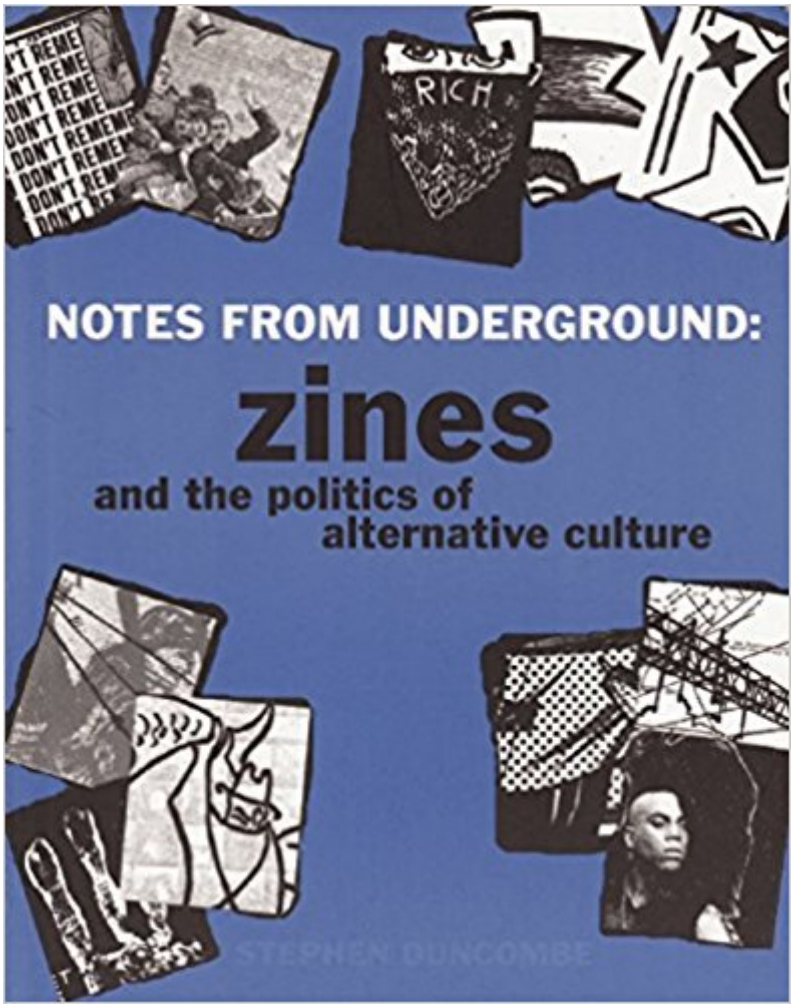
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Notes From Underground: Zines And The Politics Of Alternative Culture



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Synopsis

Much history and theory is uncovered here in the first comprehensive study of zine publishing. From their origins in early 20th century science fiction cults, their more proximate roots in ‘60s counter-culture and their rapid proliferation in the wake of punk rock, Stephen Duncombe pays full due to the political importance of zines as a vital network of popular culture. He also analyzes how zines measure up to their utopian and escapist outlook in achieving fundamental social change. Packed with extracts and illustrations, he provides a useful overview of the contemporary underground in all its splendor and misery.

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Customer Reviews

"A timely new critical study, Stephen Duncombe’s Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture (1997), throws some light on the current state of zines and what’s at stake. Duncombe, a professor of American Studies and a zine-maker himself, locates zines within a wider bohemian tradition, and maps out both the potential and the limits of their cultural radicalism."Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •The Atlantic"Duncombe retains his respect and even admiration for the utopian sentiments that animate the ’zine world, even as he unblinkingly diagnoses the contradictions and limitations of the political vision these publications offer."Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •Weekly Wire"Here is an extensive analysis and critique of the zine as a whole by a professor, activist, and zine maker himself. Originally published in 1997, it gives many references to the broad world of zines at the time and even dating

back to the 1930s. All subject remains timeless in effect and Duncombe espouses on each careful selection as it relates to the subject he is tackling. As a former self-publisher and now contributor, I never gave much thought to the history. For example, originating in the sci-fi world, the zine was birthed as a means to connect with like minded people to share ideas about stories read in glossier magazines, and even to self publish their own. The anti-consumerist nature of DIY publishing is a rebellion in itself and yet has a major craving for connection at the same time. Duncombe delves into this oxymoron and raises the questions: do zines make the difference it set out to do? Can they actually effect social change or rather implode in itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s underground world? He sites arguments for both, afterall he IS part of it himself. These are all important queries that raised my eyebrows and had me pondering the broader effect of zines on our culture and society as large. Recommended."Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •Profance Existance"This book took me a little by surprise with its in depth and analytical look at zine culture and it's place in alternative culture. This zine starts with a great overview of what exactly zines are and then moves into discussing the community around zines and other aspects of their place in culture."Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •410Media"Duncombe professes American Studies at SUNY Old Westbury and Notes From Underground is a work of very impressive scholarship: there are 32 pages of notes, many of them gathered during 'weeks on end' when he studied at the NY State Library among 'hundreds of cubic feet of zines housed in their Factsheet Five Collection'.' He's also a longtime zinester and has created a labor of love here, meant to be read. Don't be intimidated by the scholarly apparatus or the occasionally highfalutin language (zines are 'repositories of nonalienated creation and media for nonalienating communication') -- there's a lot here to interest the general reader. There's dozens of well-chosen illustrations. Almost all from zines published in the early 1990s. A pretty good index despite the omission of Tussin Up and MSRRT's Chris Dodge. I recommend Notes From Underground very highly."Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •The Ten Page News

Stephen Duncombe is an associate professor at New York UniversityÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Gallatin School and a lifelong political activist. He lives in New York City.

