

WOMEN'S ZINES IN THE SARAH DYER ZINE COLLECTION

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Zines are small publications produced by individuals in order to communicate with a limited audience about themselves and their interests. The first section of this paper argues the importance of preserving this form of self-publication in libraries and archives, and describes how zines should be treated in libraries. Reconsidering how zines should be handled in libraries requires a revisioning of the librarian's role of preserving popular culture materials for future scholarship. The second part of this paper focuses on the Sarah Dyer Zine Collection in the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture at Duke University. The last part of the paper is a researcher's guide to the Sarah Dyer Zine Collection, organized by subject categories with annotated notes about selected zine titles from the collection.

Headings:

Dyer, Sarah (Collector)

Fanzines

Self-publishing

Young women-United States-Social life and customs

Feminism-United States

Underground press publications-United States

Introduction to Zines

Most articles and books about zines begin by describing what a zine is, since many people are unfamiliar with the term. This literature review will begin with that approach, followed by an explanation of how the attributes that define zines also may make them unsuitable materials for an academic library collection. However, the literature supports the argument that zines do have research value for future scholars, and special collections archives are the appropriate institutions for the collection and preservation of zines.

It may be easier to describe or characterize the nature of zines than to precisely define what a zine is, because their content and formats vary so widely. Definitions of “zine” mainly approach why and how zines are produced, and what they might contain. Seth Friedman, current editor of *Factsheet Five*, a zine review and networking publication, gives a physical definition of zines as “small, digest-sized booklets, created by folding several pieces of standard-sized writing paper” (9). But this definition is too simple. Chip Rowe offers a more accurate portrait by describing zines as “cut-and-paste, ‘sorry this is late,’ self-published magazines reproduced at Kinko’s or on the sly at work and distributed through mail order and word of mouth” (xii). Vale asserts, “A zine is more than a flyer, leaflet, poster or newsletter. It reflects the unmediated obsessions of the immediate producer, in which publicity in the normal sense and other commercial concerns are completely subordinate” (159).

Mike Gunderloy, founding editor of the zine review publication *Factsheet Five*, is often credited with popularizing the term. He says that “zine” is “an all-purpose contraction”

used to describe a publication “created by one person, for love rather than money, and focus[ed] on a particular subject” (2). Friedman agrees with the idea that zines are published “for the sake of communication without regard for profit” (9). Wachsburger says zines are “self-published, largely low-circulation labors of love and free expression” (57). These three definitions address the motivations of a zine editor for publishing his or her own writing.

Subcategories of zines may vary in their subject areas, but are similar in form and function to more general zines. Michael Basinski, Assistant Curator at the Poetry and Rare Books Collection at SUNY Buffalo, specifically describes poetry zines as “homespun, folksy, and funky self-generated literary magazine[s],” and as “fugitive publications, produced in small quantities (less than 100 copies), and distributed to friends and poets within small networks” (84). Green and Taormino focus on “girl zines,” and define them as “do-it-yourself publications made primarily by and for girls and women” (xi). These editors examined over 500 issues of 300 different zine titles, and found that zines can range “anywhere from Xeroxed handwritten rants and cut-and-paste collages to professional design and offset printing” (xi).

Zine editors themselves do an excellent job of defining and describing zines when they explain why they write and publish. Bob Bellevue, editor of *Basura*, writes “Publishing a zine is easy, it’s cheap, it’s fun, it’s something to do when you’re bored, it’s a greeting card, it’s a business card, it’s expression, it’s a stab at definition and critical evaluation” (Rowe 97). Julian Davis, editor of *The Secret Handsignals of the DBA*, writes, “Why publish? To paraphrase Anaïs Nin on why she became a writer, I had to create my own world because I wasn’t happy with this one” (83). The anonymous editor of *Switch Hitter* writes, “One of the excellent things about publishing a zine is that once you get listed in *Factsheet Five*, and get reviewed here and there, people start to send you their zine and ask for yours! Another

excellent thing is that people send you money. No, Switch Hitter doesn't actually make any money (the IRS can tell you how much I lost on it last year!), but when people send me money I can afford to buy more stamps" (Issue #2).

Librarians have their own definitions of zines that reflect perspectives from collection development to cataloging. Billie Aul, reference librarian at the New York State Library, says zines are "those funky little serials with a small subscription base that provide alternative viewpoints on anything from politics to music to Pez dispenser collecting" (81). Julie Herrada, assistant curator of the Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan, has described zines as "obscure... extreme... unmarketable... personal... illegal... bizarre... offbeat... unedited... uncensored" (79). They are "amateur publications" funded on "shoestring budgets" or out of the editor's own pocket (Herrada 80). They follow irregular publication schedules, with no consistent issue numbers or dates, and certainly no ISSN (Herrada 80). Chris Dodge says zines are low-budget, low-circulation and ephemeral means of self-expression that are edited and published independently with "sloppy production values and dubious credibility," and yet he is a librarian who actually wants zines in his collection (26). Dodge acknowledges that zines do not fit the profile of regular library materials, but also recognizes the value of collecting them. There are many different kinds of zines with different formats, audiences, and varying degrees of production qualities. Zines are not traditional magazines, do not behave like serials, and cannot be treated as such in libraries.

It is a premise of this paper that librarians need to rethink the definition of what a zine is in the context of library collections. For regular zine readers, zines are essentially little magazines without all the corporate advertisements. Libraries have procedures for adding magazines to their collections, but zines are not suited to this procedure. They do not follow

regular printing schedules, and usually cannot be received on subscription. Instead, zines should be treated more like a type of modern manuscript. Though zine editors may reproduce from 10 copies to 1,000 copies of their zine, it is unlikely that more than one or two institutions will have a particular zine in its collection. In some respects, many zines are written like letters, with personal content intended for a limited audience. Other zines are written like diaries, with daily accounts of an individual's life, their most intimate thoughts and feelings. Some zines are like rough drafts of literary works, with no foreseeable editing or polished publication in the future. Zines can also be published electronically, like many of today's manuscripts. The characterization of zines as personal communication between individuals rather than between corporations and mass audiences, easily lends itself to the treatment of zines as letters or even published diaries. While many institutions may subscribe to national magazines like *Time*, or even regional publications like *Wildlife in North Carolina*, it is not likely that more than one library will hold issues of a zine like *Crummies in Tummies*. When a library receives one issue of a serial, unless that issue fills a void in an existing collection, that lonely serial will most likely be discarded. With irregular publication schedules and limited production, it is highly unlikely that a library would be able to acquire a complete run of a zine.

For a number of reasons, zines have not been welcomed into academic library settings. Zines are not the only popular culture materials that have been traditionally excluded. Pulp fiction, children's series novels, comic books and other forms of entertainment literature have been weeded from collections or simply not acquired by libraries. Two authors give laundry lists of reasons why alternative or popular culture materials in general are seen as inappropriate for library collections. Steinfirst cites inadequate funding, poor bibliographic control, the ephemeral nature of popular culture

materials, along with general organizational and preservation problems (208). Frost adds to this list the problems of poor availability, non-professional layout, low print runs, and poor quality of alternative press materials (62). These problems are certainly applicable to zines in a regular library setting, but special collections archives are set up to handle materials with non-standard organization and varied preservation needs. Archives face the same budgetary concerns and problems with non-standard means of acquisition, but are also likely to receive zines as donations.

Besides basic problems with the materials themselves, there is also resistance among academic librarians to admitting such items into the stacks of their institutions. As Barbara Moran points out, “In academic libraries... the collecting of popular materials goes against the grain of what library professionals have been taught” (12). Several librarians talk about the need for an attitude change to create a friendlier climate for popular materials. Steinfirst goes so far as to say “some librarians are ‘intellectual snobs,’ aesthetically conservative, and ‘caretakers of a traditionally defined, microscopic view of culture’ ” (208). Scott is writing about comic books when he says, “Institutions devoted to the ‘high’ subcultures reflexively excluded the ‘low’ subcultures, and to this day that’s the dominant mode” (82). The same principle applies to zines. Even Wiegand in 1979, says that the first step in beginning a discourse on preserving popular materials in libraries requires “an attitudinal adjustment” and broadening of scope beyond traditional approaches (203-4). Atton echoes Wiegand when he says librarians’ “own attitudes to what needs to be in our libraries may have to be changed, widened immeasurably” (*Failing* 543). This attitude adjustment may have to start in schools of library science to prepare new librarians and archivists to be effective collectors of popular culture materials.

