

FOR THE LOVE OF IT?: ZINE WRITING AND THE STUDY OF
CONTEMPORARY AMATEUR WORK

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

In this project, I am examining zines in relation to the question of contemporary amateurism. With the onset of Web 2.0 came a space for new forms of amateur work, but this new work hasn't been addressed as "amateur," which has revealed a problem between what theorists know the amateur to be and what has been embraced by mainstream culture. This oversimplification of the definition of amateurism seems to threaten the integrity of amateur work in general. I analyze the concepts "transparency" and "distance" and show that both highlight the need for preserving the amateur. I confront the notion of "for the love it" by interrogating the boundaries that zine writers have established and the misperception that zine work somehow remains on the fringe of capitalist culture. Moreover, I identify the Pro Am (professional amateur) as the most significant contemporary amateur figure because it directly challenges not only what it means to be professional, but also what it means to be amateur.

By examining perzines and glossies, I argue that while "for the love of it" has been downplayed or even ignored, internal rewards are still an important factor in what makes an act amateur and that external rewards don't always have to be monetary. I argue that a better understanding of amateurism via the amateurs doing their work calls attention to the way that individuals are self-identifying as amateurs and shows that zine writers maintain the distance and transparency that is seen as a necessity of amateur work.

I find that zine writers demonstrate this preservation of amateur space in successful ways until they are confronted with the issue of Pro Am work. It is at this point that they fail to embrace a diverse definition of amateur work, which is necessary to understanding what kind of space glossies occupy and how they are valuable to amateurism. The zine community ends up rejecting a body of publications that directly interact with and challenge professional magazine work. By alienating these publications, they lose out on the opportunity to alter the mainstream magazines their zines are working so hard to change.

DEDICATION

To Nana and Aunt Nat, two women who taught me the importance of education
and instilled in me the love of reading.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

THE STATUS OF ZINE WRITING AND AMATEUR WORK

It's a windy, but warm Memorial Day weekend. The place: a turf field at a sports complex in Brooklyn, near the Rockaways. The function: a 6 a side field hockey tournament. The moment: defense. The goalie: 45 years old with a persistent back injury, lays out to stop a shot. The ball bounces off her kickers and deflects back into the other team. The defender: 35 and still working her way back to peak shape after six years off, attempts to stop the shot fired off by that opposing player. It bobbles off of her stick into her foot. Tweet! Penalty corner. The goalie gets up, laughing. "Sorry, I should have just cleared that one." The defender, also laughing, "Yeah, I should have maybe only used my stick." They look at each other and then the referee and laugh: "Oh well, didn't go in, right?" "Hah! Right!"

Ten years ago, I would have made that stop, as would my goalie. As we hash out each play in each game in all of the leagues and tournaments we enter, we take with us the memory of our former glory and we remember that while victories might look a little different now, our competition is on average ten to twenty years younger than us. And we remember that we are each one of the few from our particular athletic divisions who are still daring to play the sport on a competitive level. We are amateur athletes, driving from New York to New Jersey to play multiple games in two leagues on the same day and hobbling to work that Monday. We fly across the country and the world to play

against international teams with little to no recognition outside of our own small group of family and friends. Even the greater field hockey community has seen fit to relegate us to the shadows in lieu of the younger and more elite players. What was once a thriving community that showed me my time with field hockey really had no limits is now much smaller and much more hidden. In fact, during the televised commentary of the most recent University of Maryland/Princeton University Division I field hockey game, the presenter repeatedly stated that individuals have no options for playing field hockey in the U.S. beyond college sports. The vibrant amateur field hockey community within which I participate seems to go unnoticed even by those who are dialed into the overall American field hockey arena.

While this is certainly frustrating to those of us who know better, what is clear to me is that even this invisibility is more than many amateur groups will receive. That is to say, field hockey, by virtue of being a sport, stands a greater chance of visibility than lesser known amateur work, such as ham radio operators and zine writers. However, what causes that obscurity isn't always the fact that an activity remains out of plain sight. There is an increasing amount of amateur work that is, in fact, quite visible, but in its newer form doesn't always bear the signs of being amateur. This is mainly seen with amateur work that is performed or hosted on social media and other internet-based mediums. Commonly known as "Web 2.0," this new approach to the generation of information and intellectual resources has spawned a pseudo-professional element. As well, contemporary athletics have merged with capitalist culture to the extent that classic notions of the amateur athlete seem to be no longer applicable and, in fact, quite

problematic. Both of these entities complicate our common understanding of what an amateur is, what amateur work looks like, and what the motivation should be when undertaking it.

While this particular project is interested in zine work, an understanding of the overall amateur world and the issues plaguing it will help to better analyze how these zines and zine writers are positioning themselves within the general amateur community. As well, it will help examine how a lesser known amateur group interacts with this issues in order to understand how exactly we should be defining amateur work and what elements of that classic definition no longer apply. Mostly, however, I am interested in better understanding the attitudes of individuals doing amateur work in athletics and within Web 2.0, so that I can better interrogate the boundaries that zine writers have established and challenge the misperception that zine work somehow remains on the fringe of capitalist culture. I will argue that these publications offer us a good example of transparency of one's work and self-awareness as it relates to amateur work and distancing within the amateur/professional structure. As well, I will argue that zine writers demonstrate the ongoing discomfort of the amateur and professional community at large when it comes to Pro Am work. By examining glossies and their position in a middle space between amateur and professional writing, I will demonstrate that paid amateur work (Pro Am) isn't as problematic as it is made out to be, and furthermore, is much more prevalent than is realized.

What are zines?

Zines are self-produced, generally alternative publications generated within communities that are defined by their specific interests. These publications touch upon topics anywhere from the politically and culturally significant to the seemingly mundane routines and experiences of the everyday, everyperson. Some are perzines, which are personal zines that are based on the writer's lives. Some are written anonymously or under a pseudonym. Some zines are literary-based, some are collections of works from various writer and artists, and some are simply meant to be informative. In general, zines are handmade "noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines which their creators, produce, publish, and distribute by themselves" (Duncombe 6). They vary in size and content, but they usually follow a basic format:

A typical zine [...] might start with a highly personalized editorial, move into a couple of opinionated essays or "rants," criticizing, describing, extolling something or other, and then conclude with reviews of other zines, bands, books, and so forth. Spread throughout this would be poems, a story, reprints from the mass press (some for informational value, others as ironic commentary), and a few hand-drawn illustrations or commix. The editor would produce the content him or herself, solicit it from personal friends or zine acquaintances, or, less commonly, gather it through an open call for submissions. Material is also 'borrowed': pirated from other zines and the mainstream press, sometimes without credit, invariably without permission. (Duncombe 10)

What distinguishes zines most from other publications is their do-it-yourself (DIY) ethics and their use of the cut-and-paste format. DIY is a philosophy with both artistic and punk music roots and its basic concept is rejecting consumer culture, specifically passive consumption. It promotes “Do-it-Yourself,” which otherwise looks like making your own clothes and products, growing your own food, and educating yourself about social, political, and cultural realities. DIY culture embraces local community, such as local farming and small business, as well as exchange culture as an alternative to the money-based mainstream culture. In zines, the DIY ethic is used to address the negative effects of mainstream business practices that privilege profit over individuality and encourage passive consumption over thoughtful choice. The importance of DIY as a guiding philosophy is the belief that it promotes personal agency in all activities that are undertaken.

At the economic level, zine writers participate in exchange culture. They exchange their zines by hand or through the mail and are generally heard of by word of mouth or via other zines or zine vendors, known as distros. Instead of being profit-oriented, exchange culture is community-oriented, promoting local economy and sustainability. More importantly, it frequently, and quite literally, raises exchange methods to the same level as traditional payment. Goods and services become as valuable as money. Zines embrace this by encouraging zine exchange, giving one for one sent, as well as the equivalent of the zine’s price in personal service, to be negotiated between the zine writer and reader. In this very basic way, zines challenge conventional consumer culture by purposefully rejecting a single value system.

In the bigger picture, zine writers actively fight against large publishing house production, which quashes creativity in favor of profit. Only those works that fit the established standard and that will produce the necessary profits will be accepted and so validated as “good” work. Zine writers refuse to subject their work to this, choosing instead to produce according to their own standards, as well as to publish their work themselves. They look to their audience for validation and eliminate the need for monetary success. In doing this, zines believe their work retains a higher level of authenticity because the final product is mediated only by the author and their personal audience. What they want to put into their zines is what the zines contain.

In *Culture and Authenticity*, Charles Lindholm attributes the need for authenticity to the individual’s need to find his or her “real” identity in consumer culture, “particularly in the United States, where the fantastic quantity of things made possible by capitalism has stimulated an equally fantastic proliferation of optional identities” (53). In other words, at the same time that individual anonymity and isolation are increasing and creating more tension about self identity, the market presents a multitude of personalities for consumers to assume. This is something that succeeds only in heightening the already present anxiety. Zines, steeped in popular culture, respond to this crisis of identity and consumerism. How they accomplish this has much to do with the zine writers’ approach to form and production.

Zine writers focus on the actual act of creating over the end result, a philosophy that comes from the heavy involvement of anarchist groups in zine writing as well as the zine genre’s roots in modernism. This means placing a greater emphasis on producing

each issue of the zine, rather than perfecting the product. Consequently, zines tend to appear messy and have adopted this as a convention of their work. As well, zine writers generally maintain a small audience under the presumption that doing so will establish more personal, and therefore more authentic, connections. Their readers are their friends rather than faceless, voiceless buyers. Responsibility is implied both on the part of the zine writer to produce their zines honestly and on the part of the audience to respond critically and enthusiastically. Without either of these elements, the process would fail.

Zines have a long history, starting with political pamphlets and moving into and through science fiction fan fiction of the 1930's, the punk music movement of the 1970s, and finally the Riot Grrrl movement of the late 80s to mid 90s. They have classically occupied an underground space and an alternative voice that is determined to talk back to mainstream culture. They have also provided a space for participatory culture, which allows members to interact directly with the fiction and writing as well as the writers of these works. Readers and writers form a symbiotic relationship with one another and make the creative process an interactive one.

When thinking about women and zines, Riot Grrrl is the movement that comes to mind. Riot Grrrl was a bi-coastal music movement aimed at the sexist treatment of female punk musicians within the music industry, and in some respects spawned third wave feminism, a branch of feminism most commonly associated with young feminists who have grown up with the accomplishments and complications of Second Wave feminism in their everyday lives. While female-centered zines are not solely associated

with Riot Grrrl, most have an understanding of it as the basis for the entry of women into the zine community.

This project will look mostly at perzines because they provide a transparency that is necessary for this kind of analysis, and primarily women-authored zines. I have chosen a variety of zines in the hopes to get a better sense of this idea of amateuring across an extended period of time. Essentially, I am interested to see if amateuring appears in the same way regardless of the time period in which the zine was authored. *Doris Zine*, by Cindy Crabb, has been in production since 1991 and continues to be produced alongside her other writing ventures. *Pagan's Head* is a now defunct zine written in the heyday of the Riot Grrrl Movement. I chose this zine because author Pagan Kennedy wrote a book a few years after establishing her writing career that is a reflection of her zine and the process through which she developed it. From there, I chose to work with *Entry Point*, which is a collective zine that talks about why zine writers decided to make zines and what their experiences were with making them. Some of the zines continue to be in production, while some aren't and some are unknown. Finally, I chose three relatively current zines *Pulse Zine*, *She's So Very...Zine*, and *Cardboard Cutous Zine*. One is written by a college-age woman, one is a graduate student who is working on her Master's Degree, and one is a twenty-something woman who is working to find her path in life. While I have chosen to work with perzines, I believe my findings are applicable to other forms of interactive zines.

Why zines?

In his work, "Criticism in the Zines: Vernacular Theory and Popular Culture," Thomas McLaughlin argues that the significance of zines lies in their ability to bring what he calls the "critical everyday culture" into print (69). Fostering this is the zine's potential as a medium of knowledge, McLaughlin says that "in the zines we can find the fans seeing through the ideological operation itself, practicing a vernacular cultural criticism. The zines are a space in which fundamental theoretical questioning of cultural systems manages--now and again, and against the wishes of popular culture itself--to occur" (53). The significance of these publications lies in their ability to educate their readership. By manipulating media and popular culture texts, zine writers demonstrate active reading to their audience, providing the tools to approach similar texts on their own. According to McLaughlin, the cut and paste collage of images and words helps their readers see through the strategies of popular culture and media systems because it results in "visual overload and a denaturalization of the reading experience" (56-7, 67). I am not going to focus as much on the physicality of the zines in this project; however McLaughlin's argument speaks to the dialogue that is established first by the zine writers in creating their bricolage work and then again between the writers and their readers.

Apart from McLaughlin, most critical discussions of women's zines focus on one general idea: zine work as autobiography or life writing. Within that, critics speak about two different end results of life writing. The first is the empowerment that zine writers derive from creating their zines. For instance, Anna Poletti considers zines as mediums of life writing in an economy of self. In, "Self- Publishing in the Global and Local:

Situating Life Writing in Zines," she argues that life writing allows zine writers the opportunity to reuse the language of the dominant, public spheres of discourse" (189). The very act of cut-n-paste both lessens the space between media and consumer and challenges conventional autobiographical writing by refusing to present a coherent whole. As well, the underground space and the thriving use of pseudonyms allows girls and women a safe space in which they can confront issues and harness the power of what Poletti calls "the dominant, public spheres of discourse." In "Zines, Women, and Culture: Autobiography through Self-Publication," Kate Hodgson writes that, "To write as a woman is to be dismissed and ignored by a variety of communities and individuals in many different ways. It also entails dealing with the presumptions according to which a female writer's work is read, presumptions constructed both by the 'mainstream' and by genres of feminist thought which have forged the link between gender and narrative" (126). Writing itself is, indeed, a major act for young women confronting the complexity of society and culture as well as debunking myths about women's writing and language. Hodgson seems to be arguing a similar point as Poletti. Not only does the zine community offer women a space for their voices, it allows them to confront assumptions that have been made about their writing and to challenge how their writing has been situated by various dominant bodies of thought.

The second general response debates the political potency of life writing. Brandi Bell argues in, "Riding the Third Wave: Women Produced Zines and Feminisms," that a heavy tendency towards autobiography in zine work may affect its political impact. She writes that "while this characteristic of zines provides opportunities for women to reflect

on and share their experiences with others, the focus on the personal may overshadow the political. While some women zine producers use their personal experiences to encourage broad political activity, many producers overwhelmingly focus on the personal and fail to connect those personal experiences with characteristics of the larger society” (195). In her opinion, too often the personal is favored over any over political work or statements when it comes to women’s zines. Her critique is aimed at the writers themselves and the failure to build the bridge between the experiences they discuss and the bigger picture issues to which these experiences relate. She argues that zine writers own lives as subject for their zines do not automatically equate to political urgency.

Aside from more pointed analytical works, there are several ones dedicated to providing a general comprehensive guide to zines, a full accounting of their history, and the motivation behind their production. These works are particularly useful in that they are usually written by zine writers or individuals who have participated in zine culture. As well, their general approach to the entire zine community provides a context through which female zines can be considered. I will draw from Amy Spencer’s work, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, and Stephen Duncombe’s work, *Notes from Underground*, which present full-bodied accounts of zine culture, because, like McLaughlin, both are concerned with how zine communities function. Unlike McLaughlin, however, Spencer and Duncombe’s works present a more detailed and in-depth look at zine culture.

This project isn’t concerned with engaging the personal versus the political debate, nor is it interested in performing a valuation of types of zine topics. Why I have chosen zines in general, though, lies mainly in their function as amateur artists and

amateur works. They maintain the distance that Vodanovic emphasizes so heavily as a necessity of amateur work. They also exercise transparency, although as we will see in Chapter 4, this transparency is called into question with glossies precisely because the concept of the Pro Am has not been factored into how zine writers define their amateur work. I argue that zine writers demonstrate distance in successful ways until they are confronted with the issue of Pro Am work, and that zine writers, like others, fail to embrace diversity in their definition of amateur work, which is necessary to understanding what kind of space glossies occupy and how they can be both zine and conventional magazine. By failing to do this, they effectively alienate a body of publications that is the amateur work that most directly interacts with and challenges professional magazine work. By alienating these publications, they lose out on the opportunity to alter the mainstream work their zines are working so hard to change.

Defining “amateur”

The word amateur by classic definition is one that indicates a lack of skill, knowledge, and capability. It gets applied to all kinds of activities, but is probably known for its connection to athletics and the continued struggle to preserve “amateur ethics” in certain athletic spheres. Under this definition, the word “amateur” is intended to be pejorative, so arguably, most would not enjoy bearing that title. Frequently, it is considered synonymous with hobby work. It is considered something to do in one’s spare time, that bears little meaning on one’s identity, and at which one is not particularly skilled or skilled in a way that is significant. Wayne Booth challenges this definition in

his work *For the Love of It: Amateuring and Its Rivals*. In this book, Booth defines amateurs as individuals who “play for the love of playing, yet [...] often reveal signs that [they] lack professional skill or ease” (9). And while they will most likely never escape being an amateur, they don’t just “dabble at something they sort of enjoy doing occasionally. Instead, like any serious professional, they work at learning to do it better” (11). What Booth establishes is not only a mental approach, but a physical one as well. Achieving amateur status does not happen simply because one decides that they are an amateur, the individual must also engage in the activity in such a way that embraces the dedication required to succeed at a higher level.

While Booth will be my primary source for this analysis of amateuring, he is but one of many who have weighed in on this concept. An understanding of what others have to say about amateurism is helpful in identifying some of the complexities that Booth’s analysis seems to neglect. In his work, “The Amateur: Two Sociological Definitions” Robert A. Stebbins is preoccupied with examining the “modern amateur,” which in some ways retains characteristics of the classic amateur. Stebbins reinforces much of the classic definition of the amateur, writing:

amateurs, though neither dabblers nor workers, are serious about their leisure. Thus, more often than not, they are misunderstood by their friends, neighbors, relatives, and even spouses who, having no amateur interests, spend their leisure as spectators, dabblers, or participants in some nonserious activity. The seriousness of amateurs is evident in their orientation to their activities, in their

talk about them, and most significantly, in their willingness to work toward perfection. (599)

Like Booth and many of the other writers in this discussion, one of the hallmarks of amateur work and amateurs themselves is the seriousness of the focus. Amateurs are not simply playing at an activity, and as such, wouldn't simply walk away from it and pick up another kind of activity. Despite the fact that they might feel this way about other activities in their lives, their amateur work is something they take very seriously. There is the intention of getting better and striving toward a professional standard. It is this awareness and desire to be as close to that professional standard as possible that drives the amateur. Stebbins writes that accepting professional standards as their own standards, "impels the part-time participant away from play toward necessity, obligation, seriousness, and commitment, as expressed in regimentation (e.g., rehearsals, practice) and systematization (e.g., schedules, organization), and on to the status of modern amateur for some and professional for others(583). So not only does the amateur push to be as good in terms of skills, this individual also adopts the structure and exercises of the professional as a way to achieve success.

