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Zines, Half-Lives, and Afterlives: On the Temporalities of Social and Political Change

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THE TERM *ZINE* IS A RECENT VARIANT OF *FANZINE*, A NEOLOGISM COINED IN THE 1930S TO REFER TO MAGAZINES SELF-PUBLISHED BY AFICIONADOS of science fiction. Until zines emerged as digital forms, they were generally defined as handmade, noncommercial, irregularly issued, small-run, paper publications circulated by individuals participating in alternative, special-interest communities. Zines exploded in popularity during the 1980s when punk music fans adopted the form as part of their do-it-yourself aesthetic and as an outsider way to communicate among themselves about punk's defiant response to the commercialism of mainstream society. In 1990, only a few years after the first punk zines appeared, Mike Gunderloy made a case for the genre's significance in an article published in the *Whole Earth Review*, one of the few surviving organs of the 1960s alternative press in the United States. He celebrated zines' wide range of interests and the oppositional politics that generated their underground approach to publication.

Gunderloy was well known in alternative-press circles as the respected founder of *Factsheet Five*, a review newsletter about zines that first appeared in 1982. He conceived *Factsheet Five* as a recommendation list for his friends. Over the years, however, it expanded into an internationally circulated publication with a readership of close to ten thousand (Chu 74; Duncombe, *Notes* 157–63; Spencer 94–139). Drawing on his experience and stature in the zine community, Gunderloy made a case in the *Whole Earth Review* that zines were critical components of the underground press. Although he acknowledged that most zines had a circulation “in the thousands, the hundreds, and sometimes only in the tens,” he insisted that zines were “where the action is, where information (and disinformation) is free, where things are happening.” He added, “[T]hese people, the few thousand publishers and the few million readers [of zines] are the ones at the cutting edge of social change” (58). In Gunderloy's view, zines constituted a democratic approach to political intervention, a do-it-yourself, from-the-ground-up practice with the potential to challenge the institutions of mainstream society.

Gunderloy's short piece is significant today for the way in which it formalized what many zinesters thought about their publishing activities. Indeed, it helped to inaugurate a debate about the political effects of zine-ing. At first this debate took place largely in the zine community, but as the literature on zines burgeoned in the popular and academic press, the debate continued there. It's worth looking at key turns in that debate to consider not only why zines gave rise to it but also how the question of their impact has been construed. I'm especially interested in the recent growth of interest in zines created by girls and young women in the 1990s and in the practice of evaluating their political effects.¹

It seems likely that Gunderloy overstated the coherence of the zine scene as a politically unified community. Certainly, he was vague about what zinesters sought to accomplish. Still, the zinesters Gunderloy recommended in *Factsheet Five*, as well as the many who followed in their wake, spent significant energy in their zines assessing their disaffection from the mainstream. They worried constantly about which zine titles were more "authentic" than others and which were freer from the desires cultivated by consumer capitalism. They also campaigned heavily against selling out, against organizing zine-ing or music making for profit. Together, zinesters idealized the notion of an outside, alternative, free space uncomplicated by political compromise or capitulation.

Wary of the dominant culture's power to co-opt, zinesters strove to resist commodification formally by practicing an aesthetic that was decidedly not reader-friendly. They produced collaged pamphlets with chaotic, cut-and-paste layouts that defy linear scanning, sometimes resist traditional narrative sequencing, and even refuse pagination altogether. Zines explored subjects like environmental justice, sexual abuse, queer sex, and body-image problems, as well as everyday obsessions and odd tastes unacceptable to the print mainstream. Some zinesters produced

more than one zine at a time, while others changed their approach to a zine after one or two issues. Still others changed titles every time they produced a zine. As a result, most zines disappeared quickly—in Gunderloy's words, they lived only "half-lives" (58).