Another problem arises from a lack of awareness about alternative publications among librarians. The zines discussed in this paper are a relatively recent form of publication, beginning in the 1970s and flourishing in the 1990s, and are mainly generated in youth or underground subcultures. Many librarians and archivists, like the general population, may not be familiar with the terms “zine” or “fanzine.” General perceptions about the production quality and popular culture content of zines also keep them out of libraries. Most libraries would prefer to have a nicely bound, reputable academic women’s studies journal instead of a cheaply produced girls’ zine, though both may contain valuable insights for researchers of current women’s issues. Zine editors do not need an education to do what they do, just a word processor (or even paper and pen), access to a copier, a concept and spare time (Aul 81). Zines are not the products of elite academic culture, and are not perceived as contributing to academic discourse or as containing anything much of value. Tom Trusky argues that “long-lived periodicals or periodicals with high ‘production values’ are not necessarily more valuable than usually cheaply produced, usually ephemeral zines” (88).

Even if a librarian or archivist knows what a zine is and would recognize one if she saw it in a bookstore, she may not know how to effectively acquire them for her library’s collection. Zine compilations aimed at zine-savvy audiences contain detailed instructions on how to buy or trade zines. It is virtually impossible to subscribe to most zines due to their erratic and short-lived nature. Vale clearly states “zines are difficult to locate; there is no central source or network” (5). *Factsheet Five* and *Action Girl Newsletter* do in fact serve as networking hubs for zines, but Vale is referring to the decentralized nature of zine distribution. Block says, “to order a zine, just send off cash...stamps, a self-addressed stamped envelope, and/or a zine for trade...Keep in mind there are no real guarantees. You

may never receive the zine you paid for” (18). Rowe and Friedman both offer similar advice. Clearly this method of acquisition poses major problems for the Order Librarian. Sending advance payment in cash through the mail for material that may never be received is not going to work for a library’s acquisition department. Order librarians barely have enough time to get out the traditional expedited orders, and do not have the time on the job to cultivate relationships with zine editors to acquire material.

Libraries are more likely to acquire zines from donors in the form of personal zine collections. As part of the Capital District Popular Culture Collection, the New York State Library houses Mike Gunderloy’s massive zine collection from his days as editor of *Factsheet Five*. Duke University’s zine collection, discussed later in this paper, began with a large donation from Sarah Dyer, editor of the *Action Girl Newsletter*. Most zine editors are also zine collectors, since involvement in the zine scene involves lots of trading.

Regular library gifts-in-kind units are usually overwhelmed with monographs, and are not equipped to handle a motley collection of incomplete serial runs. However, receipts of material similar to zines are commonplace for archivists. Gifts-in-kind units do not actively solicit donations of material. Archivists on the other hand generally do have the time and resources to pursue donors of material for their collections. One way archivists could find prospective donors is by perusing zine review publications and selecting some titles to investigate based on region or subject area.

Zine editors may be more reluctant than other donors about having their materials housed in an archive or library. Andy “Sunfrog” Smith, editor of *Babyfish...lost its mamma*, now feels comfortable having “all six issues of [his] magazine in the permanent collection of a library” (83). His essay points out the other side of the equation: “What if the library gave our name and address to the police? We should burn down libraries, not be in them!” (83).

Anarchists and punk rockers should instead “lend support to archives that keep our voices from the political wilderness alive by visiting them and sending our zines their way” (83).

Zine archives are created by and for people with an interest in the underground press, and serve to validate alternative points of view (Smith 84). The only way to convince a reluctant zine editor or collector to donate his or her material is through building personal relationships. Letters may not be enough to persuade revolutionary writers to give you their work, but correspondence is effective once a personal connection has been established. Basinski is actively involved with various networks of poets and attends underground conferences in order to effectively develop the Poetry Collection (85). Once an archive gains a reputation as being “zine-friendly,” more donations will follow (Aul 82).

Several characteristics that define zines also make them difficult to process and catalog. According to Moran, librarians prefer to handle standardized materials “according to existing guidelines and get them on the shelves” in a timely manner, but “this frequently doesn’t apply with respect to popular culture materials” (13). Huang writes that “popular culture materials are sometimes regarded as trashy, ephemeral materials of little value or importance and therefore receive a lower priority in cataloging and less detailed bibliographic control” (88). This handling results in a lower level of access for the researcher.

Though many of the reasons why libraries have not collected zines in the past may make sense from a practical perspective, there are better reasons why librarians *should* collect and preserve zines. One basic reason almost requires no further argument: librarians are charged with a “social imperative to promote the free flow of ideas and information” (Atton, 1995, 543). Zines are written primarily to communicate ideas and share information between networks of people. Chris Dodge supports Atton’s assertion: “Irreverent, gritty, lively, and a

hell of a lot cheaper than overpriced academic journals, zines provide an ideal opportunity to put the Library Bill of Rights into action” (30).

Libraries have a responsibility to support academic research by providing access to popular culture materials. Zines both fit definitions of popular culture, and resist them. They reflect popular values in some respects while also representing marginalized or localized viewpoints. All popular culture materials do not appeal to wide audiences anyway. Huang points out:

Popular culture is no longer studied just as an intellectual curiosity, it is also a key way to understand society... Since popular culture is not only an integral part of the curriculum of many U.S. institutions of higher learning, but is also a reflection of American life and attitudes, popular culture materials are becoming increasingly essential components in college and university libraries. (Huang 93)

According to Trusky, “zines often contain common knowledge or understanding, popular myth, if you will, not necessarily limited to state or region” (87).

Scott writes specifically about comics, but his arguments can also be applied to zines and other marginalized popular culture materials. According to Scott, it is the librarian’s duty to “see the need to collect and preserve things before the other scholars do” (81). He reiterates his point by saying that libraries should “identify what [scholars] will need before they need it, and have it cataloged by the time they realize its importance” (81). Dodge supports this argument: “Academic and research libraries must see that this era’s zines will one day be important historical resources” (27). According to Scott, “nobody can study and understand anything without first examining it, and so collecting and cataloging are the cutting edge of comics scholarship” (84). Librarians who work with zines may not see themselves at the cutting edge of scholarship, but they are truly paving the way for future researchers to access these materials. If collections do not exist, and are not “mapped to an

extent that makes serious consideration possible” then the research in those areas will simply not happen (Scott 84). Most librarians realize the need to provide access to research materials, but Scott really glorifies this role: “The library profession is in a unique position to contribute to the future of scholarship by preserving twentieth century popular communication artifacts, and making roadmaps through them” (84).

Atton asks the key question, “Why should we trouble to acquire [zines]? What place do they have in libraries?” (*Alternative Literature* 25). He begins to answer these questions himself: “the value of alternative publications lies in their providing interpretations about the world that we simply will not find anywhere else” (*Alternative Literature* 25). “A brief perusal of the subjects” covered by zines quickly reveals “that there are not other outlets for many of these views” (*Alternative Literature* 25). Zines sometimes fit into the definition of popular culture by reflecting popular values, but often they represent extremely marginalized or localized viewpoints. Smith points out that zines contain the “active voices of various cultural minorities” and represent “marginalized viewpoints” (83). Chepesiuk notes how zines document slang and contemporary language, and are comparable to primary source material such as letters or diaries (69). In the days of email, language used for everyday communication evolves quickly and electronic media is not easily preserved. Zines may be one of the only places that local youth dialects are preserved.

