). This analysis still held true to the author in his second edition, yet a stark warning was also issued. Duncombe believed (and warned future zinesters) that the new internet version of the zine – the blog, e-zine, and any similar incarnation – did not form “community” in the same way (p.212). The physical creation, connection, distribution, and trade of zines constituted a unique form of community that needs to be considered by any future zinester interested in connection and creativity.

Each subsequent generation generally feels nostalgic about the previous generation. The punks of the 1970s and 1980s borrowed their culture of the previous beat generation, and built upon it

(Spencer, p.200). The zinesters of the 1990s built upon the zine culture of the punk generation (Spencer, p.201). With the development of the internet, nostalgia for printed media and the 90's zine explosion is now a large part of the zine culture of the post-2000s. The future is only to be determined but the amount of history that has been previously built up. The internet is allowing newly formed zinesters to have easy access to an exploration of zine history. The D.I.Y. mentality of creation, and a longing for community that is connected via subculture, will always be a driving force for the creation of zines, be they physical paper-and-cut-out photocopies, digital e-zines, or a new format yet to be developed by creative and searching individuals of the near future.

Zines have been created and used for a large variety of reasons: a celebration of fandom, the connection of underground-oriented individuals, a usurpation of the underground by mega-corporations for profit (Duncombe, p.140), a personal exploration of politics, and countless others. Students represent a huge collection from where the future of zines can flourish, as do punks, LGBT+ community members, activists, housewives, musicians, etc. The list can honestly never end, as each new generation builds off of the previous generation to define and redefine their own existence. The zine (whatever it's form) will always be a perfect outlet for that creation of identity and expression.

## 9. Conclusion – What I Have Learned

Modern zines are about inner expression. They are a form of folk art. They can be personal, political, an extension of one's fandom, or they can be made strictly to exercise creative energy. They *should* be introduced to younger and younger people, so that *they* can create their own. Zines are a form of keeping a diary or journal, and should be presented to students as such. Zines can allow young people to be creative and can foster a personal connection between literacy, art, creativity, and their personal feelings. Creating zines can *connect* creators to their feelings, even if they are never shared with others. The community that is created between zine readers and creators is important, but it is not all that encapsulates the meaning of the zines. The *act* of creating zines creates meaning.

That said, one cannot overstate the importance of *community* within the zine subculture. The zine can both be an important personal creation *and* a way to bring together like-minded individuals seeking community and substance. The underground nature of the self-publishing world, be it online or on paper, yearns for the outsider to connect. If you do not feel like you belong in modern culture, the zine world calls you to join it. It calls for you to be present and to search. It calls for you to reach outside of the box and into a new way of thinking. If it doesn't exist: make it. If you don't have community: find it. The heart of the zine experience is the do-it-yourself mentality. There will always be people seeking a way to create and modify their own culture. *Intangible* culture comes from the *act* of creating the zine, while the zine itself is a form of *tangible* culture. Because of this, the zine is an important part of the modern human experience; it is an important aspect of modern underground *and* mainstream culture, not only in the United States, but all throughout the world. As Teal Triggs stated, "The D.I.Y. revolution is here to stay" (p.19). So, get out there, get creative, connect to your community...and create a zine!



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