If most zines disappeared only a few years after their inception, one has to wonder what they accomplished. In what sense might they have had cultural or political effects? That they did, at least in some circles, seems evident, since public awareness of zines gradually increased and broadened after 1990. Zines challenged the sense of what the media environment was. Five years after the appearance of Gunderloy's piece, the *Wilson Library Bulletin* published a piece about zines by Chris Dodge, a cataloger for the Hennepin County Library, in Minneapolis. Dodge admitted that zines did not get much respect in traditional libraries. "Notorious for their ephemeral nature, criticized for sloppy production values and dubious credibility, self-published magazines (zines, as they're commonly known)," he noted, have been seen by libraries "as a nuisance, at best, and more generally are ignored altogether" (26).² Dodge aimed to counter the situation, arguing that libraries ought to treat zines as authentic forms of popular culture that are "[i]rreverent, gritty, lively, and a hell of a lot cheaper than overpriced academic journals. . . ." He urged his fellow librarians to collect zines with titles like *Fugitive Pope*, *Holy Titclamps*, and *Alphabet Threat*, because they "provide an ideal opportunity to put the Library Bill of Rights into action" (27).³ His goal, ultimately, was to change the mix of what was offered to library patrons by opening library shelves to alternative, underground publications.

Gunderloy and Dodge aimed to bring notice of these quirky publications to more mainstream print circles, such as the established press and the library. They suggested that in discussing subjects and expressing opinions typically ruled out of the mainstream, zines

were broadening public discourse and influencing dominant culture. Journalists and librarians should take note of zines, Gunderloy and Dodge believed, because zines contributed to social and political change. Both contended that zines ought to be thought of not simply as texts to be read but also as acts to be engaged and passed on. Nearly all who have followed Gunderloy and Dodge have suggested that zine-ing is not only about writing and reading but also about community formation and social intervention (Duncombe, *Notes*; Zobl, "Persephone"; Harris; Chu; Kearney, *Girls*). Indeed, the preoccupation with what zines do and how they do it has become central to the burgeoning literature on zines, a literature that has, in effect, created something that might usefully be termed "zine studies," an intellectual discourse about zines and zine-ing that is not limited to the academic sphere.

The legitimation of zines as a subject can be traced to the 1997 publication of Stephen Duncombe's book *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture*. Still the best account of the zine phenomenon, this book did not appear out of nowhere. It is possible to track the migration of zine commentary from zines themselves and the outsider circles in which they circulated to mainstream magazines, newspapers, and books of the popular press. Then when *Notes from Underground* appeared it secured further legitimacy for zines and helped to institute academic zine studies. Duncombe's book deserves its reputation in part because of his complex history as former punk band member, political activist, zinester, and academic (Duncombe earned a PhD in sociology from the City University of New York in 1993). The tension between these various subject positions makes *Notes* uniquely generative for those following in his wake.

Duncombe has a typical zinester's mordant wit and appreciation for colorful, affectively charged language. His approach to his subject tacks back and forth between

the clear-eyed detachment of the political realist and lyricism about the utopian hopes embedded in the exuberant visual and verbal chaos of zines. At the same time, because Duncombe is a skilled writer who possesses a zinester's taste for "high weirdness" and "the oddball" in the everyday, he has a knack for capturing how zines work in an allusive, often poetic language that evokes the affective liveliness of zine rhetoric and the significance of its all-important performance of *attitude* (1–2). More important, he has an insider's knowledge of the aesthetic labor involved in creating zines and a rich appreciation for how they appeal to readers through exchange, barter, and small-scale mail distribution.

The debate opened up by people like Gunderloy and Dodge has been intensified by Duncombe's effort to take seriously zine claims to being "notes from underground." The debate has become more complicated in part because Duncombe is himself torn about the political efficacy of zines and self-publishing, aware that a fundamental contradiction infects not only zine-ing but also the entire culture of punk. "The tension in the punk scene between the individual and the community, between freedom and rules, is a microcosm of the tension that exists within all the networked communities of the zine scene. Zines are profoundly personal expressions, yet as a medium of participatory communication they depend upon and help create community" (65). The question the rest of his book worries is whether the community networks produced through zine-ing are more than isolated and ephemeral social connections.