Vale calls zines a “grassroots reaction to a crisis in the *media* landscape,” implying that the viewpoints found in zines are not reflected in mainstream media (4). Zines are a “repository of truths, theories, or visions seldom expressed in mainstream media” (Trusky 87). Atton describes how mainstream press does not consider “notions such as collectivism, direct democracy, local empowerment, anarchism or libertarianism” (1995, 543). Dodge asserts “future researchers will rely in material like this for evidence of cultural dissent and

innovation in the late 20th century” (27). “By choosing to ignore or by remaining ignorant of such publications we cannot by disadvantage our users” (Atton, 1995, 543). Trusky eloquently sums up the entire case: Zines are valuable (despite their costing sometimes two first-class stamps and a SASE), are here to stay (despite an average lifespan of a tenacious mayfly), and often give the voiceless voice (albeit strident, misspelled, ungrammatical, and in unreadable handwriting)” (87).

Huang’s article on servicing popular culture materials provides further evidence of why zines belong in archives. His recommendations about popular culture materials can all be applied to zines. “Popular culture collections should be treated as something special, using both traditional and new technologies to provide the maximum service possible” (Huang 93). One application of Huang’s observations is that zines are “more fragile and physically less substantial” than traditional magazines with more robust bindings or better paper. They therefore should be “housed in special envelopes, boxes and similar containers” (89). Both the Gunderloy and Dyer collections are housed in acid-free archival folders and boxes arranged in alphabetical order by title (Aul 82).

Huang also recommends that popular culture materials should be managed “under strict guidelines as to what kinds of patrons should be allowed to use this material, and under what conditions” (89). Clearly archives are already equipped to monitor and regulate use of these materials in ways that regular circulation libraries are not. Archives users are usually required to sign a research agreement, sign in when using the facility, or even asked to show a photo ID. Researchers’ activities are monitored while they are using the materials and they are advised of proper handling practices.

Huang’s recommendations about cataloging and processing popular culture materials are more idealized than practical. Though most would agree “all special collections should

receive extra attention in the cataloging process,” most archives do not have the resources to provide item level access (Huang 88). The problem is that if a collection is not cataloged in enough detail or with inadequate access points, it “in practicality becomes a hidden pile of garbage” (Huang 88). In an ideal world where archives have unlimited funding and staff hours, catalogers would assign extra access points at the item level, including persons or organizations named or involved in a publication, variant titles, and more subject headings (Huang 88). From Aul’s article about the Factsheet Five Zine Collection, it was difficult to determine the level of access provided in the catalog, and it is very difficult to find anything about it on the NYSL website. The archivists at NYSL used *Factsheet Five* itself as a finding aid, since its reviews provide excellent guidance to the collection (82). This actually would be a great idea for other zine collections to use, since *Factsheet Five* has such broad coverage. The finding aid for the Sarah Dyer Collection consists of an alphabetical title listing, divided by box numbers, but the archivists at Duke have access to a descriptive database with detailed information including author, place of publication, and topics covered.

Huang describes how the NIU Libraries’ comic book collection “used to be overlooked by students and library patrons because there were no analytical descriptions or subject access in the online catalog” (90). At previous access levels, it was virtually impossible to locate items. Amazingly, the library found the resources “to provide full descriptive and subject cataloging, which has increased use of the collection” (Huang 90). Certainly better catalog access to existing zine collections would increase current and future use.

The words “archive” and “archivist” are not often encountered in the literature about collecting and preserving zines, which is usually either about libraries or individual collectors. However, most large zine collections are held in special collections libraries, not

public libraries or circulating academic collections. Libraries are certainly appropriate places to collect and preserve zines. Some public libraries with a large youth audience may want to provide them for circulation among their teenage patrons. However zines are more easily accommodated in archival institutions. Aul is an advocate for beginning a zine collection, even in small libraries without established special collections. The main requirements are space to store the zines, and an understanding that they are not regular serials (Aul 82). But Aul's description of how NYSL handled the *Factsheet Five* Collection demonstrates that archival treatment is the best and most efficient way to handle zine material.

Zines are an important part of twentieth century popular culture and are worthy of preservation in academic archival institutions. Zines are more like manuscripts than serials when they are handled by libraries, and librarians should become conscious of this distinction. Archivists should also get excited about their role in determining future scholarship, and actively develop their collections of alternative and underground publications for the historians of the twenty-first century. If zines are not preserved now, then in the future it may seem as if all these clamoring voices never existed.

Sarah Dyer Zine Collection Profile

The mission of the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture (SBCWHC) is to acquire, preserve and make available to a large population of researchers published and unpublished materials that reflect the public and private lives of women, past and present. Duke University Libraries have historically collected materials related to women and women's studies, and in 1989 the SBCWHC, named for writer and feminist Sallie Bingham, was created in order to expand on the existing holdings and to provide specialized support for researchers. Currently the SBCWHC's collections reflect the diversity of women's experiences through diaries, personal papers, documentation from feminist movements, and printed materials. In addition to the personal papers of notable women such as Kathy Acker and Robin Morgan, and organizational papers from feminist groups like the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance, the SBCWHC has several other types of collections: the Girls' Literature Collection, the Artists' Book Collection, and the Sarah Dyer Zine Collection.

In July of 2000, Sarah Dyer donated seven boxes that contained over one thousand self-published zines created by women and girls from across the United States. As a zine writer and comic book artist, Dyer was inspired by others' publications, but frustrated by the difficulty of figuring out what was being produced by women and girls. She created *Action Girl Newsletter* as a means to network and publicize women's publications. In an interview with Taormino, Dyer states, "I figured if I want to find other girls doing zines, *they* probably want to find other girls, too'" (Green 167). The first issue was only one side of one page,

but later the number of girls producing zines increased exponentially (Green 167-8). She placed small ads in as many zines as she came across in order to solicit sample copies of zines, which she would review in her newsletter. This process generated an overwhelming response as the size of this collection indicates. One reason for the size and character of the Dyer Zine Collection is that Dyer started *Action Girl Newsletter* about the same time that the Riot Grrrl movement was beginning. Dyer says at first most of the zines done by women were about music, literature and art, but later women started writing more about “ ‘stuff that is happening to girls’ ” (Green 168).

Other universities have received zines in similar large collections, but this collection is unique in that it is devoted to female authors. Dyer realized the importance of her personal collection for documenting a cultural phenomenon that has recorded the personal thoughts, opinions, creative writing and art of young women and girls. She wanted them to be in a place that would take them seriously. As quoted in the *News & Observer*, Dyer states, “There are zines that are literally handmade. They have objects glued to them. They really fall in the art category” (8/15/01).

Dyer characterizes the girls who make zines as not being from a subculture: “ ‘they are completely traditional American girls who’ve discovered this way of expressing themselves that they weren’t getting anywhere else’ ” (Green 170). The zines themselves illustrate the point that Dyer makes about documenting girls’ personal writings. Meyshele, editor of *My Broken Halo*, writes, “I find that I am often silenced. By everyone and everything. Including by myself. I shut myself up. (Brainwashed) I find doing this zine very therapeutic. I find the voice I lost” (Issue #1/1995). Julee Peezlee, editor of *McJob*, writes, “I think I started self-publishing because people wouldn’t listen to me. I don’t know if it’s

because I'm a girl or if I just have a soft, uncommanding voice. But I found that people would listen if I wrote it down and published it" (Rowe 90).

The Center is especially interested in collecting materials that reflect the interests, creativity, or daily life of women, and these zines certainly fulfill these criteria. The archivists at Duke are continuing to collect zines and add to their stellar collection, but for a library, collecting zines is not a simple process. In August of 2001, I attended Ladyfest Midwest in Chicago with Bingham Center archivists Cristina Favretto and Amy Leigh. Their mission was to meet women who write and publish their own zines, pick up as many new zines as possible, and to publicize the Dyer Collection and the Bingham Center. The archivists tabled in the main lobby of the Congress Theater, and participated in a zine workshop in Quimby's Bookstore where there was standing room only. Despite popular belief in the demise of the printed zine, the overwhelming level of response demonstrates that zines are still a hot topic among young women.