As Stebbins works through his analysis, he offers up ways of identifying various kinds of amateurs. In his work he refers to a "highly dedicated" amateur as a "devotee," where as a "mildly interested" one is designated a "participant." He also makes the distinction between one who is "preprofessional," or an amateur who "intends to join the professional ranks," and "postprofessional," which is a professional who has retired but wishes to remain active in the field part-time (594-595). Additionally, amateurs have

certain characteristics that mark them. According to Stebbins, these are usually individuals who “devour all of the time and money” they have to feed into the activity. This suggests that to the average individual the amateur might seem to spend an unreasonable amount of time and/or money on an activity. As well, there’s an awareness of the professional standard that is attached to the work that Stebbins argues causes, “feelings of awe and inferiority seem to engender a type of gullibility: a propensity to accept, unquestioningly, any statement of judgment made by a respected professional about the activity” (600). Alongside that is the frustration that stems from the inability to meet those professional standards and/or frustration that comes from “lack of time and possibly experience, training, and equipment with which to meet them” (600).

All of this seems to speak back to what Booth has identified as defining characteristics of amateurs and amateur work; however, unlike Booth, who focuses primarily on the aspect of “loving” the activity at hand, Stebbins looks at the relationship between the amateur and the professional as his main distinction. While all of the aforementioned points are ways of defining the amateur, for Stebbins it all boils down to the association with a professional counterpart. He argues that this figure, the modern amateur, has developed alongside a more general social movement that saw professionalization increasingly taking over more occupations. What was once simply an extracurricular activity is now, in Stebbins opinion, amateur work. Key to this transition is money. He writes, “The evolution of modern amateurism has been occurring alongside those occupations where some of the participants in the central activity are able to make a substantial living off it and consequently devote themselves to it as a

vocation rather than as an avocation. Though there are possibly others, sport, entertainment, science, and the arts are the major types of occupations where work was once purely play and where modern amateurism is now a parallel development (582). As more jobs are gaining professional status, and thus bringing with them higher financial possibilities, those who had been dabbling in that work can now make enough money with it to consider it their primary occupation. How this is accomplished is via standards that are set by this new professionalization. Stebbins writes:

With today's mass availability of professional performances (or products), whatever the field, new standards of excellence soon confront all participants, whether professional or not. The performances of the professionals are frequently impressive for anyone who beholds them, but no one is impressed more than the nonprofessional participant who, through direct experience, knows the activity intimately. Once he becomes aware of the professional standards, all that he has accomplished there seems mediocre by comparison. He is thus faced with a critical choice in his career as a participant: restrict identification with the activity to a degree sufficient to remain largely unaffected by such invidious contrasts or identify with it to a degree sufficient to spark an attempt to meet those standards. (583)

So in other words, what draws the individual into amateur work is the decision to pursue a professional standard in so far as the individual is capable. The result is that as individuals spend more time on the work, their skills increase, and they are able to compete on some level with professionals. When they can't achieve these standards, we

see the frustrations that Stebbins views as characteristics of amateurs; however, it is the decision to work through these frustrations that makes an individual an amateur. It is deciding to accept the challenge of perfection and the struggles that will ensue in that pursuit.

Despite the seemingly solid feel to that argument, Stebbins is careful to point out that the concept of the amateur is “often contradictory and ambiguous.” For instance, while nearly all of the definitions I’ve consulted speak at some point to the “love” an amateur feels for the act or the work, only a few point out the simplicity of that statement. Frequently, the distinction made between amateurs and professionals is reduced down to the basic: one does it for the love, the other for the money. What that fails to capture is that some amateurs do what they do for money as well as love and some professionals work because they enjoy it as well as for financial gain. As Stebbins writes:

First, though it is possible, as sometimes claimed, that the amateur is attracted to his pursuit more than his professional colleagues, perhaps because he engages in it less, the activity is nevertheless rarely an unalloyed joy for either category.

Amateurs do get tired, bored, frustrated [...] Additionally, both professionals and amateurs often find the competition in their fields exhilarating, if not attractive.

Generally speaking, then, the amateur loves his pursuit, or he would not pursue it; but it is erroneous to assume that the professional dislikes his (591).

So, the amateur can be generally characterized as doing something for the “love of it,” but as this discussion will reveal, loving something may also include being paid or

compensated. As well, not loving something is part of any work act—paid or not. Blurring the line between what is done out of sheer love and what is done for money complicates the perceived tidiness of the classic definition of the amateur. What is revealed is precisely what Stebbins points out, that the notion of amateurism is still in some ways “contradictory and ambiguous.”

The way that people have attempted to make amateurism less ambiguous is to analyze the attributes of both the amateur and the professional. As Booth notes, a big part of distinguishing the amateur from the professional is the motivation for doing the work. He believes that amateurs work for the “love of it,” but when we consider what Stebbins has to say, we can see that that is but one attribute and that there are more characteristics that need to be examined. According to Stebbins there are “five attitudes that distinguish amateurs from professionals: confidence, perseverance, continuance, commitment, preparedness, and self-conception” (596). While perseverance, continuance, and commitment speak to Booth’s idea of “for the love it,” confidence, preparedness and self conception require seem related, but different. Confidence seems to come from knowing that one’s skills are quality, which requires an educated audience and their ability to judge. Preparedness suggests training and education programs, as well as mentorships and work experience. Finally, self conception is how individuals view their work and the purpose they serve. Once again, both preparedness and self conception seem to stem directly from a support network that knows how to guide and reinforce. There also the sense that more emphasis is placed on all of these for the professional because the professional’s work translates to financial significance. In other

words, it behooves the companies and businesses to encourage these five traits so that their employees are more successful and yield more success for the company.

I would argue that the amateur embodies all of these traits as well, just in smaller amounts or in different ways. They may have a sense of perseverance, continuance, and commitment, but also have a job that requires their time. Their level dedication might be as fervent as professionals, but there are limitations on how much time they can spend on the amateur work. Likewise, confidence and preparedness are derived from higher levels of skill and experience. They also seem to come from outside validation, which companies and businesses freely give of their professional employees, but what may not be available in the same amounts or in the same ways for amateurs. Self conception is the one area where I think there is a clear difference. To be aware of oneself as an amateur is a vastly different feeling of self, as Booth indicates, than to call oneself a professional. It is to see a different purpose for the work and to desire to contribute in ways that aren't maybe focused on professional success. So understanding that these traits are shared, but manifest and are embraced in different manners, is important. For Stebbins, it is a more complex way to examine what is amateur and what is professional. "For the love of it" is important, especially when examining the actual act of amateuring, but in order to get a fuller sense of this larger conversation, there is the need to make that concept of "love" more tangible.

Stebbins goes on to focus on what seems to be yet another way of making the relationship between amateurs and professionals more concrete. He introduces and examines the concept of the P-A-P structure. According to Stebbins, there is a monetary,

organizational, and intellectual relationship between professionals and amateurs (414). They exist within what is called the P-A-P system, which is a way of thinking about the relationship between the professional, the amateur, and their publics. He calls the P-A-P a “system of functionally interdependent relationships” and what seems most pertinent about this explanation is the notion that these entities are functional on their own, but are considered interdependent (585). I interpret this to mean that the amateur, professional, and the publics they serve are all separate spaces that interact with one another out of necessity, but also in a way that enhances each individual group.

What is also significant about amateurs having a public is that it reinforces the impact that amateurs can have, especially since Stebbins argues that these publics are sometimes the very same ones that professionals serve. This is very clear when thinking about amateur athletics. The Olympics draw a great amount of international attention, while certain college sports are popular for many within their respective countries. This isn't maybe as clear when thinking about other types of amateur work, but when we consider that the amateur is inextricably linked to professional counterparts in this model, it is possible to imagine that if there is a professional audience there must be an amateur one as well. Stebbins acknowledges that these publics might be imagined as well as real, but that that is true of professionals as well. For the amateur, though, the key difference in this matter is who makes up the audience. Stebbins points out that the amateur's “real” audience may be “small, composed of friends, relatives, neighbors, or other amateurs engaged in the same activity” (589). This rings true for many minority college sports and Olympic athletes as well as individuals like zine writers. Regardless

of size, as Stebbins argues, amateurs aren't simply serving themselves. This seems significant in light of the "for the love of it" rhetoric because doing something for the love it suggests a certain selfishness or self-centered focus; however, including that sense of an audience into "for the love of it" makes it feel more like the amateur is sharing a passion. In fact, Stebbins seems to agree, stating that "many amateur pursuits are unavoidably social, inasmuch as they can only be carried out collectively (589). While there is undoubtedly a social element to the professional sphere, this seems to suggest that for the amateur their work has to be social. There has to be not just a connection or an awareness of a public, but a stronger, more intimate connection in order for the work to succeed.

The P-A-P system accounts for individuals like the "dabbler" and the "novice" because they are viewed as pre-amateur or pre-professional. These individuals are read as looking to enter into this system in a more extensive manner. However, the P-A-P system relegates the "hobbyist" to a peripheral space. They are related to the amateur, but lack the interaction with a professional counterpart. For Booth, the hobbyist is like a dabbler in that he sees both as non-committal. These are individuals who have a passing interest in the activity, but who do not yearn to put in the time and effort for perfection—or near perfection. While Booth positions these figures slightly differently, he does seem to agree with Stebbins in that what prevents them from being more serious about the activity is a failure to internalize the professional standard. So while Booth would argue that the dabbler and hobbyist lack a seriousness, Stebbins argues that they are "practitioners with a definite and enduring purpose about them" and they are not "doing

something aimlessly as a form of temporary diversion” (593). Both agree that the hobbyist is not the amateur because of a lesser sense of engagement.

So what do the amateurs bring to the P-A-P system that makes this hashing out of various related and semi-related figures necessary? According to Stebbins, and others, it is the ability to see a bigger picture than the professional. He argues in “‘Amateur’ and ‘Hobbyist’ as Concepts for the Study of Leisure Problems” that amateurs are generally maintain a “broader, and simultaneously less specialized, knowledge of the field than can most professionals (415). William Haley agrees with this assessment, arguing in his essay “Amateurism” that in the age of “specialization and standardization” the amateur is necessary for what he calls the “cross-fertilization of ideas” (258-259). What both men seem to be implying is that amateurs are not locked into any one profession—at least in terms of their amateur work, which allows them to spend time immersing themselves in a variety of activities and bodies of knowledge.

When amateurs engage in the P-A-P system, they bring all of that knowledge and experience into that one specialized activity. So while professionals remain the safe and preferred experts in the field, the amateurs help bring in connections and ideas that the professionals would have perhaps missed because they are only focused on their one area of work or study. Part of how this works is that, as Haley argues, the “greater authority a professional has in one field, the less ready are we to surrender ourselves to him in others. [...]The amateur faces far fewer obstacles. He has nothing official at stake—no position to lose, no authority to maintain. His pretensions are more acceptable because they are less pretentious. We are ready to judge with a far more open mind the

merits of what he has to say” (258). So, it isn’t just that the professional doesn’t have the mental space and/or time to seek out other bodies of thought or types of work, but that they are viewed by the publics as less authoritative in those other areas and so are unwilling to trust professionals outside of their chosen fields. And amateurs, who aren’t burdened with the need to be the expert in the field are more able to suggest and add ideas. Their experimental or explorative ideas are better received because they are seen as just that-- less pretentious. They don’t purport to be experts or that their work is expert level. Their work can have flaws and holes, but because a flawless finished product isn’t the end game, their publics can focus on the ideas that are suggested and not the end product.

This is what seems to make the figure of the amateur significant to the development of the professional. As Stebbins points out, professionals have more confidence, more support from others to continue at their craft, more tangible support in the form of others there to help and guide, and more of a reason to be prepared” (598) Professionals have a better structure in place for success; however, as Haley argues, “The vital, renewing links [in the P-A-P system] will always be the amateur” (259). Because amateurs are less tied to their work and so can walk away a lot easier than their counterparts, they have the privilege to play with their work more—to take more risks. While they may have to rely more on their own resources and motivation to succeed, they have a greater sense of intellectual freedom and flexibility which translates into feeding professional spheres with new life via their “cross fertilized” ideas.

Ham radio, a lesser known amateur activity, is a good example of the relationship between amateurs and professional. While it is generally just a community of individuals, who enjoy building their own equipment and talking with other Ham radio operators, it also periodically influences and helps out the electronics industry. During the Second World War, ham operators helped to convert the military's long-range communication from Morse Code to voice because these amateurs had a better understanding of the technique as a result of amateur work with the equipment. The creativity and the freedom to play continue to allow ham radio operators to influence and aid the electronics industry with improving designs and technological advances. (ARRL Handbook for Radio Communications 1.3)

Another good example of this relationship is that of the citizen scientist. Centered on crowd-sourcing and "volunteer" science projects, citizen science has grown up around the natural desire to explore, similar to ham radio operators. In his essay "Citizen science and lifelong learning" Richard Edwards states, "In different contexts, amateurism is associated with personal commitment to practice and learning, openness to possibilities and freedom from personal financial interest" (141). In this statement, he reinforces that the amateur occupies a special and necessary role in the P-A-P structure. As Stebbins and Haley argue, amateurs are not only associated with a higher level of commitment to an activity and perceived seriousness about their work, they also represent the ability to think and work outside of the restrictions that limit their professional counterparts.

Amy Dockser Marcus presents a more detailed example of how this work contributes to the science community in her essay “Citizen Scientists—Ordinary people are taking control of their health data, making their DNA public, running experiments and asking, Why should science be limited to professionals?” In this work, citizen science is referred to as a “soft” science, which seems to embrace the openness of the amateur worker and thinker. It is a science and these individuals are doing scientific work, but in a looser sense compared to professional research and studies. They are able to be more flexible with some of the boundaries, which puts their evidence and findings in question at times. Professional scientists argue that amateurs may not “collect data rigorously enough” and “may draw conclusions from sample sizes that are too small to yield statistically reliable results” (Marcus). As well, data may not be entered consistently enough; however, these amateurs do manage to challenge certain elements of the conventions of modern science.

In Marcus’ example, individuals who are unhappy with not having control over their own biological samples and information, work to make this information more visible and readily available to the individual. One woman started the website, “That’s My Data!” a way to allow patients’ information to get to researchers “in exchange for open access to the results for those who contributed samples” (Marcus). Calling themselves “health hackers,” other individuals like this woman perform their own analysis and use the internet to run experiments and clinical trials. These website are supposed establish “neutral places” where data can be collect by anyone, including patients, and could use the information to make discoveries. While it is uncertain in this

essay if professional scientists and researchers are engaging in these “neutral spaces,” the fact that they are weighing in on these practices shows us that there is an awareness of this work within the professional sphere. Moreover, Joseph Kvedar, a physician and supporter of citizen science work, argues that “the more citizen scientists adopt the traditions of mainstream science, ‘the more you will choke off creativity and innovation’” (Marcus). This suggests that at least some of the professional scientists and researchers see a value to this amateur work even if they are critical of some of the techniques and results. It also reinforces what Haley argues, which is that creativity and innovation in professional spheres are in some ways dependent upon amateur work. And it suggests that amateur might sometimes be better than professional work.

Marjorie Garber speaks to the concept of equality in her work *Academic Instincts*. She argues that what adds to this discussion of the P-A-P system, and the understanding of amateurism, is that “like the terms of any binary opposition, *amateur* and *professional* (1) are never fully equal, and (2) are always in each other’s pockets. They produce each other and they define each other by mutual affinities and exclusions” (5). What she is saying here is that, as Stebbins argues, the amateur and the professional are inextricably linked. Yet, what she contributes to the conversation is that, unlike Stebbins’ breakdown of the P-A-P system, there isn’t a sense of equality between the two. Moreover, the professional isn’t always the one who is automatically preferred. This is something that is seen rather frequently within the athletic realm. Professional sports might be preferred to college sports at times, but March Madness trumps nearly all of the professional sports on television during that time. As well, the Olympic Games

continually draw large crowds and attention with only a minority of those athletes being professionals. As Gerber argues, they create each other and define each other and, as she adds, “Not only are they mutually interconnected. Part of their power comes from the disavowal of the close affinity between them” (5). In other words, there is more to this relationship than being involved in the same activity or work and serving the same publics. What makes these two entities stronger is the tension that is created from either group attempting to create distance from the other. One might argue that it is a kind of competition and the desire to be better than the other is what propels innovation and creativity as well as stronger skills and techniques. Regardless of who is leading in any given moment, however, one always seems to come with the other. For Stebbins, it’s the connection to the professional that defines amateur work as amateur. Therefore, by his construct, activities that do not have a professional counterpart cannot be amateur, no matter how serious the individual is about the work.

What this rather extended definition tells us is that amateur work is far more structured and detailed than it is commonly understood to be. It is clear that love for one’s work is a major component of amateur work, but also that there is more to it than simply really liking it. There are many ways for an individual to position themselves within this space and how that happens has a lot to do with how they see themselves in relation to a professional counterpart, as well as their perceived publics. The establishment of this kind of scaffold makes analyzing amateur work a lot easier. It makes the relationship between the amateur and the professional more visible and cements the notion that amateur work isn’t done solely for the one’s own pleasure.

There's an audience in play here that changes the intensity of the work. And it is the audience's presence that contributes to how we view amateur work. The audience's need for a mythological standard of the amateur reinforces a sense of purity in this work that is wholly false by contemporary standards, and potentially has always been that way.

Social class and the feelings about monetary compensation for amateur work are what seem to have preoccupied audiences in the past and continue to create problems today. My analysis will show that this is, in fact, one of the major issues with contemporary amateur work. While I don't think that there are easy solutions or even that this is solvable, I do think the lack of visibility and discussion about how social class and money colors our definitions of amateur work is highly problematic, especially since the onset of Web 2.0 has contributed to a rise in amateur work. It might be that we aren't even aware that this is a contributing factor, so a better understanding of these influences feels necessary.

As I said before, amateur athletics is perhaps one of the most visible amateur groups. Two major contributing factors to this visibility are the Olympics and Division I collegiate sports. Amateur sports, and sports in general, have historically been defined by social class. Considered a gentlemen's activity, most amateur athletics were viewed as leisure activities undertaken by upper class individuals. This unspoken requirement eventually bled over into competitive spheres like the Olympic Games. Individuals who were found to be working blue collar jobs were either prevented, or disqualified, from participating in the Olympics and related events. For example, the rower John B. Kelly was disqualified from the Henley Regatta for being a bricklayer and twelve years later,

an Australian team was banned from the Olympic because one of their members was a policeman (Schneider and Butcher 461).

While these kinds of restrictions have been eliminated in name, the essence of what they represented still remains in some ways. Garber argues that the fixation on amateur athletics as an upper class activity was a way of reinforcing a certain level of culture. That culture is what William J. Morgan examines as the “Moral Image for Sport” in his essay “Amateurism and Professionalism as Moral Languages: In Search of a Moral Image for Sport.” Essentially what both of these writers argue is the attribute of upper class gentility have been transferred onto the classic definition of the amateur athlete. More specifically, this notion has lead us to define the amateur athlete as someone who plays for the love of playing, someone who does not play a sport as their vocation, and someone who does not associate monetary gain with sports. What this creates is the “noble amateur,” as Morgan puts it. And it establishes the notion that to be truly amateur, a sport and an athlete must be removed from any aspect of capitalist gain.