Duncombe argues that zinesters' aesthetic handwork reflects their effort to live a nonalienated relation to labor and that the disorder and visual chaos in zines are a sign of their affective challenge to the supposed rationality of ideology. He also suggests that zines' loopy celebration of the loser and the nerd is a critique of middle-class culture's self-serving fetishization of the professional expert and

high achiever. In the end, though, Duncombe concludes sadly that the politics of the underground are, for the most part, a failed politics:

So long as the politics of underground culture remain the politics of culture, they will remain a *virtual politics*. As such, I have little hope that underground culture can effect meaningful social change, the very change it cries out for through its articulated critiques and very form. Individuals can and will be radicalized through underground culture, but they will have to make the step to political action themselves. (192)

Although I'm sympathetic to Duncombe's desire to be judicious, I think the relation he takes up to temporality is truncated. This is a common problem in critique that seeks to assess the political effects of social and cultural practices. Situated as it must be in its own present and justifiably wary of the promises of naive utopianism, this sort of critique allows itself to imagine only an immediate future, a short-term period opening out from the present moment when structural arrangements, such as they are, might be visibly changed. Because zines haven't immediately produced that kind of change, it is assumed, they never will.⁴

It is surprisingly rare for cultural critique to take a long-term, prospective view. Scholarly analysis and analytic critique, especially in the humanities, tend to be retrospective, looking back at the history of evolving cultural traditions, knowledge of which constitutes the humanistic disciplines. Consequently, cultural critique, even that focused on popular culture, typically attempts to make sense of the situation at the time of writing by relating it to past canons and rarely seeks to trace emergent, gradually building effects over time.

A range of conditions and practices militate against long-term assessment. These include the nature of the modern university and its procedures for evaluating faculty members; standard publishing and funding arrangements, which are tied to notions of short-

term productivity; and, finally, structures of expertise and specialization, which hamper the capacity to trace the trajectory of effects through a range of social and political realms. Had Duncombe tracked zines and zine-ing over a longer period of time, he might have evaluated their political effects differently and been more encouraging about their promise as a form of social and political action.

Ironically, I came to this insight because my own effort to make sense of zines has been delayed by other projects and administrative responsibilities. Although I have never been a zinester, I became interested in them around the time Duncombe was writing his dissertation and his book. My interest developed because the daughter of a friend became involved in riot grrrl and the zine-ing that emerged around it.⁵ When, in the mid-1990s, I began to study zines and to speak about them informally in classes and lectures, most of what had been written about them was by zinesters and former zinesters. At the time, I planned to conduct an ethnographic study of girl zine-ing as a way of attempting to understand the nature of its incipient third-wave feminist politics.

The delay in my writing has been useful because it enabled me to observe what has happened to zines and what they have wrought in the interim. It has allowed me to assess what has happened to zine-ing since 1997, the year Duncombe's book was published—in a future he could then only barely imagine. It has also pressed upon me a different subject, something I call the afterlives of zines, a formulation that challenges Gunderloy's sense that zines enjoyed only brief half-lives and Duncombe's assertion that what mattered is what they managed by example in their present. Zines did not simply die in the early 1990s as their creators moved out of adolescence and young adulthood. Rather, they continued to live on in a number of different venues and forms, as a result of the actions of a significant number of former zinesters who

were profoundly changed by their zine-ing. One consequence was that many developed a commitment to extending the reach and effects of zines into the future.

From the early 1990s on, a fan-generated literature about zines developed in a number of different venues. This literature appeared in compilations and anthologies, in analytic articles published in the alternative press, in books written by zinesters yet published by mainstream presses, and in online materials. Indeed, encyclopedic Web sites like *ZineWiki* (zinewiki.com/Main_Page), *The Book of Zines* (www.zinebook.com), *Zine World* (www.undergroundpress.org), and *Grrrl Zine Network* (www.grrrlzines.net) all emerged within a few years of one another. Together, these venues function as an indigent research apparatus, a method of community self-definition, a kind of boosterism and subcultural cheerleading, a recruitment tool, and a critical review literature on the do-it-yourself world of underground communication. Often this literature contests the authority of academic expertise about zines. It acts on, further enables, and thus perpetuates the networking and community formation at the heart of zine-ing. Zine community formation is at least not evanescent, then, even if it is fostered in a mediated way.