Karen Green and Tristan Taormino's book *A Girl's Guide to Taking Over the World* focuses solely on women's and girls' zines. The introduction to a compilation of women's writings from zines describes how girls and women across the United States, not just in large urban areas, have been using zines as a unique form of communication. They point out that "women have historically had limited access to channels of communication, and, ultimately, to power" (Green xii). Later in the book, in an interview with Sarah Dyer, Taormino asks Dyer if she agrees with the statement that "one of the most important results of the girl-zone movement seems to be a general interest in empowerment for girls" (Green 170). Dyer agrees, and adds that the "ability to express yourself and learn about yourself is so important, and there aren't that many opportunities for girls to empower themselves" (Green 170).

During the 2001-2002 academic year, several instructors brought their classes to the Bingham Center to learn about its holdings. Students in a “house course” organized by students on the topic of women and leadership came to hear about efforts to collect women’s private writing. A student in this course was so inspired by this experience that she brought a group of women from her residence hall so that they too could find out what the SBCWHC has to offer. One English graduate student, who was teaching a course called “It’s Raining Men: Sex and Gender in African-American Culture,” brought his students to introduce them to the Dyer Zine Collection. In the upcoming year, Amy Leigh anticipates that more instructors will take advantage of the unique research opportunities provided by the Center. This sort of instructional session can provide students with an overview of the Center or of a particular collection, but this experience can only be offered to a limited audience.

The SBCWHC website offers a broad range of digital outreach so that casual and serious researchers can find some level of access to collections without having to physically visit the library. The number of digitized collections and online research guides demonstrates their commitment to shaping contemporary research. But limited resources prevent everything from being made accessible via the World Wide Web. The Dyer Zine Collection is one that is especially suited for web accessibility. Currently the zines are housed in archival boxes, and ordered alphabetically. Online a researcher might stumble across the full listing of all the titles held, but no information about each individual title is currently accessible online. A database with information including title, author or publisher, place of publication by city and region, topics covered, issues held at Duke, and any additional notes was created to provide the archivists some bibliographic control over the collection. This database is available for in-house use only, and must be intermediated by the archivist. This database is

an excellent resource for people who go to the SBCWHC to use the collection, but many users are not aware of its availability. By simply providing access to the listing of topics, and a sampling of titles, an online guide would make the Dyer Zine Collection much more accessible and would lead to increased use.

Methods

The popularity of the recent annotated bibliography entitled “Beyond Nancy Drew” and increased interest in the girls’ literature materials indicates that a similar guide to the Dyer Zine Collection would be well received. The “Beyond Nancy Drew” guide has been frequently cited online and was listed in *Feminist Collections: a Quarterly Review of Women’s Studies Resources*, (vol. 23, no. 2; Winter 2002), published by Phyllis Holman Weisbard, University of Wisconsin’s Women’s Studies Librarian. The girls’ literature collection was divided into several subject areas, and each section provided an overview of typical material in that genre and then an annotated listing of titles. The Dyer Zine Collection Guide is designed on a similar model, divided by broad subject area and containing a sampling of titles with brief descriptions.

Using the existing subject index database for the collection, I divided the 54 existing topics into 7 larger categories: Art, Life, Politics, Race and Ethnicity, Sex, Subculture, and Women’s Health. The subtopics under these headings are identified in the research guide section of this paper. In addition I selected titles from the topics with the largest numbers of zines: Feminism, Music, Personal, Poetry, and Riot Grrrl. Several authors of books about zines also designed their own zine categories, and while these do not line up exactly they are quite similar. Friedman divides his book into the following broad categories: Miscellanea, Popular Culture, Sex, Music, Politics, Riot Grrrls, Travel, Work, Food, and Fringe Culture. Friedman points out in the introduction to the “Miscellanea” section, “Some zines are hard to classify—it’s not hard to tell when you’ve found a sex zine or a music zine or a political zine or a food zine. But much of the writing that you come across in zines is impossible to classify” (15). Gunderloy categorizes the zines in his book as follows: Fringe Culture,

Comics/Humor, Sports, Personal, Science Fiction, Hobbies/Collecting, Music, Science & Beyond, Reviews, Politics, Literary, People, Love Sex & Relationships, Travel, Spirituality, and Movies/Television. Duncombe bases his “Zine Taxonomy” on his assessment of Gunderloy’s *Factsheet Five* zine review publication, and his categories are almost identical to those listed above. Green and Taormino, who focus on girl zines, have a slightly different approach, grouping topics under larger headings in their table of contents: “Slumber Party- friends, secrets, sex;” “Mirror, Mirror- body image, health;” “The Parent Trap- parents, siblings, family;” “Dear Diary- personal stories;” “Fan Club- music, stars, idols;” “Princess Phone- gossip, letters, technology;” “Runaway Daughters & Rebel Girls- politics, anger, power.” The topics identified in the Dyer Zine Collection database are in accord with these different authors’ characterizations of different types of zines, as appropriate to this particular collection.

After sampling 10-12 zines from each large category, I wrote annotations for each title much like a typical zine review and narrowed down my selections to include zines that best represented each category. I also wrote an overview for each category based on my own observations and readings in secondary texts. Selecting titles using the database rather than sampling directly from the boxes was necessary because the research guide is arranged by subject and not title. The database can easily be used to generate lists of every zine with content on a particular topic, or to look at all topics covered in a particular zine. I used the lists of zines by topic to select titles to look at in more detail, and made a decision based on the information provided in the zine’s individual record. After selecting about ten titles per subject area, I went to the repository to take notes on each title. I examined all available issues of the titles I selected and made assessments based on the quality of the zine, and

whether it adequately represented the subject areas for the research guide. Zines that covered more than one topic in a large category were given preference.

The purpose of this guide is not to replicate the contents of the existing database, but to give researchers a clear sense of the collection's scope and answer their initial inquiries into whether the Dyer Collection contains anything of interest to their studies. The guide will also serve as a great resource for teachers and students. It has potential to serve as outreach to other zine writers and collectors who may decide to donate their zines to add to the growing collection. Although a full-fledged digitization project is beyond the scope of this paper, the zines' visual appeal and uniqueness would make an attractive and popular exhibit. To draw even more attention, the release of the web and print guide could be accompanied by a physical exhibit in the library's cases.

Conclusions

Reviewing the literature serves to create a convincing argument for preserving zines in libraries, but even as one reads about how the zines contain alternative perspectives that are not represented in other media, it is hard to imagine the scholar sitting down to study these cut-and-paste rags. But as a scholar examining these bits of photocopied paper, I realized just how rich in content the zines are. Zines are artifacts of a particular moment in culture, where women and girls have access to the technology to publish their own works full of their opinions and ideas about the world in which they live. Their value lies not in the individual issues, but in the network and community that they represent as a whole.

The Sarah Dyer Zine Collection contains titles that were reviewed in Dyer's own zine *Action Girl Newsletter*. Many of the titles I examined had advertisements for Dyer's zine as evidence of this connection. Women who sent zines to Dyer also used *Action Girl Newsletter* to find out about other zines across the country, and they traded their zines with each other. Dyer state, " 'for the first couple of years, the *Action Girl Newsletter* was really a hub for girls to network with each other' " (Green 168). Most titles also review other zines, and I kept seeing the same titles pop up in different places. One could almost map out the network of communication by looking at which zine reviews appear where and when. There is an amazing level of consistency in appearance and content of women's zines due to this intricate network that exposed writers to each other's publications. And yet they retain their individuality by keeping the content personal.

The Sarah Dyer Zine Collection Research Guide bridges the gap between the seemingly disparate worlds of zines and scholarship. This research guide will potentially reach zine writers and readers by emulating the same form of communication found in zines, that is, by writing the annotations in way that reflects typical zine reviews and by using familiar categories like those used in most zine books. The guide will also reach scholars because it is presented like an annotated bibliography or guide they may be familiar with using in an archive or library. By being posted on the web, this guide will potentially reach a whole range of users.