The impact of the association of social class and amateurism can be seen outside of the athletic realm as well. Barton Swain traces the shift of amateurism within the writing community along class lines in his essay “‘What is Scott’: John Gibson Lockhart’s Professional Amateurism.” What he finds is that amateurism is at first an upper-class act between friends and a small courtly community. Writings are exchanged and discussed as part of friendly conversations. It is within the realm of leisure activities for the educated upper class. This changes, however, as the opportunity to sell one’s writing increases. Swain argues that as it becomes more possible for individuals to make

a living as a writer, the amateur writer goes from the “aristocrat scribbler” to the “working man” (286). What Swaim does here is firmly connect the notion of social class to “leisure” activities, specifically writing, which will be the focus of this project.

While social class continues to be a factor in amateur work, it doesn’t always get manifested the same way anymore. In Ann Deslandes’ essay “Exemplary Amateurism: Thoughts on DIY Urbanism,” she examines the cooption of urban spaces for artistic purposes in a study about favelas in Brazilian cities. Her analysis demonstrates the privilege that social class affords the individuals who engage in this work, and how working class individuals lose out or remain invisible even though these favelas are created within working class neighborhoods. Clearly, this is a discussion of a sort of gentrification that happens via amateur work. The artists who move into these spaces are there temporarily and under the guise of stimulating the local economy. While they are amateur artists and these are amateur spaces in that they aren’t setting up formal museums or businesses, the artists by and large are comprised of individuals with the economic means to have a certain level of mobility. So, while they appear to fit in and to be absorbing the local culture, they are seen as appropriating the look of poverty in order to further their own artistic and philosophical desires, and it is understood should this not work or should their artistic needs change, they have the economic capital to move. More importantly, this study demonstrates not only that social class and amateurism continues to exist, but that it has shifted in some ways. In this case, as with Hipsters as Deslandes points out, social class is very much so a part of the amateur work, but it isn’t about showing off class privilege so much as it is hiding it. Amateurism is desirable here

because it is associated with the working classes, which are viewed as being more authentic. Arguably, this is also true in some athletic and other artistic realms.

While I will examine the athletic component in greater detail a little later, what I want to establish is the way in which social class has added a facet to our common understanding of what an amateur is, and that it is one of the reasons that the “modern amateur” is such a contested figure. One of the primary reasons for social class complicating the notion of amateurism is because of its relationship to financial gain. As an upper class, leisure activity, amateurism is supposed to represent the ability of the moneyed individual to spend free time exploring a variety of cultured activities. Money comes from one’s profession, not their leisure activities. To associate one with the other is to taint the “authenticity” of the work, an idea that will arise in my discussion of zine work. However, as more of these activities become professions and more individuals are capable of making a living doing them, the concept of the amateur as separate from any monetary gain becomes more complicated.

When defining the difference between the amateur and the professional, most indicate that money is a big factor. As Stebbins points out, the shift from “play” to “amateur” is for the most part based the development of a professional counterpart as well as the feeling that the amateur can make money doing the work. He furthers this point, stating that in order to consider yourself professional, you must gain at least 50% of your livelihood from the activity at hand. The amateur, on the other hand, “at the most, only supplements a principal source of income earned elsewhere” (2). This seems to challenge the longstanding notion that amateur work should be done out of love and

not for financial compensation of any nature. In fact, college athletes weren't initially compensated with scholarships for this very reason. Clearly, that stance has changed, as has the notion that amateurs shouldn't make any money. More importantly, what seems to be the bigger shift is the perspective of the amateurs themselves. According to Stebbins, "The modern amateur [...] is in no way opposed to making money at his pursuit—even a lot of it—so long as the pursuit continues to be more or less enjoyable" (601). It seems that the modern amateur understands the P-A-P system, or at least has the sense of being connected to the professional sphere, and as such, entitled to some monetary compensation. Awarding athletic scholarships to collegiate athletes was just the beginning of recognizing that within the amateur realm there is a skill that is worth payment in some way.

While these shifts have been viewed as improvements for the amateur athlete, they have also contributed to the conflicts and the tension that currently exist in that arena. They also reflect the issues that have arisen in other areas, like Web 2.0. Web 2.0 is a term that comes up frequently in relation to amateurism. The idea is connected to the growth of the internet and is fed by a philosophy that is frequently espoused by individuals who currently work, and have worked, to develop the internet we know today. The general approach is that the internet is a free space and should be used as such. People should be able to write and research and post as they want. An example used to exemplify this is Wikipedia. Wikipedia is a source that was set up to challenge the common way information is gathered and accessible to the public. While many aren't happy with the end result, this website does allow everyone to have a voice and

gives everyone access to information. As well, it encourages anyone to contribute and edit that information. The purpose of Web 2.0 as an ideal is to “democratize” the internet. It is to deconstruct the lines between expert voices and holders of truth/knowledge and average individuals. It is supposed to bring diversity of experience and voice to the internet in such a way as to challenge and correct misrepresentations by these so-called expert sources.

In reality, as we see with Wikipedia, people have found there needs to be a middle ground. Yes, we want to encourage agency, but we want to preserve truthful and factual reporting and research. The face of these empowered average individuals is the amateur most of the time. It is the especially interested, but not professionally-trained individual. And as previous sources pointed out, there are downsides to amateur work, mainly consistency and accuracy. While we value their creativity and their agency, the P-A-P system requires the interaction of the amateur with the professional as well as the public. And as Stebbins argues, the amateur must have that professional counterpart, presumably to provide the factual and verifiable to any activity.

In his essay “The Myth of Amateur Crowds: A critical discourse analysis of crowdsourcing coverage,” Daren C. Brabham writes about Web 2.0, specifically the concept of “crowdsourcing.” He defines it as: “an online, distributed problem solving and production model whereby an organization leverages the collective intelligence of an online community for a specific purpose. It is a blend of a traditional, top-down, hierarchical program management and bottom-up open innovation process” (395). Basically, it is the act of polling an audience for their opinions or ideas and is something

that many companies and groups take advantage of as they are making decisions about products. However, Brabham's issue with this is that it is frequently positioned as being an amateur or hobbyist act when in fact most who participate in crowdsourcing activities are professionals. That is, crowdsourcing is sold as amateur work that is done by people who simply have a passing interest in the subject. He writes that "crowdsourcing is discussed in the popular press as a process driven by amateurs and hobbyists, yet empirical research on crowdsourcing indicates that crowds are largely self-selected professionals and experts who opt-in to crowdsourcing arrangements. [...] The amateur/hobbyist label then undermines the fact that large amounts of real work and expert knowledge are exerted by crowds for relatively little reward and to serve the profit motives of companies" (394). Brabham argues here that the image of the amateur has been appropriated in order to make the work generated by crowdsourcing look like it's being performed by non-professionals. As a result, the companies who use crowdsourcing can get away with not compensating the individuals as the professionals they actually are. The image of the amateur is false and detrimental to the professional.

Like others, Brabham critiques the "democratizing" of idea generation and the argument that is made about how crowdsourcing effectively lowers the cost of business while also encouraging innovation (395). He seems to argue a number of points, the first being that professionals are being shortchanged for providing professional services. Secondly, he seems concerned with the fact that the businesses are co-opting the Web 2.0 ideal in order to benefit a traditional and hierarchical structure of power. By denying that they are using professionals, they are saving money, and by employing

crowdsourcing techniques, they manage to distance themselves from product failure. They can't necessarily be held accountable—or as accountable—because it was their amateur crowdsourcers who made the decisions or provided the information.

What is up the utmost importance is how crowdsourcing breaks down the P-A-P structure. It appears to include both amateurs and professionals, but in reality it's just fulltime professionals and part-time ones. We can see how this system is problematic for professionals, but ultimately, Brabham is concerned with the impact of this marketing approach on the figure of the amateur. He points out that being a professional is contingent upon pay and label and that that only serves to benefit the individual who has that label. In other words, power. In the case of these companies who want to usurp the notion of the amateur for their own economic gain, Brabham argues that what they are also doing is denying people the power that comes with labeling something or someone as professional. He points out that professionals can use their status to create barriers and boundaries and effectively prevent amateurs from entering into their space. Keeping people outside of the professional space effectively prevents them from gaining access to that power. When Brabham is concerned with how Web 2.0 denies professionals are the ones participating in crowdsourcing, he is pointing out that the only individuals who have power are professionals. So while companies look to “amateurs” for information and work in the form of crowdsourcing, they don't see these individuals as bearing any real power.

This doesn't seem to support the relationship dynamic that Stebbins and Garber argue exists between the amateur and professional in the P-A-P system. For them, there

is power albeit different kinds. For Brabham, in the realm of Web 2.0, words and phrases such as “enthusiastic” and “eager but unformed” are frequently used and are problematic. These phrases are applied to amateurs and amateur work and serve only to undermine amateur expertise. In fact, the entire crowdsourcing system serves to do much the same. He writes:

The subtle word choices amount the corpus of articles to describe amateurs in crowdsourcing work also to dismiss the importance, impact, or expertise of amateurs, distancing them further from the unquestioned quality of professionals. [...]Ultimately, the discourse of amateurism in crowdsourcing falsely positions amateurs –who are in fact often as qualified and committed as professionals—as the barbarians at the gate, disrupting the tide status quo of enterprise. This discourse blames crowdsourcing and amateurs as outside forces that have come to drive down industry prices, though it is merely an extension of a race to the bottom that was already happening in the creative industries. (403; 405)

Brabham believes that this new system of Web 2.0 works against amateurs while purporting to open up their opportunities. And he points out a contradiction to the system. Amateurs are written off as lesser than professionals, but seem to be necessary to the crowdsourcing system if we believe what the businesses are telling when they say that their crowdsourcers are all amateurs and hobbyists. They are used continually for their knowledge and opinions, but also demonized for contributing to a poor economic situation that prefers part time workers over full time professionals. They are accused of

contributing to an economy that is obsessed with cheap labor and cheaper products. All of this serves to remove any sense of power from the amateur.

Andrew Keen is equally critical of Web 2.0 in his book *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet is Killing Our Culture*. Keen worked for many years in the Web 2.0 industry and embraced the philosophy until he began to see the results of it. He agrees with Brabham that Web 2.0 encourages everyday individuals to participate and contribute, but he compares it to T.H. Huxley's scenario about infinite monkeys, in which it is theorized that if you give an infinite amount of monkeys an infinite amount of typewriters, one will eventually create a masterpiece. In this comparison, he views the everyday individuals who are participating in Web 2.0 as Huxley's monkeys. While one might produce something worth reading or viewing, most will be mindlessly typing away, producing little in the way of thoughtful, accurate work.

This "democratization" of information has produced "superficial observations of the world" rather than "deep analysis" and faulty, emotion-driven opinion rather than "considered judgment" (Keen 16). Brabham argued that Web 2.0 impacted all parties involved. Keen is really only interested in the impact of the rise of the amateur, which is how he views Web 2.0. It is a system that has opened the gates to amateur individuals to produce amateur work, which he sees as threatening good, professional work. He writes that "the real consequence of the Web 2.0 revolution is less culture, less reliable news, and a chaos of useless information" (Keen 16). According to Keen, this is because Web 2.0 pushes people to focus on themselves—to write about themselves, post pictures of themselves, and view the world via their own experiences. He sees people taking

resources without acknowledging their sources, which obscures who owns materials and who authors them (23). It also takes the power away from official news sources and the experts who are trained to produce reliable and credible information. And with the proliferation of citizen journalists and fake news sites, people are losing the ability to distinguish between what is official and what is amateur.

When we lose this ability, according to Keen, we lose the “gatekeepers” of cultural and intellectual standards because amateurs are not held to the same professional level or penalized quite as rigorously if at all for poor quality work or inaccurate information. With the focus evermore on “collective intelligence” derived from Google users and click bait, it is apparent to Keen that our culture has become about ourselves and not the world. Keen writes that, “As traditional mainstream media is replaced by a personalized one, the Internet has become a mirror to ourselves. Rather than using it to seek new, information, or culture, we use it to actually BE the news, the information, the culture” (7). Web 2.0 has narrowed our scope in a way. It has turned our focus away from learning more about the world and towards examining ourselves. And finally, Keen argues that Web 2.0 has taught us that talent just appears instead of being developed. Nurturing talent, he writes, “requires work, capital, expertise, investment. It requires complex infrastructure of traditional media—the scouts, the agents, the editors, the publicists, the technicians, the marketers. Talent is built but the intermediaries” (31). Web 2.0 tells people that all they need to do is be and promote, they don’t need to have a considerable level of talent or training in order to achieve success.

Unlike most of the sources in this analysis, Keen doesn't see amateur work as the opportunity to inject creativity and innovation into an industry. Instead, he sees Web 2.0 as the overabundance of amateur work to the put of great imbalance. The everyday individual isn't contributing to professional concepts and ideas; rather, they are overrunning them and driving them out. While I agree with some of his assessments, I find the definition of amateur basic and so problematic. While he has a point that there is a suggested balance in the P-A-P system, he fails to consider that amateur work is more than the everyday individual's efforts. In other words, he oversimplifies the amateur and amateur work while he is criticizing Web 2.0. And this is a perspective that further complicates our understanding of the current position of amateur work.

Now, it is important to note that Keen's book was written in 2007. I would argue that in many areas of the internet, things have changed. There is evidence of exactly what he is arguing in terms of the destruction or at least maiming of official news sources, but there has also been a push to better utilize the tools of Web 2.0 to these sources' advantage. We continue to see social media developed for the sole purpose of self-promotion, but we are also seeing where Stebbins pre-professionals are able to break into the industry via Web 2.0. So, to write off this "democratization of the internet" entirely is faulty, but more important for this analysis, is it particularly dangerous to the amateur.

Web 2.0 and the democratization of the internet is only one area where this issue arises. In her essay "Symbolic Amateurs: On the Discourse of Amateurism in Contemporary Media Culture," Caroline Hamilton shifts the focuses away from the

internet and onto other forms of media, specifically television. Her main issue is something she refers to as “symbolic amateurism,” which sounds much like what Brabham is identifying in his analysis of crowdsourcing. According to Hamilton, “symbolic amateurism” is “adopting the pose of the amateur even while inhabiting the sphere of the professional.” She looks to reality television shows as her primary example. In this kind of work, networks gather volunteers to participate in activities and competitions for prizes and make money off of the “show” that is created from the footage. Hamilton argues that the participants are asked to “perform at the professional level while still being treated as members of the audience.” This is the crux of the problem with “symbolic amateurism.” She writes that in this scenario, what she calls the information economy, “Professionals are encouraged to be more like their amateur counterparts and take satisfaction in their lack of job security, while amateurs are encouraged to perfect their skills to the professional standard and be flattered by the attention accorded to them.” When we look at the reality television shows we see amateurs who are trying to be professional—either at a skill or as actors.

According to Hamilton, the inclusion of amateur actors into mediums like television and social media is marketed as a positive element of new media. She writes, “Although amateur new media producers are sometimes criticised for their lack of quality or failure to adhere to particular standards, their efforts have also been interpreted as advancing the cause of democratising media. As such, amateur participation in professional industries is today routinely positioned as, if not unequivocally good, then at least an essentially positive development.” I will examine

the criticism of this work briefly, but what she is basically saying is that new media is like Web 2.0 in that it is seen as a democratizing force. Reality television, like blogging, allows anyone to be on a TV show and to participate in making that kind of art. However, these shows are marketed as amateur, and as such, don't have to adhere to the standards of the industry both in aesthetic quality and in regulations.

Because there aren't supposed to be scripts or there isn't supposed to be any actual acting, the producers of these shows don't have to abide by the rules of the acting unions. There are consequently no limitations set on hours worked, pay, or working conditions. As well, there isn't any job protection that can be fought for or demanded. In his essay "The Political Economy of Amateurism," Andrew Ross examines what Hamilton alludes to in terms of how reality television producers not only fail to comply with industry standards, but seem to thrive because they don't. He points out that this includes contestants and production employees. He writes:

But the less appealing side of this amateurism is the cut-price labor economy it has established as the default mentality of the cyber world, where sacrificial labor and self-exploitation are the order of the day. Forged in the trenches of pioneering web design work, this mentality has become further institutionalized in the social networking frenzy of the Web 2.0 era where users have unlimited access but no rights over their content" (137).

Ross argues that this new media is related to Web 2.0 and that, as Hamilton indicates, the approach and the problem are the same: everyone can participate, but no one gets protected. In this case, protection is directly linked to on site job issues, but the other part

of that is the right to protect one's products. By calling these people volunteers or amateurs, these production companies invoke that classic definition of the word that strips the individual of any rights to compensation because amateurs aren't skilled enough to deserve it. Contestants aren't professionals; therefore, they don't produce anything of value that should be protected.

Ross's biggest concern is that reality television and this kind of democratized media isn't working to create new and different artists or genres of entertainment so much as it is looking to further develop a cheaper labor force in the film and television industry. He argues that "we need to start analyzing how it is that contemporary media, or the so-called creative industries, have emerged as an optimum field for realizing the longstanding capitalist dream of stripping labor costs to the bone" (137). Ross sees the proliferation of reality television as the recognition by the television industry that this is cheaper than professional television and people will still watch it. Hamilton's concept of the "symbolic amateur" is how television producers are able to get away with what they do. By appropriating the image of the amateur and exploiting people's limited definitions of this work, the television industry is able to recruit willing "volunteers," who aren't aware that they are providing free labor.

Like Keen, Hamilton and Ross see one of the issues with amateurs acting like professionals, but being treated like amateurs as a way in which new media is undermining our confidence in traditional media sources. Reality television features real people in fake situations that are scripted to meet the shows demands. They act at roles designated for them within that script, but they aren't actors. The line between truth and

fiction is blurred in confusing ways and audiences aren't always aware of this. Brooke Duffy addresses this problem of visibility in her essay on contemporary fashion blogging. Once again, lines that have been clear in the past aren't with Web 2.0 and it is both the "amateur" writers and their audiences who are impacted.

In her essay "Amateur, Autonomous, and Collaborative: Myths of Aspiring Female Cultural Producers in Web 2.0," Duffy examines the themes of amateurism, creative autonomy and collaboration as they are enacted in the blogging sphere. She argues that "The strategic deployment of such myths [...] effectively conceals the very real ways that digitally enabled forms of creative production emulate traditional industry structures and logics. Indeed, far from being authentic, autonomous, and collaborative, the organization of fashion blogging is increasingly hierarchical, market-driven, and self-promotional" (48). Like Brabham, Duffy sees this use of Web 2.0 as detrimental to the amateur. It promotes an amateur environment, where individuals can engage with other "normal" individuals who are simply into fashion. The reality, as Duffy points out, is that these are not average people. Predominately, the fashion blogging industry is filled with what she calls "aspirational labor," or individuals with fashion experience who are looking to gain visibility in order to get paid or secure a job.