At the same time that this literature began to emerge, current and former zinesters and zine fans began to create nonvirtual, quite material circulating collections and research archives of zines at libraries. The establishment of private libraries like the ABC No Rio Library, in New York; the Independent Publishing Resource Center, in Portland; and the Denver Zine Library helped zinesters and other alternative publishers to meet one another and find zines (Wreck; Brent and Biel). Big-city libraries like the Salt Lake City Public Library and the Cleveland Public Library launched circulating collections of zines as a way of attracting younger patrons to their institutions and expanding the range of opinion

represented in their versions of print culture. Even the New York State Library established a large zine archive when it acquired Mike Gunderloy's ten-thousand-title personal collection in 1992 (Chepesiuk; Herrada and Aul). In addition, research libraries associated with universities and colleges quickly moved to establish collections. Following the lead of Bowling Green and Michigan State, Smith, Duke, Barnard, San Diego State, DePaul, the University of Michigan, and others developed zine archives, each with a slightly different orientation. Initiated often by a single librarian who had been a zinester or zine fan, these collections developed largely through donation.

Smith College's collection was initiated when Tristan Taormino donated her collection to the Sophia Smith Collection: Women's History Archives (asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/sophiasmith/mnsss356_scope.html). Taormino was a coeditor of one of the first mainstream-press books ever published about girl zines, *A Girl's Guide to Taking Over the Revolution* (Green and Taormino). Her donation was augmented by that of Tinuviel, who worked at Kill Rock Stars, the original promoter of the riot grrrl bands Bikini Kill and Bratmobile. Tinuviel was later the creator of Villa Villakula, a distributor of the music of girl bands. She assembled a good part of her collection from the zines her CD buyers mailed back to her in appreciation. Similarly, the Duke University collection was initiated when Sara Dyer, the creator of *Action Girl Newsletter* and *Action Girl Comics* donated her large collection to the library (library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/zines/). Jenna Freedman, the zine archivist at Barnard College and a zinester herself, maintains an elaborate Web site that allows people interested in zines to network with one another, pursue bibliographic references, and link to writing about zines (www.barnard.edu/library/zines/). Freedman also contributes to the substantial librarian-generated literature about the nature of zines and the challenges

involved in collecting them and making them available to patrons and students (Bartel).

This library-oriented literature is only one aspect of the academic zine discourse that has developed in the wake of Duncombe's *Notes from Underground*. A significant portion of the literature has been produced by former zinesters like Duncombe who respond to a range of theoretical agendas. Although the literature they have produced is nuanced and appreciative of zines' radical intentions, it tends to repeat Duncombe's effort at dispassionate critical assessment of zines' limitations as an oppositional literature. Those limitations are sometimes attributed to zinesters' race and class privilege, an undeniable fact that is understood to have constrained the radical political vision embodied in most zines (Nguyen). Nevertheless, despite this claim to a clear-eyed realism about the zine phenomenon, most analysts still focus on zines as forms of political communication and on the question of the political effects of zines and zine-ing.

One could dismiss this move as nostalgia or as self-justifying special pleading on behalf of superseded adolescent tastes. Or one could argue that this literature is in practice itself a political intervention, an effort to import zines into new social and institutional venues, to extend their lives and augment their rhetorical effects, to garner for them a new, perhaps larger audience capable of extending and building on their radical claims. In fact, I would argue that the indigenous research apparatus I mentioned earlier, the archives and collections and the librarian- and teacher-generated literature that supports them, and the academic literature are political acts that are themselves effects of zine-ing. Those involved in these practices were inspired to act by their past experiences with zines, which convinced them that the larger world of knowledge production should be altered by the active presence of zines in it. This presence is political because it challenges established hierarchies of forms and voices, the selection

of those who are attended to as legitimate, authorized denizens of the major institutions that comprise contemporary knowledge production. To summarize the political effect of this work most bluntly, it has interjected the voices and works of adolescents into the legitimated precincts of knowledge production—that is, into magazines and books, libraries, and schools and universities. As a result, it has rendered teenagers not merely visible but audible. It has enabled their appearance in this realm as subjects in their own right, as writers worthy of attention rather than as targets of surveillance, policing, and silencing by others (Chu 82–83).⁶

A number of questions arise. How did zines produce these effects? What is it about zines and zine-ing that motivated zinesters to organize part of their adult lives around the project of keeping older zines available so that new audiences might take up the form and practice? Why and how did zine-ing produce zine activists? How do they live out their activism? What sorts of political subjects are they? How do they live their lives, at what sites and in relation to what institutions? What role did zine-ing play in constituting them and their social relations? How have virtual social relations been transformed into real social and material relations in the present?