Stephen Duncombe's book *Notes from the Underground* is a stellar example of what a scholar can learn from using zines for primary research about popular culture. The based his work on the Factsheet Five Collection at the New York State Library, and in his acknowledgements affirms his respect for the librarians who helped guide his research. His book is the first comprehensive study of the history of zine publishing and to portray contemporary underground culture as it is reflected in zines. Though his book covers a lot of ground, there is still room for more analysis of the zine culture, and there are more zine collections in libraries that have not been explored with this same depth of study. Study of regional zine collections, such as the small one housed in the North Carolina Collection of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, could reveal unique aspects of subculture in North Carolina. In the future, I would hope that the Sarah Dyer Zine Collection would be used to document the lives of women and girls in ways that previously has not been possible due to the lack of primary resources. "Because zines are generally personal and intimate works, they are simply about women's lives as they are lived on a daily basis" (Green xiv). These writings integrate reflections on serious issues such as racism, sexism, and violence

against women, and demonstrate how pervasive these different forms of oppression can be in women's lives.

Zines are especially important because they preserve underrepresented voices, namely queer women and ethnic minorities. Minority women who are also queer have more than one obstacle to face if they want to have their voices heard. Their voices are certainly absent from everyday media. Young women writing for zines are “uncensored and free to discuss their realities,” and they often write simply for the joy of creative expression without regard for their audience (Green xiii). Researchers now and in the future will be privileged to take advantage of this uncensored representation of girls' and women's lives in the twentieth century, but it is up to the archivists and librarians to insure that the zines will be in the stacks when the scholars are ready for them.

Researcher's Guide to the Sarah Dyer Zine Collection

Arts

Many young artists use zines as a means to publish their creative writing, drawings and photographs. This section includes zines with literary, music, performing arts, poetry, and visual arts content. None of these topic areas should be interpreted in the classical or traditional sense, nor in the commercial sense of arts produced for consumption. The poetry is not Shakespeare, but it is the voluminous expression of young people who have creative ways to share their thoughts and feelings. The art might be doodles drawn in the margins during math class. The music is always rock, indie rock, punk rock. Gunderloy describes literary zines as “one of the mainstays of zinedom” (98). He explains that “the urge to write poetry and fiction at times seems near universal, and people are willing to have their work published without pay just so that can share it” (Gunderloy 98).

Bedtime Stories for Trivial Teens. Andrea Lambert. 5, n.d. Portland, OR & San Diego, CA. (Box 1) Topics: literary, visual arts

The cover of #5 subtitles this issue “Revved-Up Youth on a Thrill-Rampage.” This issue is one long story in typewritten text, cut out and pasted collage-style on graphic background.

The issue with no date (due to torn cover) contains some poems and a long play called “The Tale of Charlie Rubber.”

Catherine's Hair. Kiki Nusbaumer & Kim Cassidy. #5/May 1994. Richmond, VA. (Box 1) Topics: literary, visual arts, riot grrrl

This issue contains three fiction stories: "The Last Tower" by Scott; "The Organ Grinder" by Kiki; "The Finding Loser" by Kiki, lots of poems, and zine and music reviews. The essay "A Literary Pilgrimage: The Anne Rice Book Signing" has an account of going to the book signing and a photo of Anne Rice. In this piece, Kiki reveals her literary nature: "It seems as though the art of writing and the act of reading are very much underrated."

How I Learned to Do IT Bloody Murder. Heather Lynn. May 1998. Grayslake, IL. (Box 3) Topics: sexual abuse, cutting, literary, mental health

This title is a semi autobiographical, self-published book, by an 18-year-old author. "I want self representation in my life in a way that makes me able to share it with the people who need to know its important enough to talk about." She explains her writing at the end of the book. "The kind of fiction I like best is the kind where you can get an idea of the person who wrote it, not just the characters. I hope that comes through when I write. I am determined to paint pictures of my life. Write books that read like journals and talk about blood and guts. And real glory."

You Start It All. Zöe Crosher. n.d. Santa Cruz, CA. (Box 7) Topics: literary, visual arts

This lovely and artistic zine consists of a series of black and white photographs of a man and a woman, each captioned with a literary quote. It does not tell a narrative, but rather gives an impression of the possible relationship between the two people.

Music

The zine scene and the alternative, underground or independent music scene “seem to have a natural affinity for one another” (Gunderloy 54). Most personal zines have music reviews, lists of favorite bands or musicians, and excerpts of favorite lyrics. Friedman writes that there are two types of fanzines, fan club newsletters about favorite performers, and general interest zines with “interviews and record reviews from enthusiastic and personal viewpoints” (93). Women’s music zines tend to focus on women in music, as musicians and fans. The best parts about writing a music zine is getting to interview favorite musicians, getting free music from bands and record labels to review, and maybe even backstage passes.

Fake Magazine. Irene Chien. #0/1992. Potomac, MD. (Box 2) Topics: riot grrrl, music, arts

This professional looking zine has great content. This issue includes interviews with CopShootCop, Circus Lupus, and Kathleen Hanna of Bikini Kill, who talks about revolutionary girl power and the Riot Grrrl movement.

Women’s Underground Music Directory for NYC. Leah Huddleston & Stephanie Saddler. 1994. Brooklyn, NY. (Box 7) Topics: music, riot grrrl

This zine-style directory has listings of local and out of town clubs, rehearsal spaces, recording studios, labels, and everything else a woman needs to know about putting out her own albums in New York. There are two interviews, Women Making Noise and Women in Radio, and a listing of female bands in the NYC area.

Chickfactor. Gail and Pam. #1/Fall 1992, #2/Winter 1993, #3/Summer 1993, #4/Fall 1993, #5/Winter 1994, #6/Summer 1994, #8/Winter 1995. New York, NY and Washington, DC. (Box 1) Topics: music, travel

From Issue #1: “We do Chickfactor because we are madly in love with pop music.” All issues focus on women in music and have great interviews with musicians such as Liz Phair, Stereolab, Luscious Jackson, Cibo Matto, and Yo La Tengo. The music reviews are organized by LPs, EPs, 7-in., 10 in., and 12 in. records. Several issues have a Travelog feature where readers and interviewees list the best venues, records shops, thrift shops and other indy places to hangout in cities all over the U.S. and beyond.

Slug and Lettuce. Christine. #34/Apr 1994, #39/May 1995, #36/Sep 1994, #30/Jun 1993, #33/Feb 1994, #41/Oct 1995, #35/Jul 1994, #31/Aug 1993, #28/Nov 1992, #32/Nov 1993, #41/Aug 1995. New York, NY. (Box 6) Topics: music, skate punk

This newspaper tabloid-style zine has lots of great photographs from punk shows, and a large classifieds section that serves to connect punk rockers who are looking for pen pals, new friends, and particular albums or songs. One “pen pals” ad reads: Boston bored female 25, seeks correspondence with those in to cycling, veganism, the punk scene.”

Poetry

Michael Basinski is the expert on poetry zines, so his words make the best introduction to this genre. “The poetry zine is a homespun, folksy, and funky, self-generated literary magazine...The poetry featured in these zines is aggressive and confrontational and often rants against social injustice or quests for sexual liberation via explicit sexual images.”

Women’s poetry often reveals stories of sexual violence, and can be found in almost every personal zine. Some of the poetry zines in the Dyer Collection are more akin to chapbooks.

In Your Face! Gina Grega. #6, #7, #8, #10 (2 c's), #12. New York, NY. (Box 3) Topics: poetry, feminism, literary

Most issues of *In Your Face!* are primarily composed of poetry by the editor and other authors. Issues #8 and #12 are entirely poetry written by women. From the Editor's Note in Issue #12: "These poems make me feel strong—like I can do, say, or survive anything. These poems sometimes make me feel like I'm at an eighth grade slumber party, and other times, like I'm in a dark alley rumble with my girl gang."

Womazine. Hollins College Women's Collective. n.d. Roanoke, VA. (Box 7) Topics: poetry, violence against women

This collection of poetry is mainly about women's issues including violence against women. "Our intention with this journal...is to provide an outlet for women to speak their minds and way what needs to be said about what concerns them." It also has some great drawings and other non-poetic contributions, such as information about birth control methods and listing of women's resources.