Duffy identifies several aspects of fashion blogging that contributes to what she sees as "symbolic amateurism." First is the myth of collaboration. This is revealed in how bloggers speak about giving and receiving feedback. What appears to be honest, enthusiastic feedback is instead a ploy to gain more followers and more feedback on the readers' own blogs. The comments are a means to an ends rather than genuine interest in

what the writer is posting. Amateur work, which has been defined as social and heavily dependent upon the community that is built up in this social activity, would not survive in this fashion blogging space. The amateur is driven by the desire to contribute and the feeling that he/she is working with the professional sphere on some level. What is implied when the amateur is defined this way is that there is meaning to the act.

Commenting on someone's blog or following them just to get them to follow you back does not imply meaning in the act.

Self promotion is probably Duffy's biggest issue with fashion bloggers posing as amateurs and it goes beyond the issue of "spamming" other bloggers just to get more followers. Once again, we see the problem of class and money. Duffy finds the unspoken class privileges problematic. She writes: "Attendance at blogger conferences, local and regional 'meet ups,' and even New York Fashion Week was encouraged as a thinly veiled way to schmooze with fashion designers, media professional, publicists, and advertisers. What such recommendations fail to address, however, are the reserves of time and money that are required to engage in these (classed) activities" (54). These individuals need to be financially secure enough to be able to give time over to these activities—amateur or otherwise. So the sense that these fashion bloggers are average people who are just fashion enthusiasts might be partially correct, but it doesn't take into account the financial requirements of this "compulsory sociality", which calls attention to whether or not we can call see them as "average."

Finally, there is the issue that bloggers are paid for reviews of products and that many of these individuals are seeking professional status. Duffy writes: "Innovation is

but one among the laundry list of qualities that aspiring media professionals must exhibit in order to be considered viable employment candidates in the early 21st century. They must also strategically manage their affective relations and engage in a socially mediated performance of the *self as brand*” (49). She explains that this is the contemporary problem with pursuing a creative career and the need to pay for one’s life. Today, it is no longer sufficient to be creative and innovative individuals must also turn themselves into a product that comes along with their work. Writing paid reviews, pays the bills, and according to Duffy, the blogger justify doing this “as long as they [aren’t] just doing it for the money” (56). This stance is similar to the feeling about athletes and amateurism. So long as they are doing it for the love of playing and not just for the money it’s okay for them to be compensated for their work. According to Duffy, the bloggers “reconcile the inherent tension between internal and external demands” by focusing on the creative aspect of their work (56). In other words, they recognize the need, and perhaps the desire, for paid work because it gives them visibility. Visibility of the writer brings visibility to their craft. Being paid allows them to spend more time working on their writing. However, there is the tension, as Duffy points out, that stems from the potential for a blogger to work simply for the money under the guise of creative amateur work.

Ultimately, Duffy is concerned with how the image of the amateur is used to hide the fact that fashion bloggers are concerned with becoming professionals. She argues that by hiding their intentions, they aren’t embracing a true amateur spirit. She writes: “Mainstream media constructs fashion blogging as a form of cultural production that is more accessible, inclusive, and democratic than the elite, top-down world of high

fashion” (49). But she argues that it isn’t. Accessibility is contingent upon class and connections. Paid reviews corrupt the inclusivity as well as the democratic nature of the work. Finally, the community building lacks depth, which also breaks down inclusivity and the democratic aspect of the blogging. The individuals who thrive in this space are professionally-focused, writing paid reviews, interacting heavily with the professionals at shows and conferences, and interacting with others only to advance their own careers. In Duffy’s opinion, this is a clear example of “symbolic amateurism.”

What seems obvious to me is that Duffy is working from a more traditional definition of the amateur and so views any inclusion of money and paid compensation with skepticism. While that isn’t an invalid concern, as many have pointed out in this review, payment doesn’t automatically corrupt amateur work. As well, Stebbins’ breakdown of the P-A-P system validates the desire and the need to interact with professionals and embraces the existence of the pre-professional as an acceptable form of amateurism. It seems important, however, to address the need for transparency with amateur work and that is Duffy’s significance to this dialogue.

Stebbins designates several levels of amateurism and that is what seems to be lost in these case studies of reality television and fashion blogging. There is a failure to recognize the depth of the term amateur, which creates problems not only in the work itself, as we see with the reality shows, but also in the analysis of the workers, as we see with the fashion blogs. Stebbins provides us with a spectrum of amateurism, within which many different positions can be assumed. Some individuals can simply enjoy engaging in the activity. Some can enjoy doing the work and want to contribute in

measurable ways to the corresponding professional spheres, and some might be looking to engage more intensely with the professional realm—even potentially becoming a professional.

What is evident in this overview of social class and the impact monetary compensation has on amateur work is that these are elements that have been negotiated for quite some time. For the majority of that time, the tensions seem to remain same. There is the sense that amateur work embodies a higher standard of self and dignity and that ensuring those qualities means preventing money from being a part of the equation. That in itself ensures a certain social class implication because it means that the individual not only has the money to participate in leisure activities, but that they also have time for it.

Additionally, this overview reveals the impact of the internet on not only the opportunities for amateur work, but how we conceptualize it. The main issue that seems to have developed is what amateur work looks like and what I will show next is that the reason why there is such an issue is because traditional definition of amateur work is no longer sufficient enough to cover all of the kinds of amateurs out there now. What I will show is that while the options Stebbins' lays out have been around since at least the 80s, it seems as if contemporary analysis of the amateur isn't factoring them into the picture. My review centers upon one particular type of amateur work because it is the most problematic to a classic definition of amateurism and because it has the greatest potential to create new amateur spaces.

Pro Am, or professional amateur, is the term that we need to think about when considering contemporary amateurism and the situations like the fashion blogs that Duffy examines. This is a term that embraces the amateur who isn't the professional, but who is skilled and desires compensation for his/her work. Duffy argues that the problem is transparency, or the lack thereof. The blogs are an issue because they are amateur, but they are too closely aligned with the professional fashion world. Whether or not these writers are aspiring professionals or simply really interested in fashion, they do not maintain enough of a distance for Duffy, which makes it seem like they are trying to manipulate their audiences. Positioning these writers as Pro Am, instead, might make their work seem less suspect.

Marjorie Garber argues that the professional and the amateur though "apparently distinct, are not only mutually enfolding but mutually constructed and mutually policed" (9-10). She seems to agree with the P-A-P system that links the two figures together in a working relationship. One cannot exist and thrive without the other. But what her definition adds to this is the sense of complexity. They are not only "mutually constructed and policed," and so reliant upon each other in a working relationship that is clearly hashed out, they are "mutually enfolding." In that phrase, she suggests the ways in which this relationship is forever developing and how the connection between the two perhaps exists in ways that are unspoken and perhaps unknown to those involved. What she brings to the very cleanly structure P-A-P system is the organic nature of human beings interacting. The messiness that Hamilton and Duffy identify seems to be the

humanness of being “mutually enfolding.” One cannot be so clearly differentiated from the other in some ways.

Garber defines the professional amateur as “someone who glories in amateur status. [...] The dabbler, the dilettante, the virtuoso, the ‘man (or even ‘woman’) of letters,’ the book reviewer, the belletrist, the polymath. And that current favorite, the ‘public intellectual’” (20). According to Garber, the professional amateur is not simply an amateur; it is someone who loves being an amateur. Likewise, it stands to reason that their passion for their work would be amplified. This would explain the desire to be ever closer to the professional realm. She offers up Sherlock Holmes as a prime example of the professional amateur. He is an investigator, but he is not connected to the official professional realm. He is not a cop, he is a private investigator. He is professional, but still an amateur.

On the other side of this is the amateur professional, who is “someone who is learning, or poaching, or practicing without a license” (19). The amateur professional is someone who is intensely interested in the work, but not as skilled and trained as a professional amateur. It can also be the professional who is exploring a field unrelated to their professional work. It is someone who is trained in one field and writes, thinks, practices, publishes in another. Garber offers up Oprah Winfrey as an example. She is a professional journalist, but used to run her book of the month club. She is not a professional book reviewer or a professional in the publishing and sales field, so she is an amateur professional.

As Garber argues, it can be difficult to identify the difference between a professional amateur and an amateur professional much in the same way it might be difficult to differentiate between the different types of amateurs that Stebbins and Haley describe. It is clear that the struggle to define different amateur figures, specifically the professional amateur, is what causes much of today's problems in Web 2.0 and other areas. And, it all seems to be derived from the insistence that being paid or not being paid is best way to determine an individual's status.

Transparency and the Pro Am

One of the most recent instances of this struggle involves a popular social media app and the democratizing philosophy of Web 2.0. A young woman on Instagram made the news for quitting her Instagram modeling "job" and for calling out the false nature of the work. The internet is constantly growing its capabilities, especially in regards to social media. What started off as an app for posting pictures has now turned into a place where individuals can cultivate their own celebrity and brand. This is similar to blogging where a new form of "citizen journalism" has appeared. And like we saw in Duffy's essay about fashion bloggers, there's the issue of transparency and a need to better understand the range of the P-A-P system. There's also the need to understand how businesses are taking advantage of this technology and this mindset.

In the situation with the Instagram model, Essena O'Neill made her living by being what is currently known as "Instagram famous." Essentially, she presented herself as an ordinary individual who simply liked to take selfies and other pictures. What it

ends up being is that O’Neill was paid to wear designer clothes and to travel to various places to take fake selfies. She was paid by these companies to promote their brands to an unknowing audience. When she revealed all of this information, she then set up a crowdfunding site to ask people to donate money for her to continue doing her work. The reaction was what you’d expect: people accused her of being selfish and berated her for having the audacity to ask for money just because she quit her job.

In his article, “The High Cost of Instagram Modeling” Arthur Chu, examines the situation and without using the exact words, acknowledges O’Neill’s work as amateur. He argues that: “Essena O’Neill is just another example of one of the most dangerous trends of the New Economy. She was making a living giving away content that was “free” to users, creating the illusion of a “sharing economy” where money was of no concern. Her customers didn’t know they were customers. She had no paywall. She was ad-supported” (Chu). O’Neill has fallen victim to providing free, or nearly free labor, which is his biggest complaint against Web 2.0 or the New Economy, as he puts it. Instagram models are but one figure in this approach to work. Bloggers, freelance writers, web artists, actors and comedians—essentially individuals in creative fields, are other types of workers who are subjected to the “pressure to ply your trade gratis ‘for exposure.’” What this boils down to is “working” multiple jobs for little to no pay on top of a paying job in order to market the individual person and gain more visibility.

This “unpaid, invisible labor” is a developing problem in general, but what makes the “Instagram famous” situation particularly appropriate in a discussion of amateurism is that what is being pushed is the illusion of the amateur and amateur work.

The idea that she is doing it just for fun is what sells the products she features. As he writes, “O’Neill used to make her money by creating in her audience’s minds the idea that they had an intimate relationship with her—a peek into her daily life—when really it was a three-way relationship: a relationship between her, her audience, and her advertisers, with the advertisers being the key member in the partnership.” So while the relationship between an “author” and their audience is key to how social media works, what isn’t being announced is the corporate involvement. When she reveals who she really is, there’s a backlash against her asking for money.

Chu argues that now that O’Neill is asking for money via her crowdfunding site, what she is really doing is asking to be paid for a service that deserves compensation. He writes, “Now she’s offering the real version of what she was offering an illusion of. She’s offering to let people see videos and blog posts about what she really believes and thinks, in return for their directly giving her money if they like what she’s doing so she can do more of it.” The problem that Chu identifies with this seemingly logical move is that this kind of work is portrayed as amateur, and as such, should be free. Amateur work within the democratization philosophy of Web 2.0 is something that is part of a “gift economy.” It is something that is done to be done and everyone gets to enjoy it—in theory. The reality is much of this work is, or should be, paid work. What sells O’Neill’s product is that it appears to be simply amateur—for the love it. People don’t feel like they are being sold anything. They don’t enter into following her and other Instagram models thinking they are supposed to buy any products, thus they might be more open to

buying these products. But, when O'Neill calls attention to the fact that it is marketing simply in a different way, people have rejected her work.

What we see in this public response is the tension of money and amateurism. Being Instagram famous is fine and to want to spend one's free time taking selfies and posting them is fine. Likewise, being a model and wanting help achieving a fulltime job as a professional model is acceptable, but to ask to be paid so that she can continue to be an Instagram model is unacceptable—even if she continues to provide the service she has been providing. What her followers are saying when they critique her request is that amateur work should not be paid. Once again, the issue is the way we define amateur work. The fashion bloggers have approached the issue of paid reviews with the attitude that they will generally only promote that which they really like, but that they will ultimately answer the call from businesses to promote products. The situation with Instagram modeling is slightly different. There is not obvious paid advertisement and she doesn't seem to be choosing products that she likes so much as she is wearing what will get her paid. While the fashion bloggers don't call themselves Pro Am, there's a much better sense that they see themselves as flirting with the line between amateur and professional. They don't want to simply share what they like, there's a desire to generate money from their work. This may not translate to full time employment, but they clearly think money can be part of the amateur work equation. O'Neill is struggling to present herself as a classic amateur, thus she cannot give away her corporate sponsors. This seems to be a major part of her breakdown and subsequent "quitting." What we see is

that she doesn't want to stop modeling, per say, but stop lying about getting paid for her work.

Chu argues for the need for this kind of transparency, and with that, honest discussions of payment in the form of paywalls, subscriptions, and crowdfunding.” He argues that we need to be up front about what artistic work looks like so that those who consume understand it. Otherwise, the work will be compromised and we send the message that artistic work is somehow different than other forms of employment. We effectively allow people to believe that these individuals don't have to work to pay bills like the rest of us do. Within this discussion, what is clear is that the problem lies in how we define and understand the amateur. All of these examples seem to suggest that if Pro Am was a better understood and more visible concept, amateur work wouldn't automatically be associated with free labor or unpaid services.

While fashion blogging and Instagram modeling are the most recent iteration of this problem, there's a group that has weathered this amateur/professional debate for decades now, perhaps even a century or two. The struggle this group has had embraces every facet that has been brought up here in regards to what amateurs are seen to be and what they actually are. And, as we will see, it is experiencing the impact of the struggle between contemporary amateurism and Web 2.0/new media. College athletics have long been the most public representative of amateurism. As athletics have progressed from a leisure activity to a big economic force these, we have seen the continuous battle over the purpose and relevance of amateurism to culture. While this happens mainly with the more prominent sports—football, basketball, and baseball, it is an issue that touches

every program in some way. The athletic situation captures all of the historical constructs of the amateur and the professional and embodies the continued struggle to maintain those spheres as separate, even though they are connected within the P-A-P system.

In their essay, “For the Love of the Game: A Philosophical Defense of Amateurism” Angela J. Schneider and Robert B. Butcher make an argument that is similar to the one that Duffy’s fashion bloggers do when they say writing paid reviews are fine so long as you like the product. Schneider and Butcher write: “Amateurism is presented as a form of motivation, the desire to perform or compete of the love of the game itself. The rewards for the amateur athlete come from the internal goods of the game he or she plays” (460). In other words, the amateur athlete focuses on the internal rewards, while the professional athlete is only concerned with the external ones. While many agree that the internal rewards are a significant aspect of amateur sports—and work in general, the strict interpretation of this makes contemporary amateur athleticism a conflicted space. First off, this implies that professional athletes are not driven by some feeling of internal rewards. As Stebbins point out, that is essentially saying that professionals derive no pleasure from their work and are only there for the money, which we know is patently false. Also, as Schneider and Butcher point out, amateur athletics is then tied to the limitations of social class. They play for the love of it—for the internal rewards, because they represent the upper class gentility that does not need, or want, to be paid to play. Again, we know that the actuality of this concept of athletics has largely faded.

Yet, people are trying to preserve this image of the amateur athlete. Schneider and Butcher argue that not only is the notion that amateurs need not be paid because it is a corrupting element outdated, it is dangerous in today's athletic climate (461). They write: "The insistence that an amateur athlete is an athlete that has not been paid, coupled with an inexorable desire for ever-improved performances, led inevitably to the rampant hypocrisy of millionaire amateurs and to the eventual collapse of a system that lacked a coherent justification" (461). What they are looking back at is the way in which this limited, class-based definition of the athlete failed to be sustainable. The lack of transparency leads to some amateurs making a lot of money, which creates fissure in the overall structure of college athletics and causes it to break down.

What Schneider and Butcher argue is that there's no reason to be concerned about paying amateur athletes. In their opinion, it isn't the element of money that drives them; therefore, it isn't a corrupting factor. Of course they acknowledge that it can be, but it can also be a corrupting factor for professional athletes. They write: "If [...] you view football as an opportunity to master new and complex skills, then in any match you must view your opponent not as a foe to be vanquished but as a partner in the joint project of mutually testing your skills. If you value the exercise of skills themselves, victory is only significant when it comes as a reward for more skilled play" (466-467). In other words, it is the spirit of the competition and how playing is the opportunity to get better that drives amateur players. Furthermore, "If one simply rewards victory, one will sometimes fail to reward excellence. However, what the amateur is interested in is

excellence” (467). So, the amateur is looking to become a better player—without or without money.

William J Morgan agrees that the previous class-based definition of the amateur athlete is problematic to our current athletic culture. In his essay, “Amateurism and Professionalism as Moral Languages: In Search of a Moral Image for Sport,” he examines our understanding of athletics is supposed to be and what it is in reality. He identifies two problems with amateurism and sport: “first, its insistence on passing off sport as a pastime rather than a substantive practice in its own right, and second, its uncompromising rejection of any form of financial reward for athletic excellence”(476). What Morgan is arguing is that there’s a need to break from the class constrictions because they impact our understanding of what contemporary athletics entail without even getting into the financial aspect of it. In his opinion, this outdated approach undermines the level of commitment and intensity of training that is required today to be a successful college athlete. On top of that, there needs to be shift in our attitudes about money and amateur athletes.

However, Morgan doesn’t argue that we should lose sight of the amateur and allow an unchecked amount of money to be generated. He writes that, from a moral standpoint, “While athletes are entitled to make a living off their athletic accomplishments, they are not entitled to turn sport into a commercial exploit, because doing so compromises and imperils the central goods that underpin and galvanize sport’s practice” (470). So even as we are arguing that amateur athletes desire some compensation for their work, Morgan is careful to acknowledge that the amateur is still

our basis for morality in sports in general, and as such, needs to have some limitations. In other words, a line needs to be drawn even as we are adopting a more realistic approach to the whole venture.

Morgan also identifies why the classic image of the amateur doesn't exercise a greater influence over the athletic community. What he argues is that we aren't particularly interested in upholding that kind of standard. He writes: "So while it cannot be denied that the amateur ideal gives us something to shoot for, it can be denied that the amateur ideal moves or compels us in any particular or meaningful way to seek what it stands for" (476). According to Morgan, this is why our definitions of athleticism follow more along the lines of professional sports. The ideal of the amateur might still be alluring, but it's not feasible because, as we see with O'Neill in the issue of the Instagram modeling, it ignores a range of amateur work and amateur desires. As he points out, one of the issues is how money validates aspects of our work. By calling something amateur, and thereby meaning "unpaid," it makes the activity "just a game." It robs the work of any serious energy. The amateur athlete is avocational, and so not serious, which doesn't ring true to what we know of college athletics today.