These are only some of the questions that arise in the wake of the recognition that zines didn't die in the early 1990s but live varied afterlives under the aegis of specific people. I can't answer all these questions now, but I have embarked on a project that will attempt to address a few of them by looking at how an extended subset of zinesters generated their zines, why they did so, what they hoped to accomplish, and how they interacted with one another and then at the fate of this activity in their subsequent day-to-day lives. The working title of the project is "Girls, Zines, and Their Afterlives: Gender, Subjectivity, and Forms of Sociability in the Nineties and Beyond." Designed as an oral history of girl

zine practice and as a kind of longitudinal ethnography of former girl zinesters, the project aims to trace the afterlives not only of girl zines but also of those girls themselves as they matured. My guiding question is what has become of girl zines and the girls who created them since the early 1990s? In what ways and to what extent did the girls' longing for a different everyday life manage to produce change and thereby help to secure an altered future?⁷

The working hypotheses structuring this project were developed from a preliminary review of girl zines in a number of different collections and from my engagement with the fast-evolving literature in girl studies and what I call "girl zine studies," both of which have proliferated in recent years. In closing, I want to mention a few of the key arguments that have influenced my thinking and adumbrate my main hypotheses. Those hypotheses should suggest why I think zine-ing may have had considerable though perhaps long-gestating effects on the girls who participated in it. It is this process by which the sometimes small effects of prior practices live on in the desires, acts, and interventions constituting people's subsequent lives that produces change—slow change, perhaps, but change nonetheless.

Many feminist scholars have contributed to the development of girl studies and girl zine studies over the years. Girl studies emerged during the 1990s as feminist scholars recognized that the category of the girl was newly resonant in global popular culture because a range of actors—from pop recording artists, to advertising executives, to public relations officials, to feminist activists and writers themselves—sought to secure the attention of girls.⁸ As the field developed self-consciousness, it traced its origins to the large body of work done by Angela McRobbie (especially her 1976 essay with Jenny Garber, "Girls and Subcultures," and her 1991 book, *Feminism and Youth Culture*) and to the early work of Carol Gilligan (Gilligan; Gilligan, Lyons, and Hamner). Also considered significant

was the controversial intervention by Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia*, which many feminist scholars criticized for its focus on girls as victims and as passive consumers of popular media. In response, a few sought to investigate girls' own cultural productions and the way they altered dominant narratives about sex and gender. Some of the earliest work in that vein was collected in *Delinquents and Debutantes*, edited by Sherrie Inness, which contains an essay by Mary Celeste Kearney, who went on to publish *Girls Make Media*, a book that surveys girls' media activism, including their work as zinesters. Also significant was Lauraine Leblanc's *Pretty in Punk*.

These writings have been suggestive because, as products of the women's movement and feminist activism and theory, they have acknowledged the significance of everyday life and the role of popular culture in it just as they have focused on the pleasures and pains of so-called private life and on its connection to larger economic, social, and political structures. At the same time, drawing on poststructuralist feminist theory, a good deal of this work, including Catherine Driscoll's *Girls*, has raised questions about processes of subject formation—that is, about the way discourses and practices interact to position young women as subjects. Additionally, Anita Harris's *Future Girl* includes an important discussion of girl zines that stresses the way they occupy "border spaces" constitutive of a "countercapitalist economy," thereby enabling alternative practices that "allow the creation of narratives that disrupt hegemonic discourses about young womanhood" (163).

This line of argument was broached as early as 1997, when Julie Chu argued in "Navigating the Media Environment: How Youth Claim a Place through Zines" that even as the 1980s witnessed "the proliferation of medical, policy, and criminal justice discourses aimed at managing and delimiting youth agency ('Just say no'), a new mode of youth discourse . . . developed . . . via the zine network" (76).

This network enabled young people to connect with one another out of earshot of adults and mutually to constitute themselves as agents—“oppositional selves,” in Chu’s words, people who create cultural objects and messages rather than simply consume them.