Life

All zines are about life. This section includes zines with content from the following topics: education, family, food, humor, motherhood, personal, religion, school, television, travel, women in sports, and work. These are all things most women have experienced or will experience in their daily routine lives, whether they are punk rock riot grrrls or not. Perhaps this section could have been divided up into "Domestic Life" and "Cultural Institutions." Since many of these categories overlap as they are explored in zines, it seems proper to group them all together as the real life and personal experiences of real people, unlike commercial publications about unattainable consumerist ideals. Food zines are about

how to make healthy, familiar and easy food on a budget, and include childhood favorites or kitchen experiments (Friedman 129). Work zines are mostly complaints about boring jobs and annoying coworkers, or encourage readers to use the company's Xerox machine to make their own zines. The religion in zines is usually non-traditional, or anti-establishment. Above all, these tales from the tedium of everyday life in America maintain a healthy sense of humor.

Baby Nebula. Allison Williams and Sarah Roe. #2/Feb 1995. Fayetteville, AK. (Box 1) Topics: travel, work, personal, depression, poetry

Sarah rants about friend not being hired to work as a dishwasher at the same restaurant where both she and Allison work, a place “where your rich grandparents or prom dates frequently go.” Sarah relates the argument she has with the boss about the unfairness of not hiring her because she had “multi-colored hair and facial jewelry.” Nice collage page with smoking warnings. A couple of pieces about living in Fayetteville, AK: “fayetteville: a ball, a bomb, a balm, a bore” and “Ode to Fate-ville.”

Girljock. Roxxie the Sleepless. 1996, #10/1993. San Francisco, CA. (Box 2) Topics: women in sports

This looks more like a magazine with a glossy cover, but in the zine spirit, just with better production quality. All about lesbians in sports, with articles by and interviews with female athletes. Also includes funny articles about lesbian relationships. *Girljock* is very well written and fun to read for everyone, even the not-so-athletically inclined.

Hip Mama: The Parenting Zine. Ariel Gore. #1/Winter-Spring 1994, #2/Summer 1994, #3/Fall 1994. Oakland, CA. (Box 3) Topics: motherhood

In a press release inserted into Issue #1, Gore is quoted about *Hip Mama*: “If we believed the mainstream press we’d think that the twenty-something generation are a bunch of do-nothing slackers, we’d think that all parents were either wealthy baby boomers, or drug-addicted teens, and we’d think that feminism was passé. But here we are. We’re young, we’re smart, we have kids, and *Hip Mama* gives us a place to talk about the multiplicity of our mothering experiences.” Most issues include fiction, poetry, recipes, and great photos of mothers and children. The third issue has an excellent special feature with several contributors: “Mixed Blessings: Raising multiracial kids in a black and white world.” This zine is still going strong, and can be found in your local independent bookshop.

My Broken Halo. Meyshela. #1/1995. Tukwila, WA. (Box 4) Topics: sexual harassment, violence against women, depression, body image, family, school

Meyshela shares a moving account of being bisexual in a Catholic high school and describes what it is like to go to a Catholic high school. She writes about religion and how Christmas is celebrated in schools. She includes diary entries from junior high, her favorite things, personal body image and fashion sense. Meyshela is not sure if she defines herself as a riot grrrl, but likes the ideas. She clearly has a good relationship with her older cousin Huy, and reprints a letter from him about going to UW and being confronted with the Greek scene and rape on campus. He also contributes a cute comic- “This is Ghost Pup!”

Sittin’ Pretty. Samantha Harper. #1, #2. Mansfield, MA; Foxboro, MA. (Box 6) Topics: religion, poetry, school, feminism

The editor of *Sittin’ Pretty* is a Christian feminist, but otherwise this zine has similar content to other personal zines. She writes an essay about how she doesn’t fit the stereotypical

definitions of Christian and feminist: “I just want people to look beyond the labels and pre-conceived opinions to find out what I’m really about.” Cute interview with Hello Kitty. Opinion piece about how men in sparkly pink tutus aren’t going to win the fight for gay rights. Unlike most zine writers, Harper has attempted to give copyright info for all the graphics. Also features animal rights concerns.

Sugar Plum Fairy. Ashley. #1/July 1994. Princeton, NJ. (Box 6) Topics: family, personal, miscellaneous

This personal zine has a good rant about middle sister syndrome: “middle sister syndrome is a bad thing, so if you ever have three daughters be sure not to ever take the middle one for granted cause just think what it would be like if all three girls were bratty showoffs. hmmm...scary thought.” Along with the requisite list of favorites, Ashley writes about “scary mall tales,” her addiction to teen fiction novels, reverse sexism and its stupidity, and why Kmart is so cool.

Personal

According to Mike Gunderloy, “a personal zine, or perzine, is the most intimate kind of zine. It allows the editor/writer many freedoms, not the least of which is spouting off about anything or nothing in particular...It’s also a way of corresponding with any number of people simultaneously while maintaining an aura of intimacy and friendship” (28).

“Personal zines read like the intimate diaries usually kept safely hidden in the back of a drawer or under a pillow. Personal revelation outweighs rhetoric, and polished literary style takes a back seat to honesty” (Duncombe 21). “Perzines are the voice of a democracy: testimony to the unrepresented everyday, the unheard-from everyperson” (Duncombe 24).

Confessions of a Weird Weird Weird Kid. Sarah Kennedy. #1. Chicago, IL. (Box 1)
Topics: personal

“Hi! So this is a zine about me. It’s about the things I use to do or think about when I was a kid... I don’t know, maybe you’ll find this boring, but I’m practically giving this away, so there! ps. on the cover its me me me!” Kennedy’s funny childhood stories include an autographed photo of Olivia Newton John with the tale about what happened when a friend told her she must be gay since she was obsessed with Olivia.

Good Auspice Wish. Marie Sullivan. #1/Sep 1995. Ardmore, PA. (Box 3) Topics: personal

“I am pretty sensitive about a lot of the stuff I wrote in here, and felt like I had to include a huge disclaimer in the introduction, so that even if you don’t like what I wrote, or think I’ cheesy, you’d still accept me. The whole trying-to please-everybody deal. Well I’m not going to. So there.” Includes the requisite list of favorites.

Patchwork Heart. Erin Chamberlain. [#1]/Mar & Apr 1998, #2/Aug & Sep 1998. Orono, ME. (Box 5) Topics: personal

“It’s kind of like Chasing Amy when Alyssa asks ♥ Holden ♥ when he’s going to write something more personal and he says → ‘When I have something more personal to say.’ I finally have something personal to say.” This zine has multiples lists of favorites (music and bands, lyrics, books, movies) and a lot about friends and cute boys. Coloring page with images of Pooh Bear & co. (a popular theme among girls). Nice collage page with images to illustrate the theme “I am beautiful because/I am ugly because.”

Politics

Politics is something that pervades many of the zines in the Dyer Collection. This section includes zines with content from the following topics: activism, animal rights, censorship, environment, feminism, politics, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, vegetarianism, and violence against women. “It’s always been a struggle for people with non-mainstream beliefs to find an audience for their ideas. Thankfully, the zine revolution has made things a whole lot easier for people to get their message out” (Friedman 107). Writing about these issues, especially personal experiences with abuse, is a highly political act for young women. It is both overwhelming and empowering to hear so many voices echoing the same stories of violence, but also calling to each other to resist and fight back and protect themselves and each other.

Aim Your Dick. Mimi Ngyun & Marike. #1/Mar 1993, #2/n.d. Berkeley, CA. (Box 1)
Topics: politics, feminism, violence against women, animal rights, abortion rights

If this zine doesn’t get your blood boiling, nothing will. In addition to the indexed topics, *Aim Your Dick* also features poetry, vegetarianism, anti-racism, anarchism, and anti-rape writings. From the cover of the first issue, Mimi and Marike’s politics are clear: “Emma Goldman, Foot Care, Gender Issues & Sexism, Abortion & the Bible, [and] Food Not Bombs.” The subtitle of the second issue is “A Journal of Anarcha-Feminists Hot to Kick Patriarchal Ass,” and it contains articles about: “Being Pro-Abortion (not pro-choice), Environmental Racism, Confronting Gangsta Rap, Marike’s Grandma, “There are no such things as Oriental sex secrets,” [and] Bible Study for Anarchists.”