The need to be honest about the role that money plays in our worlds and our lives is something that Morgan reinforces. He believes that financial compensation "is not in itself morally troubling or suspect" even though he understands that money has the potential to corrupt individuals and other entities. However, it is problematic to ignore "the salutary role money can, and frequently does, play in human undertakings not centrally dedicated to its accumulation" (478). And he is careful to differentiate between

being paid in the capacity of fulltime work and earning money on the side. What he seems to be saying is that even when earning money on the side, the compensation itself is important to the validation of one's skills and time.

The result is the amateur remains the moral standard, but as Morgan argues, it fails to move people to follow that standard. He writes that “professionalism is able to move sport in what looks like and claims to be a moral direction, which amateurism is apparently incapable of doing” (481). In essence, professional sports offer a standard that not only is followed, but is capable of enacting movement and change. Amateurism “fails” because, while it seems to still be what we think an athlete should be, the fact that the classic definition of amateurism still insists that amateurs remain unpaid for their work ignores the way capitalism has been incorporated into our lives. People are aware that in this economy, they can and should be paid for their work. And more importantly, amateur athletes are aware that others will benefit financially from their performances in ways that they hadn't in the past.

The root of this issue can be found in how the college athlete is defined. College athletes are referred to as “student-athletes.” This is a term that has been around for a number of decades and has been the way that the NCAA regulates the line between amateur and professional. The NCAA 2015-2016 manual defines student-athletes in the following way:

2.9 The Principle of Amateurism. [*] Student-athletes shall be amateurs in an intercollegiate sport, and their participation should be motivated primarily by education and by the physical, mental and social benefits to be derived. Student

participation in intercollegiate athletics is an avocation, and student-athletes should be protected from exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises.

The manual's definition sounds similar to the common definition of the amateur. The individuals involved in college athletics are amateur and playing college sports is avocational. As such, college athletes should be motivated by "the physical, mental, and social benefits" derived from playing. And, they should be driven by their desire for an education. What they shouldn't be influenced by is professional and commercial enterprises, which the manual characterizes as "exploitation."

This seems like a very straightforward concept until we step back and consider that the term student-athlete was created to avoid lawsuits and unionization. As well, while it is nice to think that all groups and activities happening within the university space are done for love, experience, and education, we know that students obtain patents for scientific inventions and we know that artists, and other creative individuals, are not prevented from entering into paid professional jobs. Athletes are one of the few groups on campus whose work is restricted in such limiting ways and whose work contributes to significant financial revenue for the university, but for which are explicitly prevented from most forms of compensation.

Of course, key to this understanding is which sports and which college level is the focus. For the most part, the analysis I've found looks at Division I athletes and athletic programs because they are the ones who get the most compensation in their athletic packages and also are the most visible. Rarely do Division II and III programs

receive national media coverage or television time. This doesn't mean that these athletes aren't also part of the conversation about amateurs and professionals. Simply, they occupy a different space and their presence furthers my analysis. Along with the less visible minority Division I sports, D-II and D-III athletes demonstrate my argument for better visibility of the range of amateurs. The work I will examine shortly focuses on the issue of Pro Am, which is one facet of the argument; however, these unexamined athletes and sports are examples of athletes who have some interest in professional sports careers—be it actually playing or coaching, and those who truly looking just to play. In the college athletic spectrum there are at least three different versions of the amateur at any given moment. And all of them are concerned with compensation, or more accurately, maintaining their eligibility.

Most college athletes are aware that accepting money, or the equivalent, is the biggest risk to eligibility next to drug use. Athletes are not allowed to be paid for appearances or participation beyond a t-shirt. They are only allowed to make money working camps that are directly associated with their programs. Most of the time, the money made isn't given to the individual athletes, but rather is dumped into a general team fund. For D-II and D-III athletes, as well as lesser known D-I sports, this is the extent to which one has to worry about compensation. Beyond that, the athlete essentially needs to stay aware of the acceptable and unacceptable drugs and supplements and abide by participation guidelines as a team.

However, in some cases, major D-I sports generate enough money to support the entire athletic department and then some. This is where the issue of the Pro Am enters

the equation as many of these athletes are vying for professional careers after college and many of their universities are aware of the money that can be made on the student-athletes' popularity even as college students. Mike Ingersoll, a former college and professional football player, examines this problem of the student-athlete role in his essay "Amateurism and the Modern College Athlete." He argues that the term "student-athlete" as it relates to our understanding of the amateur is outdated and fails to protect the athletes from the realities of our contemporary university system.

One of the first points Ingersoll makes to distinguish himself as an amateur athlete. He writes: "In the end, I didn't love it. I respected it—the game—but it wasn't football that I loved. No, I loved the locker room. I loved the competition. I loved the preparation, and I loved the cerebral parts of it all. The game itself was irrelevant as far as I was concerned. It is the minutia that made me feel the most complete" (607). In here, Ingersoll confirms that what drives athleticism, in the truest sense, is the love of doing. He didn't love the sport per se or the potential for it to make him money. In fact, he is writing this as a part of his legal degree. While he pursued a professional football career, when it didn't work out, he pursued a career in law and it didn't affect his time as an athlete. More importantly, all of the little aspects of what athletics involves—the team work, the community, thinking the game, and competing against worthy opponents is what is found valuable and what "made him feel complete."

Yet, Ingersoll is also aware that he played D-I football and that his athletic experience was part of a bigger conversation about how to effectively negotiate the ever-overlapping professional and D-I amateur spheres. He points out that D-I athletes are

treated like they are working fulltime jobs. They have morning sessions before classes. Then, they go to classes, where people from the athletic department check in to make sure they are actually attending, then practice again, and finally mandatory study hall before heading back to their dorms to finish their homework. As he notes, there are ways in which the athletic body is regulated by the university that is unlike any other person on campus. Athletes must attend classes or risk losing playing time. They must maintain a certain academic standard, which is similar to any student on scholarship, but they also must maintain a high athletic standard. In the case of D-I sports, this equates not just to doing one's best, but to winning. As Ingersoll points out, every athletic scholarship is a yearly contract that can be revoked if the athlete doesn't do enough to help the team win.

All of this sounds understandable. If you are brought in to a school because you are particularly skilled at an activity, the university can expect you to live up to that. Part of bringing different students to campus is about incorporating those qualities into the school community. The difference with the athletic program is that there is a financial element that motivates decisions more than sheer athletic performance. Ingersoll points out that the term "student-athlete" is something the NCAA made up to avoid workman compensation lawsuits for injuries and benefits. And in doing so, the NCAA recognized that student-athletes are performing a type of work for the university, that without the "student" before the word "athlete" these individuals would be entitled to packages similar to other employees on campus. Adding "student" to the phrase is a thinly-veiled attempt to incorporate this labor into the educational function of the university.

That as well, might not seem problematic. That is until we understand what is covered under the auspices of the “student-athlete” designation. They are, of course, regulated by the university to perform well academically and athletically, as well as represent the university. Ingersoll writes: “Contractually, schools now owned players’ likeness rights, their schedules, and their labor, in the event of a catastrophe, did not even have to pay out disability or medical benefits” (619). It is the representation that is of particular interest to Ingersoll for this is what he believes is the contemporary issue with amateur athletics. The schools now own players’ “likeness rights,” which classically have meant they can use their images in brochures and posters for the school’s athletic program; however, for today’s D-I athlete this means something else. There is an additional “likeness” issue that straddles the line between classic amateur and the rights of today’s Pro Am. Ingersoll argues that ticket sales, concessions, sports products like clothing and cups, as well as video games generate revenue that athletes don’t receive and he argues that this oversteps the originally intentions of this stipulation (620). He writes, “Yes, the athlete gets experiences, training, and skills that he would not otherwise have available to him if it were not for college athletics. But that does not change the fact that student-athletes are providing free labor in exchange for millions upon millions of dollars in annual revenue for the university” (620). What seems to be the issue for Ingersoll is twofold. First off, it’s the amount of money being made. It seems that he would be agreeable with athletes only receiving the compensation of the scholarship if the athletic program was simply self-sustaining. As he pointed out, ultimately it is about playing and being involved, but when the university gains millions

of dollars off of the performances and products associated with specific athletes as well as the team, there needs to be a new, modified approach to compensation. Second, he takes issue with the video games in which athletes' likenesses are copied down to the idiosyncrasies of each athlete's appearance. In his opinion, this steps outside of the realm of university necessitated use of the athletes image and strides right into pure profit—and profit that none of the athletes will see.

Athletes have successfully sued universities over the video game issue, which gives some weight to Ingersoll's argument. Perhaps, as the video game issue demonstrates, it is time to rethink how we define amateurism in D-I athletics. In terms of this discussion, it seems antithetical to make considerable amount of money off of amateur work and not allow them access to that money. This has been an issue between the NCAA and the Olympic Committee for some time. Participating in any program for money makes an athlete ineligible to play on the collegiate level, which puts Olympic athletes in a difficult position, as many compete in the games before they are of college age. In his essay "Amateurism Interplay Between Olympic Excellence and NCAA Eligibility," Tyler Dumler discusses the ways that the NCAA has shifted rules for Olympians and Olympic play so that athletes are allowed to gain some monetary benefits and paid clothes, travel, equipment for Olympic work. However, the money that Olympic athletes make from their medals can't be pocketed, it must be held in trust to be used for college expenses. And as of 2013, they couldn't take the money with them after school. The issue with that is it implies a professional contract, which is not allowed in any capacity while the athlete is participating in NCAA programs. The leftover money is

frequently absorbed by the university, which once again brings in the issue of the school benefiting financially from an athlete's performance.

Additionally, the concept of the Pro Am needs to be considered if only for the D-I level, where athletes are far more connected to the professional realm. The idea that money is corrupting automatically needs to be challenged because as Dumler argues "Modern amateurism should reflect the profit motive of the student-athlete and recognize the corporate nature of NCAA athletics as they exist in reality, rather than cling to the strict regulations that have been used to protect amateurism which is no longer an accurate portrayal of NCAA athletics" (47). And as Ingersoll argues, it needs to be changed because the current definition fails to recognize the class implications that are still attached to it. It fails to recognize that D-I sports are viewed as a way to secure a financially-stable future for the athletes themselves, as well as their families.

In light of the discussion of what an amateur embodies, this issue of the D-I athlete and the subsequent money made by universities feels as exploitative as the Instagram model moment. The image that is being sold to us is false. There is clearly a monetary element to both the athletes and the Instagram models, but the overly-simplistic interpretation of the amateur opens them up for abuse and disempowerment. What these individuals actually are are Pro Am. They are potentially looking to segue into a professional field, which means learning to interact with external rewards. Denying them this, denies them, first and foremost, real opportunities, but also some knowledge about how the professional sphere works.

Simply put, what seems to be the current issue is that our guiding definition of amateurism in athletics isn't being honest about the role money plays in our lives, and that if money is being made off of someone's work, they should receive compensation. There's a failure to recognize that money doesn't automatically corrupt an individual or activity. I would argue that it is once again the lack of transparency of the system. Some athletes are fine with the compensation they receive. This might be in part due to the fact that not all athletic programs generate the same kind of visibility and money. For the minority athletes their issue with amateurism and money might not be with the individuals not receiving money, but the overall program. However, some athletic programs generate a huge amount of revenue via ticket sales, product sales, and advertising. Athletes who are aware of their opportunities to play beyond college find those job opportunities as part of the incentive to play, but for those athletes who might not aspire to professional careers, receiving money for what they do in college wouldn't necessarily corrupt their play.

Morgan seems to agree with this when he makes the argument about internal and external goods. The amateur represents the internal goods one gets from playing a sport while the professional represents the external. These internal goods are found in the skills and challenges, according to Morgan, and they are what "excite" and "capture what it is about sporting practices that make them meaningful undertakings" (486). Internal goods are found in the actual motions of playing the sport, engaging with teammates, and how doing those two things make a person feel. Moreover, they cannot be bought or sold or be possessed exclusively by any one athlete (486).

The most important aspect of this sense of internal rewards is that it is something that creates a type of unity within the athletic community. As Morgan writes, “when new levels of athletic excellence are reached and when new features, dimensions, and nuances of the ways of life they exemplify are revealed, all members of their relevant practice communities gain from, and share in, these attainments” (486). In other words, when one athlete achieves internally, all athletes in that field, and perhaps beyond it, gain internal rewards. When he makes this statement, he is referring to all athletes, not just amateurs. And Morgan does this because if all athletes feel internal rewards, then it isn’t a stretch to argue and accept that all athletes should receive some level of external rewards. Ultimately, this is what Morgan argues. He writes:

we must concoct a hybrid moral image of sport that somehow combines and balances the core principles of both amateurism and professionalism. For what we seek here is amoral image of sport that neither loathes market imperatives nor covets them, an image that, in other words, gives the market just enough access to the sphere of sport to enable its practitioners to turn their athletic pursuits into the main vocations and callings of their life but stems the market whenever it strays too close to the center of the practice of sport, whenever, that is, it threatens to invade the life-giving marrow of sport. (489)

And while this is strictly a discussion of athletics for Morgan, we can see how it also applies to Duffy’s fashion blogger and Instagram modeling. These are both examples of people who want to embrace what Morgan calls a hybrid moral image and what I would argue is really the Pro Am. When Morgan calls for a mindset that allows for money and

love of a sport to coexist, he is calling for a more diversified definition of the P-A-P system. There needs to be allowances for more than the current amateur/professional binary that seems to be most commonly embraced right now. It's not the destruction of the old notion of what an amateur is, but a broader sense of all of the ways amateur can be manifested. Morgan argues that the amateur fails to motivate people, but the professional can. The amateur is still the moral image, but the professional embraces capitalist reality. He argues for an "amoral" image, which might be a good way to reimagine both the amateur and professional because it allows both to be influential and requires both to connect with the internal rewards—the "for the love of it." However, I don't think we need to strip the amateur of being the moral standard. I think both figures can remain in their respective positions within the P-A-P system if we openly embrace the way the two overlap and to create gradations of each figure. In doing this, what we are striving for is better transparency of amateur work both by the amateur and the other figures in the P-A-P system. Monitoring how money is influencing certain amateur work is easier if the facets of that work are visible. If we insist that amateur work fits into a very narrow definition, we effectively hide variants of this work and/or silence it by labeling it "deviant" or "corrupt."

Distance and preserving the contemporary amateur

Transparency seems to start with recognizing all of the kinds of amateur work that exist and the different reasons why individuals are motivated to participate in these activities. It requires not only for individuals to fully understand what kind of amateur

work they are doing, but also their general publics. But as we will see, it is not just a matter of recognizing or claiming a label. Amateur work, especially contemporary amateur work, requires its own space within the P-A-P system. Distancing is, then, another key factor to revising our flawed understanding of amateurism.

In her essay “The new art of being amateur: Distance as participation,” Lucia Vodanovic examines the Museum of Everything, an art exhibit that’s premise is to be the antithesis of a standard museum. The idea is to literally break away from the museum building structure and curator methods by holding viewings outside and putting displays in the hands of the artists. The concept of the Museum of Everything is that “outsiders” are really “insiders” and the work is supposed to offer “an intensity, dedication and originality that professional art is not able to have” (171). The creators of this museum wanted the “unintentional, unseen, un-exhibited and unknown artists” looking to show off “unmediated display of people’s experiences or [...] artworks that play with the illusion of immediacy” (171). In essence, they wanted to embrace and promote amateurism. They wanted artists who hadn’t been sanctioned by the art world and artwork that resisted, and existed apart from, the rigorous structuring of the formal museum system. That is, they were looking for art and display methods that embraced the here and now.

Ultimately, Vodanovic determines that the Museum of Everything does effectively achieve what it sets out to, but even that it might not provide an “alternate viewing experience,” it does “actualize this notion of distant viewing and bring it to the surface” (178). What Vodanovic means by this is that the Museum of Everything brings

to light the need for a space between art and the formal space of the museum. This project “emphasizes a gap, a distance that, yet fictional, separates itself from ‘regular’ art, even if this distance is only a figure of through or rhetoric tool” (172). In doing so, the Museum of Everything establishes the need for the amateur counterpart.

What Vodanovic is noticing is the way this project speaks to the P-A-P system. When she acknowledges that the Museum of Everything can’t completely separate itself from the standard museum space, she is essentially acknowledging what Stebbins argues, which is that the professional must always have an amateur equivalent. She expresses this further, writing that “The amateur works at a professional level yet could be even more effective in terms of productivity and innovation, not by appropriating the professional space but precisely by distancing his or her work from it” (169). What she emphasizes here is something that Stebbins and the other allude to, but don’t articulate as clearly. She emphasizes the need for maintaining distance in order for each figure to be able to perform their duties within the P-A-P system, which is interesting to think about when considered the issue of the Pro Am and the issue of transparency. Vodanovic writes that “amateur practices confirm the territorial differences between different spheres of production” and these practice “could engage and potentially disrupt the hierarchy of values that sustain those sphere” (169). In other words, the presence of the amateur helps us to see where the professional space begins and ends. But this work doesn’t just draw boundaries, it interacts with the professional sphere, albeit from a distance, to challenge and create change within the professional space.

Furthermore, problems arise when this distance isn't maintained. When referencing the failure of the Museum of Everything to succeed in its mission, she argues that "Their problematic position might reside in the fact that they are ceasing to exist as a distance, as if this cancellation was, paradoxically, that which undermines their potential for participation and engagement" (178). The project doesn't maintain a sufficient distance from the professional structure it is trying to challenge, and so, it loses its power to be an oppositional voice and force. Thus, what Vodanovic concludes, and what is incredibly relevant to my analysis of the amateur is that "the manifestation of [...] a distance, a separation but also an engagement with this distant relationship what makes something to be amateur" (173). What she is arguing is that not only does there need to be a maintained distance between the amateur and the professional, but two must interact with each other, albeit from a distance. In other words, the distance isn't a separation or a severing of ties; it is a way to allow for each figure to develop in its own space as it is in conversation with the other. What Vodanovic establishes for this conversation is that it isn't just transparency that is a huge part of current issues surrounding amateurism. It is also making sure that the amateur space is preserved. It is about drawing a line between the two that clearly demarcates where one ends and the other begins.

When we see the problem Duffy has with the fashion bloggers, we see her articulating a need for distance. As Vodanovic argues, with distance comes power. I would argue that there is distance in that example, but without transparency, it is difficult to see. If people can't see the distance, there seems to be some loss of power.

Similarly, the Instagram model and the D-I collegiate athlete suffer from a lack of clear and visible distance. They are not professional, but neither are they classic amateurs. The lack of clear definitions obscures the distance that actually exists and diminishes these groups' power to change the professional space. As Morgan points out, the issue isn't that we have given up on the relevance and desire for the amateur figure, the amateur figure, as we have classically define him/her, has lost the ability to effect change. It has lost a sense of distance, but as Morgan and Ingersoll argue, the answer isn't to dig in one's heels and insist upon an outdated definition. What needs to happen is to redefine what an amateur is in contemporary capitalism. I would argue that Stebbins gives us a way to go about redefining this figure when he argues for the P-A-P system and a more varied understanding of amateur intention and motivation.