This book is a must-read for all art students and should also prove helpful to students of journalism and other fields. It offers an excellent insight into the whys and hows of zines while also maintaining a critical perspective. If you don't know what a zine is, you will find out. If you do know, you will get a deeper understanding of the history of zines and what they have morphed into since their heyday.Zines reflect what happens when anyone can publish. Much as we might like to believe that

this is the answer to corporate news and other canned information, zines turn out to me more personal expression and less a matter of getting you better news than the big agencies. But, that said, they offer just about every perspective conceivable. And, for those self-publishers who stick with them, they can be the beginnings of projects that allow them to find a productive, creative place in society. Of course, some will keep doing zines forever and a day. Whether zines or a "real job" become one’s destiny, zines still serve as a forum for dissent and dissemination. And they and the people behind them are worth knowing about.

Low-key changed my life. I was dimly aware of zines before but after reading this I’m obsessed with collecting zines and I’ve created a couple of my own. Opened my eyes to the rhetoric of participatory culture and celebrated amateurism. Real pivotal thing for me.

underground culture born out of opposition to the mainstream media of the comsumer culture and the alienation caused by the whole capitalist culture is analysed in Duncombe’s book in great detail.The making of it,the meaning of it and the paradoxes and drawbacks it has are all introduced.pros and cons well defined.Duncombe also draw the limits of the underground scene.I agree with his pessimisim about fanzine writers doing nothing more than just being politics by themselves.[what i mean is fanzine writers dont need to take political action as making a fanzine is keeping them busy (mind and time)]What is most successful about this book is he didnt just write about the world of fanzines but explored through the social/economic/political structure of the USA. As a political science student and a fanzine writer i share his views concerning the new world order as an everchanging,imposing and even assimilating fact.(is it new?)Well, i really liked the book even though at times i felt like he is repeating all again well i guess this happens when explaining such complex things (as economic,olitical things not fanzines) Elif Ozgen

Disagreeing with a recent online review, this book is valuable for its sociological scholarly analysis. Essentially every other book currently existing on the topic of zines is nothing more than a very limited and stilted collection of samples from zines every zinester worth their salt has already heard of ad nauseum. While Duncombe is a little heavy on the utopic and overly optimistic naivete in regards to the ability of alternative media subcultures to change the dominant mainstream as we know it, it was very refreshing to read a book about zines that didn’t seem to feel the necessity to "dumb it down" for the zine kids, many of whom are exceptionally bright. This is certainly worth checking out if you do a zine and are into thinking, instead of regurgitating the same old, same old,

as far too many zines do.

An interesting overview of various zines, but there seemed to be something lacking from it... I'm not exactly sure what. Though I must agree with those that say that they were tempted to do a zine after reading _Notes From the Underground_, I'm sure that there are enough crappy zines with out my contribution. It is, however an excellent general resource, if you are doing research or are interested in zines from a sociological perspective. It seems suprisingly academic for its subject. However, I think that reading zines is a much better idea then reading about zines. The best part about the book was the pulled pages from other zines, but that is just my visually-stimulated, short-attention-spanned opinion...

This is a sobering, inspiring book. Duncombe shows us the boundless potential of zines and zine culture. At the same time he diagnoses the failure of zines to reach out and become relevant to people outside our little "underground". All the effort and enthusiasm that we pour into zines is a small revolution, but if we all joined forces and poured that effort into a movement, we could truly change the system rather than just complaining and waging futile rebellion against it. This book should be required for any would-be revolutionaries, punks, zine creators, and thinking human beings.

I was happy to read that DIY communication is surviving amist the clutches of Big Business!Having no idea what a "zine" was - in itself either tells you that I am completely removed from Bohemia and/or have been completely swallowed up by the mass of Big Business everything. But I clutched for that lifeline and reveled in the premise of freedom of speech as I read about the DIY zine creators/communicators.Individuality and originality still lives? YYYYYYYYYYYYYYEEEEEEEEEEEEEESSSSSSSSSSSSTake a walk with Duncombe - it's worth it.

This certainly is one of the best works about Zines. Steve layout a bunch of topics which are rather unknown into zine's scene. The big ammount of quotes reflects his comitment and background to perform this book. I still amazed of the number of quotes and interviews, which provides a wide vision of zine culture spreaded in USA. Still I feel a bit disapointed because of Steve just suggests the Zine scene in other countries. I'd like he wrote more about. Though his work is bloody comprehensive and interesting for those into Zines world.

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