Gecko (a.k.a. Gecko in my toilet). Lindsay Oldenski, et al. #1/Jan 1994, #2/Apr 1994, #3/May 1994, #4/Jan 1995. Gulfport/Seminole, FL. (Box 2) Topics: censorship, politics

Issue #1 has an excellent account of Oldenski's personal experience with censorship. An article she wrote for school newspaper about sexual harassment was censored by the school principal due to the mild profanity in the article's title. After the story was picked up by the media, the principal relented and allowed the newspaper to be distributed. Other issues addressed in Gecko include homophobia and sexism. The last issue mostly recycled content from previous issues.

Snakes, Snails and Puppy Dog Tails. Leanne Pyle. n.d. Safety Harbor, FL. (Box 6) Topics: animal rights, vegetarianism, literary, visual arts, drug culture

This zine has strong vegetarian and animal rights content including a reprinted fact sheet on vegetarianism from The American Anti-Vivisection Society, a list of companies that do animal testing, and information about World Animal Awareness Week. On a lighter note, there is also an interview with Satan and his Dad.

Feminism

For a woman or girl, writing a zine is a feminist act. It makes the personal political by demonstrating that women's lives, thoughts and feelings are important and worth hearing. Feminist zines range from the hysterically funny, to the bitingly radical, with most falling somewhere in between. *Bust* and *Bitch* magazines are feminist zines that have become relatively well-established glossy magazines with wide subscription bases and snazzy websites. These magazines are like *Ms. Magazine*, for a younger generation of feminists.

Hey There, Barbie Girl! Barbara. #2/Spring 1994, #3/Summer 1994 (2 c's), #4/n.d. New York, NY. (Box 3) Topics: feminism, humor

Hilarious fun for the Barbie lover and hater in us all. HTBG was ordered to cease and desist by Mattel, see article in Bamboo Girl. Issue #2: "Our Barbies, Ourselves;" #3 "Zen + the Art of Barbie Maintenance;" #4 "Barbie Says. " All of the issues have lots of new Barbie ideas: Homeopathic Barbie, Bad Skin Barbie, Manic Depressive Barbie, Totally Unemployed Barbie, and many more.

Jing Bing So. Maria Navarro. #3, #4/May 1994. Vallejo, CA. (Box 3) Topics: feminism
Issue #4 was produced as a project for high school English class: "the women's issues, the documented infomercial of feminist awareness, the all-girl empowerment extravaganza."
Navarro examines "Feminism in the Youth Generation of the Nineties." She surveyed 8 people aged 15-22, mostly zine editors and asked about defining feminist movement and their role in it, myths and stereotypes, and the Riot Grrrl movement. Other topics include in/equality in the workplace, equal pay for equal work, the women of Shakespeare, and great book reviews of high school classics. Issue #3 is more music oriented with an interview with Bratmobile, Lars from Rancid, and Tattle Tale along with music and zine reviews.

Lesbian Contradiction: a journal of irreverent feminism. Jan Adams, et al. #41/Winter 1993, #42/Spring 1993, #43/Summer 1993 (2 c's), #44/Fall 1993, #45/Winter 1994, #47/Summer 1994, #48/Fall 1994. San Francisco, CA. (Box 3) Topics: comics, lesbian issues, sexuality

This newspaper "by and for women" was not categorized as feminist in the database, but it is an excellent example of feminist publication at its finest. It includes great comics including "Lesbian Cat Paw Comix," in which the cat asks, "What do you mean they don't let cats and

people marry?” Lesbian Contradiction has a very smart and very diverse range of contributors and subject matter.

Race and Ethnicity

This section includes zines with content from the following topics: Asian American, Latina, Native American, and Race. Strikingly missing is African American.

Bamboo Girl. Sabrina. #1, #8. New York, NY. (Box 1) Topics: music, queer, Asian-American

In the editorial note from the first issue, Sabrina writes, “I’ve always been a little perturbed by the fact that nobody sees ethnic chicks in the hardcore scene, but I know they exist. I’m one of them. I’m a Filipina/Spanish/Irish mestiza of sorts. I have always wanted to express my frustration towards racist assholes who think that the hardcore scene belongs to the white middle-class boyz alone. No, I think not!” This issue includes an excerpted letter and personal statements from women of color leaving the NYC Lesbian Avengers due to racism within the group. *Bamboo Girl* is very in your face, unapologetic, and still going strong in 2002. Pick up a copy at your local independent bookstore.

Blowin’ Chunx. Alyssa. #5/Jul 1992. Brookline, MA. (Box 1) Topics: Native American, music, women’s health

This zine has a variety of content on Native American issues. One article, “Self-Actualization” by Dorene Red Cloud, is about the conflicts of exploring her Lakota and Cree heritage and feeling something missing. Red Cloud encourages other Native American people to explore their own heritage in order to understand themselves. There are also

pictures from the Ann Arbor Pow Wow, which was an “important and emotional experience” for the author, who is not Native American, but was very moved by the pow wow. Also include page with statistics about American Indian’s economic and political status and a copy of a poster protesting racist Indian athletic mascots.

Chica Loca. Lala. #3/Sep 1995. New York, NY. (Box 1) Topics: Latina

This issues is subtitled “Special Report directly from the Third World” and contains a long journal-style essay about author’s trip to Ecuador, with notes about going to night clubs, sexism and gender roles. Includes clippings and ads in Spanish. Some queer content.

Title: Lost I.D.: Feminist Women of Color Shout! Claudia von Vacono. #1. New York, NY. (Box 4) Topics: race, feminism, riot grrrl

The Hispanic editor started Lost I.D. because she didn’t know of any other zines by women of color. She explains: “So I lost my I.D. and I thought to myself: Lost. Identity. When you fail to see others of your race, gender or sexual orientation...Where are the women of color? (girls, too) Where are you?! I live in a neighborhood that is Hispanic, but when I step outside to political organizations, social events, galleries, when I read publications, when I go to a flick, a show, anything, I feel alone...”

Let’s Talk About Sex

“Everything from sex roles to sex play gets considered quite seriously in this part of the zine universe, where people can be themselves without fear” (Gunderloy 114). This section includes zines with content from the following topics: Lesbian issues, pornography, queer, and sexuality. There is some overlap among these topics. “Queer” covers more

ground than “lesbian issues” since it is a term more open for interpretation, and both of these terms rely on how the zines themselves represent the authors’ sexualities. In these zines the reader will find “a surprising array of personal, political, and theoretical discussions about sexuality” (Friedman 73).

Dork Dyke. Tara and Debbie. #1/Nov 1994. Chicago, IL. (Box 2) Topics: queer
 Subtitled, “The zine for smart girls who like other smart girls (in or out of bed),” Dork Dyke also claims to be Sassier than Sassy. This issue contains a section on TV heroines including Velma from *Scooby Doo*, Cagney & Lacey, Sabrina from *Charlie’s Angels*, Wonder Woman, and Joe from *The Facts of Life*. Other features include Dork Dyke pick up lines such as, “Can I borrow your Copy Card?” and “Wanna go shopping at the thrift store?” and Kweer Kandy: Rainbow Pride Spreez, M&Ms, Sixlits.

Disco Fred’s Got a Vasectomy. Alison Byrne Fields. #1/Aug 1992. Amherst, MA. (Box 2)
 Topics: sexuality, family, race, violence against women

This powerful zine focuses on some of the negative aspects of sexuality. One essay is about rape by a sexual partner, graphically describing what happened and how it made the author feel angry, violated, and disempowered. Another section discusses the author’s experience with doctors’ condescending behavior, when being fitted for a diaphragm and during an abortion. There is also on essay about HIV/AIDS. In addition to these issues, the author also writes about being biracial, and about her family’s acceptance of her.