The conversation about transparency and distance is really about preserving the amateur by being realistic about how many different ways amateurism can manifest and by acknowledging the need for amateur space. It is about preserving a figure who is getting swallowed up in the ambiguity of contemporary culture and a Web 2.0 mentality. What should be an exciting moment for amateurs because all sorts of channels for exploration have opened up seems to have unfortunately reinforced stereotypes and misperceptions about amateurs instead. The problem underlying this is the disconnect between what theorists know the amateur to be and what has been embraced by mainstream culture.

So what this analysis finds most pressing is the preservation of the amateur, but with an eye towards an updated, more contemporary reality. As this review has shown,

amateurism is still performed for the ‘love of it.’ Internal rewards continue to outweigh external ones, but it is no longer appropriate to assume that external rewards are never, and should never, be a part of the amateur experience. What the P-A-P system demands in its structuring of the relationship between the amateur and the professional is the necessity of each one to the other’s work. But it also shows us that distance is as important for the amateur and the amateur’s ability to impact professional work as we commonly see it for the professional. In other words, while we are comfortable with the idea that professionals might need, and want, to distance themselves from amateurs, it might be equally as important for amateurs to preserve their own space.

Furthermore, it isn’t just distance, but transparency that is key to preservation. Amateur work has to be redefined to better represent the actuality of amateur space. This means that the definition of the amateur needs to include the pre-professional and post-professional, the dabbler, an understanding of how the hobbyist exists as a separate entity, what the classic amateur looks like, and how Pro Am has entered into the equation. When identifying amateur work, these designations need to be invoked. In doing this, we reinforce the importance of the amateur, but also recognize its diversity.

The significance of preserving the amateur is easier to see with the P-A-P system because we can see the necessity amateur work to the professional sphere. Richard Edwards argues in his essay “Amateurism and professionalism in work and learning” that amateurism “opens up the possibilities for conceiving new forms of work, worker and sets of working relationships based upon different conceptions of expertise.” Amateurs can combine disciplines, blend genres and concepts in ways that professionals

can't and "can sometimes be more innovative than professionals in what they do, precisely because they are not subject to the certain standards and accountabilities of those groups" (Edwards).

Ultimately, Edwards see the importance of amateurism because of its potential impact on the professional realm, musing that "doing things 'for the love of it,' might normatively open up new possibilities for what we have come to think of as professional practices." Carolyn Dinshaw makes a similar claim in her work *How Soon is Now?: Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time*. She writes:

Operating on a different time scheme from professional activities, amateurs' activities do not require punching a time clock and do not follow a predestined career path, since they are not wage labor. Amateur temporality starts and stops at will; tinkerers and dabblers can linger at moments of pleasure when the professionals must soldier duly onward. Professionals must bring all elements of an operation into place in order to complete a replicable task—say, the making of a perfect omelet—but amateurs can enjoy the chance irruptions that occur when all is not synched up. Amateur time is not dictated by a mystified scientific method that requires not only a closed system and the elimination of chance but also, and most fundamentally, the separation of subject from object. In fact, not 'scientific' detachment but constant *attachment* to the object of attention characterizes amateurism. (22)

What Dinshaw is suggesting here is that one of the major advantages to this work is that amateurs have the ability to control the pace and the focus of their projects. They can

start without a solid plan or every element in place, and they can pause and spend time on aspects of the work because they find it interesting or worthy of further inspection. Without the need to finish in any particular amount of time or way, the amateur has the advantage of full control over how they interact with the work. Most important to Dinshaw is that amateur work is not confined by the need to meet some scientific standard of precision or objectivity. The amateur does not need to be detached from the work; rather, “constant *attachment*” should be exercised. This requisite attachment challenges how we have come to expect to experience work.

Amateur work, according to Dinshaw, is work lived in a different temporality. Her thesis ends up being built around how amateur work presents an argument for “taking seriously these kinds of lives lived” (4). She writes that “Amateurism [...] is itself a bit queer, defined by attachment in a detached world” (31). For Dinshaw, the amateur is someone who lives at a different pace than everyone else, but more importantly, they defines themselves via the ability to attach fully to their work as well as their lived experiences. What she is saying here is that the contemporary world is driven by professional work, and within that, by the ability to separate oneself from work. Work is no longer a meaningful part of one’s life. It is a clock that regulates the flow of time and movement. Amateur work, however, is created by connection to work.

Dinshaw clearly isn’t factoring in the P-A-P system that links the professional to the amateur. She is also functioning under some of the basic assumptions about the professional and the amateur, but what she does bring to this is the idea that the amateur offers us a life lived at a different pace. And if we complicate that with the many

versions of amateurs that are out there, we can see how many different paces of life are potentially being offered up. The Pro Am is probably one of the most significant ones to contemporary amateurs because it directly challenges not only what it means to be professional, but also what it means to be amateur. So the significance of preserving the amateur and the amateur space is the potential to fulfill the P-A-P structure and to challenge any stagnancy in our working spaces. As Haley argues, the amateur provides the creative energy to change up the status quo, and as we saw with the Instagram models and athletes, a failure to acknowledge the kind of amateur work they bring to the P-A-P space is a failure to both appreciate and reap the benefits of the specific kind of work they do.

Zines and spirited connections

In “For the Love of the Game: A Philosophical Defense of Amateurism” Angela J. Schneider writes of her experiences as a college athlete in rowing and track field. In her example, she emphasizes that the internal rewards are ultimately what drive athletes. She writes: “I could not achieve the internal good of each of those sports from the practice of the other. The joy that comes from getting the stroke just right, and just right in harmony with the rest of the crew, when each member gets her stroke just right at the same time, cannot be duplicated in any other sport. The beauty of a well-rowed boat is unique. So while I may get the external goods of money and fame from a variety of sources. I can only get the joy of a well-rowed boat from rowing” (463). As well, each sport brings with it its own set of internal rewards. She cannot get from track and field

what she gets from rowing, and the rewards individuals feel can never be replaced by money.

More importantly, Schneider places the emphasis of this discussion back onto the joy that one receives in the act and from the community. She argues that, “We cannot explain the passion and dedication of these people [athletes] without thinking and talking about the joy that their activity brings” (463). In essence, we can’t even begin to discuss the P-A-P system and its various designations, the issue of class and money, or the impact of more recent technological advances unless we first analyze the internal rewards that continue to be the primary defining factor of amateurism. And this is really where Wayne Booth enters this conversation. For him, the act of “amateurism” as he calls it is mainly about internal rewards or the “love of it.”

For Booth, like the rest of the writers in this review, amateurism is work, and it is work that is connected to the professional realm. What he offers to the dialogue is his opinion of what are the general characteristics of amateur work. For Booth, the amateur is still a flawed figure, who makes a concerted effort to learn and to do. Amateur work is “laboring” because these efforts come with the potential for failure. For him, failure is an expected and commonplace aspect of amateurism. And it is in some ways the test of an individual’s commitment. It is what draws the line between a hobbyist and an amateur. The amateur understands that beyond these failures is internal reward. There is the joy that one gets from working through difficulty and failure.

As well, Booth goes on to attribute the draw of amateur work to the community that gets built up around it. While Booth acknowledges that one can amateur alone, he

argues that amateuring in a group amplifies the spiritedness that comes with the act of amateuring. He even suggests that it is only amateuring done with a group that is truly able to achieve the spiritedness that for him is the hallmark of “for the love of it.” And it is this spiritedness that turns the act of amateuring into a lifestyle. What he seems to be suggesting here is that there is external reward in amateur work that isn’t necessarily monetary. So part of what creates the joy of the act is internal. It is the way amateuring makes an individual feel. But another part of it is the community, which sounds like an external reward. If people engage in amateur work, they will develop, or be taken in by, a community. They will form a support network and connections. Booth feels like a valuable source for an analysis of zine work because he focuses on the type of amateuring that zine writers do and articulates the rewards that these individuals seek from this work. This is to say, Booth is less concerned with the professional element, though it is present in his analysis, and more concerned with how the amateur experiences this kind of work. Zine writers, while positioning themselves opposite of professional publications, aren’t as concerned with their professional counterparts as they are in creating their own conversations and communities. And while they are connected to the professional sphere, as Stebbins stipulates, there is a distinct distance established on the part of the zine writers in order to create their work as far away from professional influences as possible.

While I agree that part of the necessity of rehabilitating our definitions and preservation of the amateur is important to the professional space, I am also interested in what preserving this act does for the individuals who are involved in this work. For most

of this review, the idea of “for the love of it” has been downplayed or even ignored, yet when it comes down to it, internal rewards are still the predominant factor in what makes an act amateur, and as Booth suggests, external rewards don’t always have to be monetary. A few have pointed out that it is difficult to judge a person’s motivation for being involved in any given kind of work and so it is difficult to use that as a method for identifying amateurism, especially when money enters the equation. With that, I argue that a better understanding of amateur work from the perspective of amateurs (zine writers) does make it easier to see amateurism more fully. Zine writers do enact transparency in clear ways. As well, they actively work to establish distance as method for creating their work. I argue that this is a large part of their preoccupation with authenticity. Love is a driving force for amateur work, but I argue that external rewards do also exist in the form of community and spirited connections. Finally, I examine the newcomer to the P-A-P system as I analyze the work of glossies and consider how they as Pro Am works challenge myths of amateurism. So zine work is a prime example of not only how we can approach these new problems surrounding amateur work, but also of how these tensions are perpetuated.

Chapter II: Amateuring is the new bricolage

This chapter starts with a look at Levi-Strauss’ work on the bricoleur. Zine work and zine writers have already been connected to the concept of the bricoleur, so my approach is to take a closer look at how their creative processes are similar. For this chapter, I work mainly with *Entry Point*, Pagan Kennedy, and the intro rants of *Doris*,

She's So Very..., and *Cardboard Cutouts*. What I am looking at is how the writers approach their zines and what seems to motivate them to continue to work on their projects. I draw on Levi-Strauss and the bricoleur, specifically the dialogue process through which bricolage work is created. I also include Wayne Booth's work *For the Love of It: Amateuring* first as a lens for considering the continued relevance of Levi-Strauss' theory of the bricoleur. Then, I consider that like the bricoleur, the amateur is also a term that has been attributed to zine work.

What I find pertinent to my analysis of the zine writers is the idea that bricoleurs create a dialogue between themselves and the materials of their project. What is important is the consultation with each material and how it relates to other materials and that this must be done each time prior to the bricoleur actually beginning assembling the work. When I examine the zine writers, a similar dialogue process is revealed. While this is more of an inner dialogue because we don't get to see the zine writers discussing what they select and why, there's still a relevant crossover that helps to reveal a commonality between the various zines. The question that each zine writer seems to be answering in one way or another is: why? Likewise, for each issue the zine writer articulates a specific purpose for creating the issue. After some analysis, it is evident that each issue's purpose corresponds back to the zine writer's initial question.

By focusing the "A" in the P-A-P system, this chapter intends to analyze the internal rewards that amateur work brings zine writers by analyzing their process behind their publications. By examining the question and answer structure that seems to drive the zine process, I hope to identify what internal rewards look like for zine writers and

why they are such a driving force. In this chapter, I examine the concept of “for the love of it” but try to break that down into tangible steps and acts.

Chapter III: Koinonia and creating a spirited community

Chapter three continues with an analysis of Booth’s theory by shifting away from a focus that is entirely upon the zine writer towards how the relationship between zine writers and their readers creates a sense of community and spirit. Booth emphasizes the importance of working in a community, especially honing one’s craft in a group that is also working to be better at it. Drawing from his book title, Booth connects the idea of loving an activity with the feeling of the act, which he ultimately decides is spiritual in nature. He refers to this as the spiritedness of the act of amateurism and argues that this gets extended to the group and heightened by the feeling of the group as community.

I turn to Linda Gaither and her work *To Receive a Text: Literary Reception Theory as a Key to Ecumenical Reception* to help conceptualize the transference of spiritedness within a community. Gaither is focused specifically on the ecumenical community, but I found the parallels useful enough to bring in some of her major terms. While I briefly refer to her discussion of how dialogue works between members of a spiritual community and how it relates back to a spiritual text for a better sense of how spiritual dialogue works, I use the concept of koinonia and the related idea of gifting and receiving in depth.

When looking at the zines, I analyze how their community is structured and how the smaller sub-community that develops around a specific zine works. I examine what

spiritedness looks like for the zine writer and then how that seems to get translated to the reader. From there, I analyze how the writers and readers work together to create moments of koinonia, and then how koinonia seems to be integral to the further development of the zine. Gifting and receiving is an idea that is a part of koinonia and that speaks to the idea of communion. In the zine world, this generally gets manifested through small gifts like stickers and pictures as well as mix tapes and playlists. The last part of my analysis in this chapter is focused on how zine writers employ a gifting system within their zines in order to encourage better connection and interaction from their readers.

When writing about amateurism, many writers reference the joy of the act as the real reason for doing amateur work. This chapter looks at the spiritedness of the act as an extension of internal rewards. In particular, it looks to the social element that is considered a necessity in amateur work. I consider how internal rewards are amplified by community members and their own experience of internal rewards. I also argue that the development of the community is in itself for zine writers a type of external reward. In this way, I confront the concept that money is the primary form of compensation in amateur work. I argue that with amateurism that isn't Pro Am or preprofessional, external rewards aren't monetary. Rather, they are emotional and social.

Chapter IV: Glossies and the feminist middlebrow

The final body chapter steps away from the zine proper to glossies, which exist as a kind of hybrid version of the zine and fashion magazines. My analysis focuses on

BUST and *Bitch* magazines because they are two of the most successful feminist-based glossies on the market today and because they both have established zine roots. I examine how the editors at *BUST* and *Bitch* situate their publications in the same space as mainstream magazines, and how that space would be considered middlebrow. I look at how the term middlebrow, like amateur, has commonly been viewed as an undesirable label, and I consider why critics of *BUST* and *Bitch* view these works with a similar skepticism to those who are dubious of middlebrow literature.

For this analysis, I work mainly with Janice Radway's work *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire* and the middlebrow reader. Radway identifies the middlebrow reader as one who is looking for both a mild intellectual challenge and an emotional connection with books. I reflect on the role the Book-of-the-Month Club played in establishing a kind of taste for books. I use this to consider how *BUST* and *Bitch* are potentially doing a similar kind of work within the fashion magazine world. I look at the content of these two glossies and how they are balancing out the serious nature of feminist issues with the light-heartedness that is expected from mainstream magazines. I examine how this both qualifies these publications as middlebrow and reveals how they are working to carve out a new kind of middlebrow space.

Next, I analyze the role of consumerism as it is applied to middlebrow literature in general, as well as the selection process within the Book-of-the-Month Club. I discuss the tension around consumerism in the zine community and how that is a major point of contention for zine writers when it comes to *BUST* and *Bitch*. While I validate the

concerns about consumerism, I also suggest a new way of looking at the kind of consumerism that is promoted in feminist-based glossies. I argue that glossies are creating a new space in magazine publication.

This chapter looks at glossies as examples of Pro Am figures. By straddling the line between zine and conventional magazine, they are embracing a similar identity as Pro Am amateurs. They are not selling out into the professional sphere, but also not letting go of their zine roots and ethics. So, while they want to and expect to make money off of their publications, they are cognizant of their content in ways that prevents them from becoming truly mainstream. What I examine in this chapter is how the discomfort by both the zine community and the conventional magazine community expresses the need for a more diverse definition of amateur and professional work. Just as the glossies are hybrids of zines and conventional magazines, the Pro Am is a hybrid of amateur and professional. This chapter speaks to Dinshaw and her argument that amateur work gives us examples of lives lived in different temporalities. These glossy publications give us examples of professional magazines that function in much different ways.

CHAPTER II

AMATUERING IS THE NEW BRICOLAGE

“Since all other motives—fame, money, power, even honor—are thrown out the window the moment I pick up that cello bow, the only plausible reason for doing it is that overworked word ‘love,’ the irresistible motive that leads in mystifying ways to both intense pleasures and intense pains. I do it because I love doing it, even when the results are disappointing. I do it to do it. It is not just a way to stave off the despair or boredom or anxiety that threatens every life, however blessed or lucky. I do it not just as one might eat, drink, and feign to be merry because tomorrow one may (must) die. It’s not simply another pastime to make life tolerable and postpone death. I do it not only because it feels good but because when considered from any angle, including tough critical probing, it stands up as *the way to go* “(Booth 51).

The amateur. The one who plays for free and for audiences of family members and friends—if that. The one who creates without the validation of official degrees or apprenticeships. The non-professional. We find them all over the place. Some, like street musicians and artists, are obvious figures in our daily landscape. Some aren’t as apparent, but they are there, working behind the scenes. Very simply, to be amateur is to engage in an activity without the hopes of receiving the monetary gains that come with professional level work. It is done with the knowledge that fame will most likely not be a part of this endeavor, but it is done because the individual enjoys it.

However, to refer to someone or something as “amateur” most often is to demean because to be amateur is to be deemed not good enough. The amateur attempt is thought to be done without a full understanding of what it takes to be successful. It comes with the feeling that one is foolish, perhaps even, naïve. As American painter and photographer Chuck Close once said, “The advice I like to give young artists, or really anybody who'll listen to me, is not to wait around for inspiration. Inspiration is for amateurs; the rest of us just show up and get to work.” While the idea that individuals need to approach their creative work as a daily process rather than the result of divine intervention is sage advice, his positioning of the amateur is the more notable point in this statement because it reinforces the common feeling about this particular figure. For Close, and many others, the amateur is the antithesis of the professional, a figure who just doesn't quite cut it. Here, it's because they don't have enough of a footing in reality to know how creative work actually gets done. In general, though, there's the feeling that the amateur lacks the skill, awareness, and/or drive to be as successful as a professional. In the artistic realm, this seems to translate into the inability to create meaningful, engaged art. The amateur is someone who is simply playing at the craft, whereas a real artist creates serious work. As well, there's the sense that an amateur artist doesn't create art that is new or breaks the mold. Rather, theirs is the kind of work that mimics other works--and in a lesser way.

As this figure is always in some way positioned vis-à-vis a professional counterpart, it frequently gets defined by what it is not. The amateur is not the professional and has not succeeded on the professional level. As such, defining

amateurism in this way infuses an automatic sense of failure in the act and in the individual connected to it. Moreover, the amateur is not usually depicted as a success in his or her own space or is not applauded in the same ways a professional would be. Thinking about the amateur as someone in the constant state of failure to truly achieve casts a shadow on the act of amateurizing. Why be amateur when you can and, as it is suggested, should be professional? Why even bother if your best attempts at the activity will ultimately be viewed as failure? How can one derive pleasure and satisfaction from doing something that by definition will always fall just short of good enough?