Chu’s work called attention to the acute self-consciousness often developed by teen zinesters as a result, many of whom came to know themselves as working artists and cultural activists. For example, in 2000 the creator of the highly regarded zine *Bamboo Girl*, Sabrina Margarita Alcantara-Tan, published a reflective essay about her zine work “as a queer, mixed-blood Asian girl who confronts issues of racism, sexism, and homophobia in an in-your-face kind of way” (159). The piece is short, but it reflects substantively on how her effort in her zine to articulate her rage at the stereotyping of Asian women changed her sense of self. Marveling at the many responses she received from those who appreciated her perspective, including white, heterosexual men, she notes, “Then one day I really looked at what I had written and realized that I’d created my own truths by printing my zines. Now, finally, there was some validation for myself and other women and men who held similar views” (162).

This simple observation underscores the significance of the knotted connections for girl zinesters among writing practices, processes of subject formation and self-construction, and the validation that came with not only finding an audience but also pursuing actual connections with those who read their zines, wrote back, and offered their own zines in exchange. Although the literature on girl zines has often noted the significance of girl zine networking and the friendships zine-ing gave rise to, so far only Elke Zobl has sought systematically to assess the larger effects (“Global Grrrl Zine Network” and “Persephone”). Indeed, many of the early studies of girl zine writing construed it as a form of individual “life writing” or other autobiographical work. The best among these is Jennifer Sinor’s ex-

cellent essay “Another Form of Crying: Girl Zines as Life Writing.” Her essay views zine-ing as a dynamic, fast-changing, situationally specific activity through which girl zinesters “perform the instability of identity” and “blur genres to reproduce the complexity of their subject positions” (247–48).⁹

Despite her emphasis on the primacy of the individual act of writing, Sinor acknowledges the significance of the community building at the heart of girl zine-ing. “Letters are sent,” she notes. “More stories told. Ties reinforced. Often excerpts from letters are then included in future issues, perpetuating the conversation even further” (255). Girl zinesters “perform community” through reading and exchange, she suggests, concluding that “it is this fierce trust in the power of writing—more than form or content or even politics—that binds zinesters into a community existing nowhere and everywhere simultaneously” (262). Since it is true, as Sinor argues in conclusion, that “the zine community is active, evolving, changing, and growing,” what we now need are research protocols and analytic forms adequate to its dynamism and capable of tracing the social and material mutations of zine-ing *over time*.

In such a project, it will be critical to avoid treating zines simply as texts to be read. To be sure, what they assert as texts is important. But zines are not simply ideological instruments. They are also material objects crafted of paper, images, handwriting, myriad typefaces, staples, twine, glitter, stickers, and much more. They are aesthetic objects crafted with the intent of producing certain kinds of affects and experiences among their users. As a consequence, zine-ing needs to be treated principally as an activity with distinct but changing social relations, and zines need to be understood performatively (Sinor 243).

Zines are, in effect, complex aesthetic performances that defy and disorient those who would try to make sense of them in conventional ways. They involve their users in new

social relations and in performances of subjectivity that have had significant consequences for girls. One of the most important is that zines produced more zinesters—young girls who suddenly saw the form as something they themselves could create, a rescue from the oppressive local venues of home, high school, and college dorm, which they experienced so often as constraining (Eichhorn, “Sites”; Sinor 244–45). At the same time, the predominantly white and middle-class nature of the zine community prompted many young women of color to create their own zines and to tie them to other political projects in addition to feminism. It will be critical to understand how zines functioned over time as aesthetic, rhetorical, and social technologies for making a range of things happen, including the creation of networks based not on the accident of proximity but on the collective elaboration of shared observations, affects, desires, hopes, and even intentions. All these were shared through the mediation of handcrafted zines that, as they shuttled back and forth through the mail, knit girls and young women together into far-flung, loosely structured networks. It will be important to know, however, how those networks operated, where they were bounded, and whom they included and excluded.