Hurricane Girl. Katie. #1/Fall 1998. Milwaukee, WI. (Box 3) Topics: queer, sexuality, school, women's health

This well written publications has a great article entitled "Safe sex is hot sex," with tips on using latex gloves, dental dams, and condoms correctly. Another article is about how to deal with yeast infections Interesting interview with photographer Ann Sautter about her work and using images of Barbies in sexual situations. Great piece about men who try to hit on lesbian women: "You are absolutely NOT a lesbian trapped in a man's body!!"

Queer. Shannon Wong. #3 (2 c's). Sacramento, CA. (Box 5) Topics: pornography, queer, poetry

"Zine QUEER is an alternative for those just coming out with their sexuality or for those who don't fit into the two categories popular in society." Since gays and lesbians have gained more visibility and a level of acceptance, other people who don't quite identify as gay or straight "are being stepped on and left at the bottom." "Pornography and Prostitution: Two Women's Views on It." Pansy Division (punk queer band)

Switch Hitter: the one to have when you're having more than one. Unknown. #1, #2, n.d. Cambridge, MA. (Box 6) Topics: pornography, queer, sexuality

Very good article called "Coming Out to Danny" by a lesbian who fell in love with and married a close male friend. She writes about the conflicts and contradictions she experienced as a lesbian who is in a monogamous relationship with a man. Nice piece on "How to write your first bit of pornography if you don't usually write." Sexy fiction, poetry, and "Dear D'Amada," an advice column written by a drag queen.

Subculture

This section includes zines with content from the following topics: body modification, comix (comics), drug culture, fashion, girl power, gothic, hardcore, riot grrrl, skate punk, straight edge, and wicca.

Downer. Sara Kotmel. #11. Spencer, NY. (Box 2) Topics: skate punk, body modification, pornography

This issue has a “Skate with Style or Don’t Skate at All” ad from a skateboarding magazine, with great commentary about personal style and individuality: “And what if you’re a really good skater, but you like to wear lycra and leopard print bandannas?” Reprinted newspaper article about mainstream body piercing, with annotation: “Aren’t you glad we know body-piercing is out!” Anti-porn content. A little on the dark side with a fictional story about vampires, lyrics from The Cure and a picture of Robert Smith (lead singer of The Cure).

Endemoniada. Blacky and Lucifera. #1, #2. New York, NY. (Box 2) Topics: music, goth, religion

This hilarious goth-girl zine has band reviews and interviews, satanic doodles, zine reviews, and occult book reviews. Includes Lucifera’s thoughts and some others’ quotes about Satanism: “In my opinion, Satanism is rebellion, the acknowledgement of reality, individualism. Satanism represents a reminder that we are all animals, which I often hear people deny.” An interesting perspective on the underground scene, and very pro-women in music.

Riot Grrrl

“Riot Grrrl is a network, a community, an exploration outward for all of us as women and within myself, as, yes, a woman.” –Sarah L. quoted in Riot Grrrl (NYC). Riot Grrrl is a network of women across the country, and around the world, and browsing through the Dyer collection reveals how connected these girls are. They review each other’s zines, and have their ads in each other’s zines. They talk about the same issues, use the same graphics, quote the same statistics. And yet they made these zines because they felt isolated in their own communities, and needed a place to have a voice. They used these zines, and the title of Riot Grrrl to find each other by encouraging girls to make flyers, hold meetings, write zines, etc. Many riot grrrl zines have content about violence against women, sexual abuse or harassment (particularly in the punk scene), body image, music, zine reviews, and cool women.

I Kicked a Boy. Leah. #1, #2. Clifton, VA. (Box 3) Topics: riot grrrl, violence against women, girl power

Leah named her zine after a song by the Sundays. IKAB is a “compilation of writings done by women, for women, about women, etc.” One issue has an essay on why one punk zine writer is NOT a riot grrrl, and another on being proud to be a grrrl. The other issue has similar content, discussing what it means to be a riot grrrl and why or why not some choose to be identified in this way.

Riot Grrrl. Riot Grrrl NYC. #7, n.d. New York, NY. (Box 5) Topics: riot grrrl

Issue #7 is the Queer Punk Issue, “with lots of tortured coming-out stories,” “Tales of a True baby Dyke,” and poetry. The issue with no date has a great page of what riot grrrl

means to different women. “Putting the punk back into feminism, and the feminism into punk.” –Liberty.

The Screaming Siren. Eve. #1. Laguna Niguel, CA. (Box 6) Topics: riot grrrl, music
Well-written and fun to read. Features include: “Is Riot Grrrl at an end?,” “Why girls still aren’t invited into high testosterone three chord punk,” and “Interviews with 3 pro-girl zine editors.” Other fun pieces include: “What is punk?,” a tribute to the TV show Absolutely Fabulous, the Courtney bashing “Scully [of the X-Files] kicks Courtney Love’s butt!,” “And more stuff to brag about to your friends!” Bands discussed include 7 Year Bitch, Huggy Bear & lots of reviews.

Women’s Health

This section particularly illustrates how women and girls are rejecting mainstream values about women’s bodies. They are taking their health into their own hands by being vocal about issues that polite society would prefer to keep private. Educating each other and sharing health information is an empowering act for all women who want to reclaim their physical, mental and sexual health from doctors and the media. The topics covered under the heading of Women’s Health include Abortion Rights, Body Image/Acceptance, Cutting (Self-mutilation), Depression, Eating Disorders, Mental Health, and Women’s Health.

Angst and Depression: and you thought you were depressed! Unknown. n.d. s.l. (Box 1) Topics: depression

“We know how you feel.” Like many depressed teenagers, the authors of this zine express themselves through self-deprecating humor, and references to rain, black clothes, and bad

relationships. Special Interview with the Doom and Gloom Twins (with Morrisey); Lots of magazine models defaced. A&D word search- #1 has negative words like hatred, failure, suicide; #2 has positive words to find such as love, success, recovery, but all the letters in the puzzle are Xs.

Barbie Kan Kick G.I. Joe's Ass. Katherine Montalto. #2/Apr 1995. Warren, MI. (Box 1)
Topics: depression, drug culture

This is another depression-oriented zine with a rant against the use of Prozac, and another about having no privacy due to depression, mother reads her diary, not being believed by doctors. "Drugs give you side effects and never give you true happiness." Also includes poetry, a defense of and tribute to Courtney Love, and Tori Amos worship.

Bathory's Blister. Sara and Devon. #1. South Lyon, MI. (Box 1) Topics: body image/acceptance, eating disorders, poetry

Bathory's Blister has references to *Sassy* magazine and Barbie and a copy of Naomi Wolf's autograph. One photocopied article has AIDS statistics, and another has dieting and weight statistics. One excerpt from Mary Piper's *Reviving Ophelia* states, "America today is a girl-destroying place."

Mons of Venus. Carmen. #2. Memphis, TN. (Box 4) Topics: women's health, abortion rights, feminism

This zine has a lovely page about breast cancer with an image of woman with scar and note about from a woman named Freda about her mom's decision to have her right breast removed instead of having chemo. Content on body image, big is beautiful. Period Page. Lots of stuff about abortion rights, including page by woman who is an escort at abortion clinics

Our Rag. Jennifer Berkowitz, et al. May 1997. Sarasota, FL. (Box 4) Topics: abortion rights, sexuality

Written by five women who started a Women's Alternative Health Tutorial in order to learn how to take care of themselves on their own, "without having to depend so much on institutionalized medical care and drugs." Lots of good information about menstruation and fertility and reputable references to women's health books, zines, organizations, and websites. All about knowing your body and taking good care of it. Even has a keyword index!!

The Urban Herbalist: A magazine of herbal healing, do-it-yourself healthcare, and sexual adventure. Women's Health Action Mobilization (WHAM!). #8/Apr 1993, #11/May 1994. New York, NY. (Box 7) Topics: women's health

This guide to women's health is concerned with empowerment and education around women's bodies and healthcare. It includes a wealth of information about using herbal therapies, fertility and natural methods of birth control, choice, and how to get to know your own body. Each issue has listings of nationwide resources for women's natural and alternative healthcare.

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