Despite knowing that success will potentially be couched in terms of failure, the figure of the amateur exists in many versions-- writers, athletes, musicians—and continues to grow in numbers. People find something redeemable about being amateurs. There's something to be gained regardless of being interpreted as foolish or unsuccessful, or in doing one's work in relative anonymity. They continue on and seem to have learned to position their successes against a different qualifier. People who truly embrace being amateur, and who recognize themselves as amateurs, seem to have shirked the shadow of the professional and defined their own sense of success. Yet, there are many individuals out there who are fully engaged in the act of amateurizing, but don't recognize that they are doing it. Or at least, they don't recognize the importance of the work they do. They downplay their successes and laugh off their attempts as insignificant.

In his work "The Amateur: Two Sociological Definitions," Robert A. Stebbins refutes the claims that the amateur is the lesser of the two. William Haley agrees in his

work “Amateurism.” For both, the amateur is an equal partner in the Professional-Amateur-Public, or P-A-P, system. The amateur is characterized as the more flexible, but vital, counterpart to the professional. Where the professional is viewed as the expert in any given field, the amateur is the inquisitive-minded dabbler. Amateurs, like the bricoleur who will be discussed a little later, can pull inspiration from an infinite amount of sources, whereas professionals are generally limited to their own field. And as the structure suggests, both figures serve a type of public. Consequently, there is a level of expectation to produce quality products and ideas felt by both the amateur and the professional.

By and large those who write about and theorize the amateur view this figure as an integral part of whatever field of study in which he/she is involved. The amateur is not haphazardly or underrated. Rather, these individuals engage in serious pursuit of skill and knowledge. They simply do it for different reasons and with a different sense of time. As well, a certain lack of perfection might be attributed to this group, and not always because they aren't as skilled, but because their resources are more limited and their approach is more diverse. A lack of perfection can be contributed their non-professional status, as they aren't held to the same rigorous standards as their counterparts; however, perfection doesn't seem to be the ultimate goal for most amateurs. As many point out, for most it's engaging in an act that contributes in productive and creative ways and it's the personal challenge to best one's own skills rather than those of the professionals. Indeed, “for the love of it” is generally the motto

that is attributed to the amateur, and most agree that that is the underlying motivation for this work.

Wayne Booth, a self-described amateur musician, examines the figure of the amateur in his book *For the Love of It: Amateuring and Its Rivals* in hopes to rescue this figure by bringing more visibility to these types of individuals and this kind of work. Booth is well aware that the activities that get labeled “amateur” are usually also the ones that get labeled “professional,” only the amateur is the individual who didn’t have what it took to be as good as the professional. As well, he is aware that the common feeling is that anyone engaged in such activities are and should be striving to be professional. That is, anyone who attempts these amateur activities are thought to be secretly, or not so secretly, seeking professional success. While he recognizes that his own cello playing has hard-set limitations-- that is, he will never be a professional and for good reasons, he resists positioning the amateur as a negative foil to the professional. Indeed, throughout his work, he argues for a new definition of the amateur, and one that better captures the positive attributes of this figure and this work.

What Booth seems to really be analyzing is how amateur work brings about internal rewards. That is, how individuals who participate in amateur work feel about their work and their achievements. It is for this reason that he poses a very simple question at the beginning of his analysis: “Just what is the purpose of amateuring, then, if full success, in the sense of winning, is always out of sight?” (5-6) In other words, why bother? Why try to achieve in the ways he sees true amateurs trying to achieve if

they will never reach what is considered to be the ultimate goal? His awareness of how the amateur is classically positioned colors the answer to his question. He writes:

Though we amateurs are often driven, and even plagued, by the desire to do it better, the real drive is the sheer love of the playing itself—not just the music but the *playing* of, with, through, and *in* the music. It is our conviction that if anything is worth doing at all, it is worth doing badly. We usually manage to rise above the distractions and just play, for the sake of the playing negotiating spirited interpretations. When everything goes well, the rewards are... (Booth 6)

His answer seems to embrace Stebbins and Haley's definition of the amateur. Rather than continually position himself against professional musicians, he chooses to focus on his work, and that of the amateur, as something that exists in its own space. And, his goal is to see the amateur as something of great value on its own. It is an act that is significant apart from any professional counterpart, even though in reality the amateur's awareness of a standard for achievement is informed by professional work. Rather than conceptualize the amateur as an apologetic figure, he wants to see the amateur as admirable and desirable. It is one who can "negotiate spirited interpretations." The amateur is capable of interacting meaningfully with the text, which in this case is musical score. But, in other areas of amateurism, the concept is that the individual can understand nuanced details of subject matter and process it in ways that are smart and thought-provoking. Flaws may always be present because the group is "rising above distractions and just playing," but there is the potential for good work and achievement in this space.

While he certainly attributes a great amount of humility to the amateur, it is not a humbling of oneself to a perfect “other.” Rather, it is recognition on the part of the individual that there are inevitably going to be limitations and imperfections that might mark the work, and the acknowledgement that while that individual might work very hard to challenge those limitations and fix those imperfections, he/she may never overcome them. Failure and flaws certainly happen, but to humble oneself to that fact is to allow both elements to simply be a step to greater success or a merely a part of the work rather than a reason to quit or give up. Indeed, failure and flaws are the not the end for amateurs under Booth’s definition. They are part of the process along the way. Moreover, they are a huge part of the internal rewards that come with amateur work. This is a key distinction since amateurism is classically defined as failure—either complete or partial—and that failure is seen as the primary element that prevents progress rather than encourages it. The process, which has some sort of end in sight when attached to the common understanding of “amateur,” seems to be never-ending with Booth’s definition. To amateur by Booth’s definition is to adopt a way of life, not just to complete an act or activity¹.

The concept of the amateur artist isn’t new to theoretical analysis, though it hasn’t always been referenced by that name. Claude Levi-Strauss explored a theoretical

¹ Booth is also quick to clarify that to be an amateur is not to be a hobbyist. While the two figures might cross paths occasionally, for Booth the hobbyist is a sometimes and temporary figure whereas the amateur is full-time and long-term. The amateur views his/her work as something to commit to over the course of years, not weeks or months, and as a valuable element of the development of identity and character. The hobbyist, according to Booth, is only curious and will soon lose interest. As such, the activities one picks up as a hobby aren’t as impactful on his/her sense of self. As he makes this distinction, he further carves out new, uncharted space for amateurism. If it isn’t like a hobby or the failed professional, then it must be something other and more.

concept he termed the *bricoleur* in his work, *The Savage Mind*. In this analysis, he examines an artistic figure who he sees as creating, but not in a traditional way. He establishes the binary between science and myth as a way of understanding how knowledge is produced. For him, the engineer represents a scientific approach that is based in studies and facts. Myth is represented by the bricoleur and constitutes how cultural materials go through the process of signification. The primary difference between the two seems to be that one creates new knowledge and the other creates from already-signified materials to reinterpret traditions and ideas that are already understood to exist. It the difference between calculated art and cultural cobbling. As well, the bricoleur is not a master, but rather, a constant tinkerer. Levi-Strauss writes, the bricoleur²:

derives his poetry from the fact that he does not confine himself to accomplishment and execution: he ‘speaks’ not only *with* things, as we have already seen, but also through the medium of things: giving an account of his personality and life by the choices he makes between the limited possibilities.

The ‘bricoleur’ may not ever complete his purpose but he always puts something of himself into it. (21)

The bricoleur is the artist whose creative vision seeks out ideas or materials that are already in existence in order to better understand the world around him/her and whose

² The bricoleur, as Levi-Strauss explains, doesn’t fully translate over from French, but the best estimation of its context within the English language is “a man who undertakes odd jobs and is a Jack of all trades or a king of professional do-it-yourself man, but, as the text makes clear, he is of a different standing from, for instance, the English ‘odd job man’ or handyman (trans. note)” (17).

work is more focused on the act of doing than the final product. As well, the bricoleur takes these fragments of life already-lived and reworks them through his/her vision and perspective. As the artist is doing this, he/she is interacting with both the previous meaning of the pieces and the current moment, which as Levi-Strauss points out, directly and actively includes the artist.³ Bricolage, therefore, is an art form that includes the artist in more transparent ways than other types of art.

As Levi-Strauss asserts the bricoleur makes due with “whatever is at hand” (17). The available materials are “always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions” (17). More simply put, the materials used by the bricoleur are already signified, and so finite, but also varied in the sense that the bricoleur collects them not with their original meanings in mind or any particular project, but that because they seem interesting in some way. The pile of materials can be visualized as the collection inside a hoarders’ house or a workshop full of odds and ends. It is the box of scraps and random objects that sit until the artist finds a use for them. What they represent is cultural artifacts and former ways of thinking and doing things. And when the bricoleur takes these bits and pieces and

³ The inclusion of the self seems to be as significant distinction made by Levi-Strauss given the kinds of resources available to the bricoleur. The overt inclusion of the artist seems to play a big role in the reinterpretation of these materials and stands in as the connecting fiber or the glue that bonds the various elements together in a loose unification. And it seems like Levi-Strauss views the personal element of this artistic work as a necessary component given that the materials arrive steeped in cultural meaning.

reworks them, he/she is confronting, challenging, reworking, and potentially erasing these traditions and placing them in conversation with contemporary modes of thought.

Once more, the bricoleur isn't concerned with the outcome so much as the act. As Levi-Strauss argues, success may never actually happen. Of course, success in this case is defined by other, more traditional and conventional kinds of art. The intention for starting the work—the purpose—may not be completely fulfilled, but the artist “always puts something of himself in it.” In other words, the artist always pursues the original purpose for the project, reworking and adjusting the project over time. From this view, bricoleur work feels alive in that the repeated reworkings provide a kind of pulse to the project.

The amateur, especially the amateur artist, seems to be a kind of modern day bricoleur, and it is easy to see why. The heavy emphasis placed on action over end-result and the de-emphasis of success by the bricoleur in lieu of more steady and consistent interaction with the materials over time both speak to the nature of Booth's amateur. The bricoleur's extended tinkering sounds a lot like Booth's argument that amateurism is a lifestyle. As well, the idea that success isn't contingent upon the fulfillment of the purpose or perfection and that there are real limitations within which both of these figures must function further solidifies the connection. The bricoleur is an amateur and the amateur is a bricoleur. Furthermore, it is this approach to the work that allows for the flexibility, creativity, and innovation that many see as the amateur's major contribution to the P-A-P system. Tinkering opens up any number of subject areas and genres from which the amateur can draw their inspiration. And, unlike the professional, the amateur

does not have to be concerned that this eclectic research method will undermine his/her work.

In this chapter, I examine the concept of “for the love of it” via Booth’s lens because, while a number of theorists contribute this phrase to the amateur, Booth works to elaborate both what that looks like and what that feels like. The project at hand in this analysis is an examination of zine writers and their zines, which are small, self-published, underground magazines. By focusing the “A” in the P-A-P system, this chapter intends to analyze the internal rewards that amateur work brings zine writers by analyzing their process behind their publications. By examining the question and answer structure that seems to drive the zine process, I hope to identify what internal rewards look like for zine writers and why they are such a driving force. As well, I will examine how the zine writer’s process demonstrates a sense of visibility of the self as an amateur and how this awareness leads to the feeling of internal rewards.

One of the issues that surround contemporary amateur work is transparency. What I see zine writers doing is articulating their process, and in doing so, making their work more transparent. In the general amateur community, there is an issue with visibility in terms of the kinds of amateur work that exists. One example is an amateur Instagram Model, names Essena O’Neill. She is a highly successful Instagram model; however, she is frustrated with the way she has to fabricate her “lifestyle” in order to get paid a model. O’Neill has made a career out of posting modeling shots full of hidden product endorsements. She has created a narrative of herself as “just another girl on Instagram,” when she is really selling clothes, jewelry, and makeup to her followers.

O'Neill has gained a different kind of attention for quitting her "job" as an Instagram model. Her reasoning is: she is tired of lying about her life and what she is doing. While it might seem overly-dramatic, what is happening is the development of a new kind of Pro Am (professional amateur) work via the increased popularity of social media. O'Neill's problem isn't her work per se, but that she doesn't feel like she can be transparent about what she is doing. One gets the sense that she is unaware of the existence of the Pro Am figure, as are most of her followers. The result is that she feels like she has to quit how she was performing her job, and ask her followers for money to pay for her work. The subsequent angry and indignant response by her followers shows that they do not understand the concept of the Pro Am.

There is a distinct lack of visibility in the range of amateur work that is revealed with this issue. What I hope to do in my analysis here is to show how zine writers demonstrate transparency, and in doing so, create visibility. I argue that visibility is both about others seeing this work and the individual being aware of their status. While the zine writers I examine aren't Pro Am, the process they exhibit is still useful as a model for creating greater visibility.

The zine writer is a perfect manifestation of the bricoleur and amateur figure in one body. They are non-professional writers of all different ages, races, sexualities, regions, countries and politics⁴, and they are writers whose work is not done for

⁴ Thomas McLaughlin connects the concept of the bricoleur to the zine writer in his work *Street Smarts and Critical Theory: Listening to the Vernacular*. He discusses that bricoleur work allows the artist to break free from preexisting cultural definitions and allows the artist to narrate their own lived experience. He sees zine writers as "cobbling" themselves into collage versions on paper and working with/through their art to find an expression of self and their communities. Their choice of materials and formatting are

mainstream publication.⁵ In essence, they are amateurs. Their work can be classified as a kind of written collage. When you first look at zines, the layout is what stands out. Often times, zine writers employ the cut and paste method, which consists of typing or handwriting articles, lists and blurbs of ideas and mixing them in with drawings, pictures and other random bits of information. The completed work might seem cluttered, disorganized, and maybe a bit jarring, but the general format of the zine is meant to disrupt the conventional magazine layout and force the reader to interact differently with the material being presented. It includes elements that perhaps aren't usually associated with one another, and it plays with the idea of visual positioning. Like the bricoleur, the materials for the work are odds and ends that are collected. They are random in that any given object doesn't have a particular relationship to any other object, and they are assembled via the zine writer's perspective. That is, the connective tissue of the installment is based upon what is going on in the zine writer's life at that moment. Zine work is generally done in installments, which means that the zine writer, much like the amateur, is returning to the work and reevaluating the message in an attempt to better achieve the purpose for the zine.

Zine work and zine communities continuing to gain in numbers, despite a distinct lack of growth in the general public's awareness of these writers and their works, is

key to this connection to bricoleur work.

⁵ There are thousands of individuals producing zines in their spare time, putting their money into the creation and distribution of a type of writing that yields little to no profit. In fact, it is a type of writing that is most likely to cost the writer money with each and every installment. Yet, zine writers continue to work and zines continue to appear in the back corners of independent bookstores, in small coffee shops, and random public places. For some, this will be a phase in their lives, necessary for growth, support or therapeutic venting, but for others this will be a long-term venture. For example, Cindy Crabb's zine *Doris* continues to be one of the longest running zines available, spanning over twenty years.

intriguing. After all, what is the purpose of writing if no one knows you're doing it? As Stebbins points out, while amateurs have publics that they serve, they are frequently small, intimate ones. Zine writers seem to recognize this because the question that is addressed most frequently in their zines is the question of "why?" It is also one that Booth poses throughout his book. He asks himself repeatedly, "why do I amateur?" Why does he spend all of that time learning and working to play the cello when he knows he'll never be perfect or close to it? The zine writers seem to be preoccupied with the same question. Why pursue a kind of writing that neither directly leads them into publication, nor into wealth? What is the motivation for participating in the creation of such works—be it short or long term—if there isn't any direct link to conventional success? That is: why spend such time, money and energy on a project that few will ever see or recognize and that will probably not lead to a prominent writing career? The need to understand their desire to do such work lingers. It preoccupies Booth and the zine writers to the point that it seems to permeate all aspects of their work. What we see here in this simple question is the driving force for zine and amateur work.

While the question of why zine writers do this kind of work is the general question, and one that connects zine work to Booth's definition of amateurism, there's a smaller moment of "why?" that happens at the beginning of many zines. Zine writers spend quite a bit of time introducing each of their installments with the purpose for the zine. Like Booth, they seem to fully understand why they are doing what they are doing, why they write their zine, and why they focus on certain topics and themes, but as in Booth's work, the question of "why" seems to perform another significant function,

which is why it is repeatedly referenced. There's more to it than simply the answer: "because this _____." The "why do it?" seems to be the zine writers seeking an articulation of the general question that Booth poses: why do I enjoy amateuring? Why amateur in the first place? Answering this question is key to understanding why so many people—young and old, male and female—seek out and continue zine work. One of the most commonly held notions about the purpose of zines is the level of authenticity in the overall product. The writing in the zines is said to be more honest and more genuine in content and purpose, and so more authentic. The general idea seems simple enough, especially when compared to the strict marketing of mainstream publishing. Zine writers write about what they want to write about, the way they want to do it, and without a need to conform to a publication company's idea of what will sell. Everything from their content to the format is determined by the zine writer, and so, can change from issue to issue—in the name of authenticity. However, upon further analysis two things become evident. First off, authenticity isn't as easy to define and there are other, more tangible reasons for engaging in zine work. Stephen Duncombe speaks to the motivation for creating zines in his work *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture*, asserting that "many writers create their zines as a conscious reaction against a consumerist society. They adopt the DIY principle that you should create your own cultural experience. [...] Unlike the message of mass media, which is to encourage people to consume, the zine encourages people to take part and produce something for themselves" (16). Writing a zine can also be political, and as such, take aim at mainstream representation and at economic practice as it impacts lifestyle.

It is true that many zines are motivated by what they feel isn't being represented or has been misrepresented. And it is true that the zine community generally promotes an exchange culture, which deemphasizes big business and promotes community-based alternative forms of social structuring and currency. The argument is that DIY (Do-It-Yourself) is a more engaged lifestyle that produces more thoughtful and conscientious people.⁶ But perhaps what is a more useful definition comes from Amy Spencer, author of *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*:

Zine writers are constantly asked why they write their zines. If they have something to say, why don't they submit their work to mainstream magazines and newspapers? The reasons are as varied as the zines they produce. Some aim to relieve a sense of boredom or loneliness. Some want to discuss their personal obsessions. Others want to validate their lives and make people understand their way of thinking. There are also those who use zines as a means of distributing information and resources to others. (14)

As Spencer shows us, the range of reasons for why an individual engages in this kind of writing is wide and ultimately up to the individual zine writer to articulate. Once more, she helps firmly connect the question of "why" to zine work. Zine writers seem to be fascinated with articulating their reasons for their work and what is most intriguing is

⁶ In order to participate in DIY, an individual has to embrace the concept of contributing to as opposed to simply relying on others to make. So, in keeping with this notion, zine writers often exchange for cds, artwork, food and other handmade objects that they deem valuable. Mostly, what seems to be significant, beyond the ultimate goal of being more active in one's environment, is the human element. DIY values homemade, handmade materials that smack of the creator. Rather than purchase a generic pair of mittens, the individual receives a pair that are style by a "friend" who in theory has thought about the recipient as he or she was making the object. The gifting aspect of this culture is highly valued and seems to be reflected just as much in the style of writing.

that it is an act that they engage in over and over again. That is to say, the answer to the question isn't simple or easily answered. Furthermore, answering the question "why" seems to be the fuel behind creating the zine in the first place.