Zine-ing involved its participants in subject formation and sociability. Although it is important to treat girl zinesters as writers and artists, it is equally important to acknowledge that zines were never singly authored in the usual sense. They take up issues of private life and sometimes use a language of self-expression. Yet as collages they call attention to their porousness and openness to the world. Although they feature writing by the creator of the zine, more often than not they also highlight others’ words, which were clipped from other zines, magazines, letters, and books. Zine creators also constantly interpellate and interpolate their hoped-for readers, addressing them, characterizing them, actively making them present in the zine’s

pages. As a result, the creators of zines are constituted in ways that I would characterize as *intersubjective*—that is, in ways that highlight the interweaving of social subjects, their relations to and connections with others.

In my view, zines produce not only fluid, contradictory, even fragmented subjects, as Sinor suggests. In addition, they produce *intersubjects*, girls constituted in relation to and therefore always together with others. I suspect that it was this practice of subject formation that drove zine networking and prompted the desire to extend virtual relations into the social and material realms. After all, zines called forth a range of intersubjective activities, including reading, certainly, but also exchanging, mailing, bartering, networking, letter writing, and even face-to-face meeting. For girls in the 1990s, zine-ing was all about proliferation and social connection, as girl zinesters sought to transmute their anonymous readers into friends and in quite utopian fashion to transform those friends into an ever-expanding network of empowered girl zinesters. Some of those networks live on in extended friendship groups, through Web sites designed to augment their reach, and through circles of zine librarians, outsider artists, writers, graduate students, teachers, and academics. At the same time, zines themselves live on in transmuted social contexts—in archives and circulating collections, in classrooms, on Web sites, and in the writings of former zinesters, zine fans, and zine analysts. As a consequence, zines continue to exert their effects through the activities of their altered former creators and through those of the new readers they engage. My afterlives project is designed to explore what kinds of subjects were brought into being through zine-ing, how those subjects were constituted socially, and how the social forms they created enabled particular kinds of activities and activism on behalf of an altered relation to the twenty-first-century world.

NOTES

1. For a recent discussion of girl zines and their political effects, see Beins.
2. Dodge's claim was not entirely true—in fact, Bowling Green State University and Michigan State University had established collections of popular-culture materials, including zines, in 1969 and 1970 in response to the activities of Ray B. Browne and Russel B. Nye, cofounders of the Popular Culture Association.
3. Adopted in 1939 by the American Library Association, the bill of rights specifies that books and other library resources should be provided without regard to “the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.”
4. Duncombe has revised his position considerably in his recent book *Dream: Re-imagining Progressive Politics in an Age of Fantasy*, where he defends dreaming the future as a politically efficacious form of dissent.
5. Riot grrrl is generally understood as a spontaneous social movement of mostly white, middle-class girls and young women that developed in the wake of all-girl punk bands. Angered by the treatment of women in the punk scene, some fans began to organize their own bands and to articulate their views about music and the larger social and political scene in zines. On the history of riot grrrl, see Gottlieb and Wald; Schilt, “A Little Too Ironic” and “I’ll Resist”; Monem.
6. Some zinesters deplore this move into library archives, schools, and universities as a co-optation by the mainstream. They would prefer to remain underground in an alternative space, from which to foray out against the dominant culture.
7. Since this essay was first drafted, I have learned of two projects that partially overlap with mine. Both use interviews to explore the history of girl zines and their relation to feminism. Alison Piepmeier's *Girl Zines: Making Media, Doing Feminism* relies on interviews with zine creators and zine readers “to map out as fully as possible the personal, political, and theoretical work that grrrl zines perform” (7). My project will differ from hers in its longitudinal focus and in its efforts to attend to the full range of zines created by girls rather than only those created with a riot grrrl or explicitly feminist focus. Kate Eichhorn is completing a study of girl zines, zine libraries and librarians, and their significance as historically specific feminist archiving practices. She recently discussed this project in “D.I.Y. Collectors.”
8. Lipkin provides an introduction to the field and its range of concerns; see also the National Women's Studies Association Web site for the NWSA girls studies interest group (nwsa.org/communities/girlsstudies.php), esp. the link to the group's newsletter. See also the call for proposals for the 2008 Annual Women's Studies Conference at Southern Connecticut State University, devoted to “Girls' Culture and Girls' Studies: Surviving, Reviving, Celebrating Girlhood” (“18th Annual Women's Studies Conference”).

9. Another important essay on the complexity of subject positioning in girl zines is Licona, “(B)orderlands' Rhetoric and Representations.”

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