This question is so prevalent in the zine community that someone decided to actually make a zine that is entirely dedicated to exploring individual zine writer's answers to it. *Entry Point* is a zine focused on why zine writers decided to get into zine writing. Each entry is a zine writer answering this very simple question, and while they don't necessarily indicate the overall purpose of each of their zines, they do discuss their reasons for starting and continuing to produce zines. Some of them enter into zine work for serious reasons. Writing the zine opens up a part of their creative life or self or it becomes a way to informally process life experiences. For instance, a common topic for women's zines is sexual assault and abuse. But, there are also zines about anarchy, struggles with drugs and alcohol, questions of identity—particular sexual and gender identities, and what seems to be what we would currently refer to as introverted personalities. The zines themselves become a space for these writers' voices and a safe place to work through their thoughts. Krissy, who started making her zine in the mid-90s, is an example of an individual whose question of "why" centers on a more serious reason. She writes:

It was the beginning of 1994. Bill Clinton was President. Kurt Cobain was still alive and all over the U.S. young riot grrrls were making zines, writing letters and forming bands. I was not rioting and I was not a grrrl. I was 29 years old. I became friends with the Editor of a small self-published literary journal that had

chosen to publish one of my poems. One night on the phone, he told me about zines. I had seen fanzines at the record stores, but had never heard of all the other zines that he said were offered in this magazine call Factsheet 5. As soon as he told me about personal zines I was enthralled. Although I had never seen a personal zine, I started making one right away. I had always been good at writing bits and pieces of stuff. It was the long stuff I couldn't pull off. Zines were perfect for my particular talents (or lack of them). The first time I sat down to cut out and glue down my carefully reduced typed copies of articles, I felt something click in place. It was almost audible. I pulled out my box of odd things I had saved for no reason; vintage magazine clippings, weird advertising flyers, antique photos of people I never knew. Now, these things finally had a place. I felt like I had finally found the art form that matched my weird interests and odd skills. I will probably always make zine.

What is notable initially is that she acknowledges the common perception of zine making and writing as a youthful endeavor-- a type of writing and creative work that appeals mainly to teenagers.⁷ After reading her blurb, there is a sense that conventional writing—i.e. longer pieces, was a kind of writing that she felt was beyond her ability, but that she saw herself as a writer regardless. When she discusses her strengths and weaknesses as a writer, we see her articulating that sense of limitation with which both

⁷ She was not part of the Riot Grrrl movement, a movement that in 1994 was in full swing and involved many young teenaged, punk girls who were discovering a need for feminism mostly in the music world and one that utilized zines heavily to communicate. What was commonly thought of as the reason a women would engage in zine writing at that moment was in fact not her reason for “why.” Krissy, who was nearly thirty when she started her zine, does not see herself as a member of this movement or this genre of zines.

the amateur and the bricoleur deal. Through this, we see why she engages in zine work. In this form of writing, she finds not only a space that embraces her strengths as a writer, but also her interests and her personality as an artist. When she began working on her zine, something clicked for her. As she describes it, it feels like this has been a creative connection she has been searching for as a writer. Her intent to “always make a zine” implies that her “why?” is a way to better connect with herself as an artist.

Holden, whose name is taken from his high school experience with *Catcher in the Rye*, is another zine writer who finds his way to this writing genre for creative reasons. He writes:

A few years later in high school as I became part of the local punk rock ‘scene’ through a form of scene osmosis I discovered zines, and upon realizing they were modern underground newspapers but with a much more personal and artistic appeal I fell in love and decided I wanted to play. [...] After years of stumbling around with newspaper style zines I finally got up the nerve to start writing a perzine called “Finding That Field of Flowers in Alaska.” I wrote about six issues until I felt my Life had moved on, and for a time got lost in the abstracts of ‘adult’ Life. (Holden)

Like Krissy, Holden writes here of a need that is fulfilled through zine writing. He is already actively seeking out alternative life in the punk scene and zines give him a way to participate on his own level and in his own way. But unlike Krissy, he doesn’t identify his writing skills as his weakness. Instead, it seems that his challenge was to be able to write a perzine, which is a zine that is entirely based on the writer’s life.

Holden also discusses the common notion of authenticity about which so many zine writers talk. He speaks to this both in adopting his particular moniker and when critiques *Catcher in the Rye* for being inauthentic, out of date, and for feeling inappropriate for his generation. He writes:

When I had first really discovered zines I had been reading the “Catcher in the Rye,” or more accurately trying to finish it for school. I remembered being told what an amazing work of fiction it was because it was so real and so honest, but all I could think was that it wasn’t real or honest; it was pure fiction and the writing style felt so forced. My first perzine was everything the “Catcher in the Rye” was supposed to be, but it WAS real and honest, and what was in it was happening right now not decades ago.

While the writing in the novel isn’t terrible or the concept of the plot poorly constructed, there is something that doesn’t ring true to Holden in that moment of his life. The text is trying to convey meaning, but for Holden it falls flat. His biggest issue with it is that the work doesn’t feel contemporary, like it is in the here and now. This becomes a strong contributing factor for why Holden approaches his zine work in the first place, but also why he approaches it the way he does.

The here and now seems to be his answer to the question “why.” The idea of writing “authentically” in the “here and now” speaks to how stable he feels in his life. At some point, he loses the need to write the zine because he has moved into a different part of his life that he describes as “lost” and “abstract.” We can infer that this is a time period when he is unsure of himself and his place in the world. Eventually, he returns to

zine writing, however, thus suggesting his reason for pursuing a zine has more to do with feeling settled and stable than lost and in need of grounding.

Stability is not the reason Bernard pursues zine work. Instead, he articulates very clearly what many zine writers are thinking or what is perhaps unconsciously motivating them into zine writing. He writes:

I needed something more. Not necessarily to validate my existence, but something to focus on so that my anger and frustration wouldn't get the best of me [...] But I am not an artist. I can't draw really, or paint, & my organizational skills are basically nonexistent. [...] I had read a lot about riot grrl zines when I was 14 but thought that scene was deader than a doorknob. Then I started to think, so what if this isn't being done anymore? It still sounds like a good idea to me! To make a long story short, I started writing, cutting, pasting, & photocopying. I picked out a penname, & made flyers. [makes connection] I have been making, reading & trading zines since.

As he states, he's an amateur, who lacks, in his own opinion, the strength of skills to be a successful artist, but this medium and its embracing of flaws and imperfections is the kind of artistic work at which he can excel and more importantly, that will allow him a useful outlet for his emotions. Bernard's reason for entering into this work is different from Krissy and Holden. He has turned to zine writing as a kind of unconventional therapy.⁸

⁸ Diane DiMassa, writer and creator of *Hot Headed Paisan*, has also spoken about how her therapist recommended graphic art/zine work as a way to help her process the anger that had developed as she was trying to overcome alcoholism. Today, she is both a successful graphic zine writer and studio artist.

Like Krissy, there's a desire to find a creative activity that is on his level. Unlike Holden, it is precisely because Bernard feels unstable in some ways that he seeks out this work.

Zine work isn't always an outlet for more serious endeavors. Sometimes, it is simply the fun of creating for oneself or one's small zine community. It resembles play much more than even serious amateur work, as we can see with Maranda and Melanie. Maranda Elizabeth brings us the perspective of a young girl venturing into the zine world. She writes about how she and her sister transform their childhood mock-magazine making into a zine. She writes:

When we were kids, my sister and I would make fake magazines. Paper, scissors, pens, markers, and pencil crayons would be scattered all around us. We used to draw a picture for the cover and write fake headlines around it. There were several magazines, but they were all incomplete projects. We would get really excited about them for a few hours, and then just move on before anything was finished. I think we really just loved the idea of creating something we could hold in our hands, and wanted to write our own articles instead of reading somebody else's all the time.

As Duncombe points out, part of the appeal of zine writing is the ability of the writer to create their own work with their own ideas and words. Maranda and her sister could create fake magazines in their home and derive a great sense of accomplishment and pleasure for a small period of time. With zines, however, they could take it a step farther and find an entire community of individuals like themselves. Maranda writes "I was completely fascinated with the idea of writing and actually having the guts to share it

with the world.” What starts off as a silly game with her sister, turns into the desire to feel that connection with a bigger community. Clearly, like Krissy, she wants a creative outlet and the companionship that comes with sharing that work. We don’t get the same sense of epiphany as we do with Krissy, though. Maranda’s answer to “why do it?” seems to be a very simple “why not?”

Melanie also discovered zines as a teenager and her entry also demonstrates not just the excitement that is the discovery of zine writing and the zine community, but also the lessons and joy of collaboration that are learned as her and her friend work on their zine together and the confidence she gains to step out and continue writing and producing zines on her own:

My friend Katie and I used to go to the library quite a bit. We started looking in classified ads for records labels and she came across an ad for a newsletter. She ordered it. It was a 2 page/front& back all review newsletter. We were like ‘hey we could so do this too!’ And so we did. We made our own newsletter called ‘The Slippin’ Bananas’ Newsletter. [...] After a year of making the newsletter, Katie and I went our separate ways. And I started making SBN in zine format (hence the name change!!) I ended SBN in the fall of 1995 and started making my zine Rebel in Magenta in January 1996. Rebel in Magenta started out with a lot of reviews (music, show, zine, books, etc) but then switched to the personal zine format (with issue #5) that I continue to do today. ☺ ‘Long Live Zines!! [I can’t live without zines & music!!]

There's a similar tone to Melanie's explanation that sounds very youthful. Like Maranda, starting and continuing with the zine seems simply like something fun to do with friends. The initial format chosen—newsletter—gives the impression that why the girls were drawn to this work was because they had a desire to communicate to other kids like themselves. The shift for Melanie from newsletter to perzine suggests movement towards more personal communication with her readers and a maturity being gained. Once again, we can see “why not?” as part of the answer, but we also see her telling us that communication and connection with people beyond her physical community is a driving force as to why she continues to do this.

No matter how they got into it, the general consensus is that zine writing is more than just journaling or arts and crafts. There's a reason for pursuing it, as much as there is a reason for walking away from it. For each of these individuals, zine work was something they happened upon, but unconsciously or consciously, something they were also seeking out. The general answer to the question “why do it?” for each of them seems to be to find a way of writing that would better fit their self-expression. As well, it seems to be a way to create their own kind of artwork and a kind of artwork that is based in their lived experiences. Like Duncombe states, there's a drive to articulate something they feel isn't being said or has been misrepresented. While many zine writers would call it authenticity, I think it more just a driving desire to engage in a conversation with oneself or one's world. As Holden writes, for zine writers “a perzine is more than someone's Life, bare and shared with the world, it's their life as a piece of art [...] I think it was that Life as art that first truly attracted me to zines, and it's definitely what's

kept me and here and will keep me here for a very long time.” For Holden, “life” is just the details, putting it into words and images in a zine makes it something much more meaningful and significant. So, as Holden suggests, when we think about why individuals are drawn to zine work, it is more than just because they *can* do it. There’s something inside of them that *has* to do it.

At the same time, the answer to “why do it” is more complex than simply identifying a drive. There needs to be a detailed understanding of the zine’s overall purpose, as well as the purpose of each installment. The theoretical figure of the bricoleur allows us to better examine the steps being taken as a zine is created. In a form of writing and art that is both underground and amateur, there’s a need to force a kind of visibility on the process in order to better understand how the work and the artists are speaking to us.

At its essence, bricolage is “collage aesthetic.” It is the gathering of various parts and materials to mold and create a new artistic statement. Levi-Strauss is the first to bring this French concept to theoretical light, but he is certainly not the only theorist to explore this term. Michel De Certeau also references the bricoleur in his work *The Practice of Everyday Life*. For De Certeau, the bricoleur is the everyday individual, more specifically the average consumer. The act of bricolage is consumption by the individual. Like the original bricoleur, De Certeau’s bricoleur works with the materials at hand, only these materials are the ones provided by consumer culture. The individual consumer is limited to what is presented to them. That is, they can only create with what is available and offered on the market and by various industries. The consumer creates a

self via the assemblage of these available materials, and as such, adds new meaning to the preexisting meaning of each object.

Similarly, Dick Hebdige turns to the concept of the bricoleur to understand the use of style in punk and alternative communities. He looks specifically at the poaching of previous styles as a way to establish a new identity apart from more mainstream ones. He sees the use of consumer materials as a way for subcultures to establish themselves apart from mainstream ways of living and thinking. Hebdige writes that alternative groups like punk “appropriated another range of commodities by placing them in a symbolic ensemble which served to erase or subvert their original straight meanings” (104). The appropriation of these styles with the twists that are placed on them infuses a new meaning onto old looks. This new meaning is connected directly to the new group. Conspicuous consumption, as Hebdige puts it, is politicized and used to reject how we are supposed to think and act. As Hebdige writes, “through style, that the subculture at once reveals its ‘secret’ identity and communicates its forbidden meanings” (103). So not only does the act of bricolage here distinguish alternative groups from non-alternative culture, it also serves to convey the values and politics of the group. At the very basic level, it makes an element or idea that was hidden visible in some way.

As Hebdige writes, bricolage is “systems of connection, between things which perfectly equip their users to ‘think’ their own world. These magical systems of connection have a common feature: they are capable of infinite extension because basic elements can be used in a variety of improvised combinations to generate new meanings within them” (103). Bricolage is the use of materials that are culturally and socially

saturated to rethink and reconsider the world around the artist. As well, the materials themselves hold “infinite” possibilities. Because it is collage work—and because as Levi-Strauss argues bricolage is a constant process of examining and reexamining, this type of text can have a number of meanings. The systems of connection, in this case the physical layouts, can be altered and repositioned to create new dialogues between objects and words. What happens when artists incorporate certain materials and objects is call attention not only to something they find hidden in those objects, but also their own feelings about these materials. So to a certain extent, zine and bricolage work is a way of establishing identity on many levels for the artist that may not be publically visible. The advantage of zine work is that it allows individuals to work under anonymity if they so choose, but regardless of whether they attach their names to the work or not, there is a visibility that is gained via the zine.

The issue of visibility is significant to the current situation for amateurism. While Stebbins and other theorists have developed a spectrum of amateur work ranging from the hobbyist, who isn't quite an amateur, to the dabbler, the pre-professional, the post-professional, the plain amateur, and the Pro Am (professional amateur) and the amateur professional, the mainstream definition of the amateur seems to still be very simplistic. The common definition is that the amateur is someone who does work for fun and not money. The reality is that external rewards have blurred the line between the amateur and professional. Financial compensation, which is the most common external reward, is now a part of some amateur work. The lack of visibility with what is or isn't amateur work is problematic. Amateurs are skeptical of paid amateur work and professionals are

positioned as amateurs. The end result is the breakdown of communication and the proliferation of “free” or underpaid labor. Visibility begins with the amateur themselves and builds outwards.

The key to achieving visibility is the process in which the bricoleur engages. Rather than the engineer, who according to Levi-Strauss focuses on, “mak[ing] his way of out and go[ing] beyond the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization,” the bricoleur “remains within them” and so works within the bits and pieces to make sense of what is going on within an area (19). Since the purpose isn’t to create something entirely new, but to create something new from preexisting materials, the bricoleur must consider what each “old” element contains individually before he/she can consider what it can potentially contribute to the new project. Levi-Strauss writes:

His first practical step is retrospective. He has to turn back to an already existent set made up of tools and materials, to consider or reconsider what it contains and, finally and above all, to engage in a sort of dialogue with it and, before choosing between them, to index the possible answers which the whole set can offer to his problem (18).

So what Levi-Strauss argues is that after gathering a pile of odds and ends, the bricoleur must take the time to consider what the cultural and social meaning of each material is and how that relates to the current project. Moving just one object around changes the entire structure of the work and requires the bricoleur to once again consider the relationship of each piece to one another and to the greater work. As the bricoleur interacts with each piece, he/she is establishing a dialogue between the material and

himself/herself. And like zines, these materials are leftovers that are considered to be part of a “sub-set of the culture” (Levi-Strauss 19).

In the zine world, the starting point for this bricolage work looks like an arts and crafts table—scraps of interesting quotes, music, stickers and ribbons. Krissy writes, zine materials are “my box of odd things I had saved for no reason; vintage magazine clippings, weird advertising flyers, antique photos of people I never knew.” Her materials are her collection of objects that are meaningful to her in some way. When she sits down to work on her zine, she turns to this pile of materials that have been randomly collected not for zine work in particular, but because they seem interesting to her. Like Levi-Strauss’ notion of the bricoleur, she is taking the everyday objects that speak to her and examining what they are, or were, and how they might fit into what she wants to do with her zine. By establishing this dialogue, Krissy is putting herself into the work both through her words and her chosen objects. In doing so, she fulfills what Levi-Strauss argues is another characteristic of bricolage work. She becomes an integral part of the physical work.

As I’ve already pointed out, why each zine writer produces a zine is a driving question. What it seems to translate into, and what connects it to the bricoleur, is a stated purpose for each individual issue. When zine writers work to articulate the purpose of each zine installment, they are tapping into the question of “why” and working to better flesh out the answer for themselves and for their readers. Like Levi-Strauss points out, purpose is a significant part of the creation process for bricolage work. It is what turns something that seems to be a mess of random objects into meaningful translation of

cultural artifacts and the visualization of the artist in that moment. This is an important piece of the equation because there's a tendency to think that all zines retain the same level of cultural value simply by being zines. The reality is that there are poorly-constructed zines that embody the classic definition of amateur. They are thrown together without a lot of thought and seem to merely mimic the genre rather than truly engage in the act of creating meaning. Clearly, the presence of these zines threatens to undermine the value of zine work, especially since this kind of art is based on a lack of structure and clean format. This unique appearance tends to be how outside readers determine that zines are amateur, and so, not as valuable as published texts. The real difference between a good zine and a lesser zine is a clear articulation of purpose, which is most frequently evident by the engaged dialogue that develops between the writer and the zine over the course of several issues.

Zines that hold true to Booth's notion of the amateur are driven by purpose and are intent upon exploring the complexities of this purpose. In *Doris Zine*, Crabb's purpose for her zine work is to tell secrets. This is announced in the first issue's opening rant⁹, and it is continually reinforced in her subsequent issues. She writes:

Doris is about secrets in a way I can't explain. It's about giving strangers something real, something shitty and beautiful that I hand to them with shy smile.

It's about how sometimes when I walk down the street, this particular street

⁹ The intros are referred to as rants, which isn't to imply that they are meant to be angry or aggressive. While some of them are used in that way, most of the time the intros are merely a space in the zine where the writers can establish who they are, what has been going on in their lives, and what they see the zine issue doing. Ranting is defined as speaking or shouting in a passionate manner for a lengthier period of time. Like energy, it can also take on a much stronger denotation and mean tirade, but for the vast majority of zine intros the opening rant is simply a passionate opening passage.

that's all tables with stuff to buy and people buying stuff and incense making my head hurt and people dieing [sic] and I can't get around through to where I'm going and I hollar [sic] at the top of my lungs, and a small girl in front of me turns around and says "I know just how you feel" and maybe she does, and maybe she doesn't, but maybe next time, she'll be the one yelling (16).

The zine, in essence, springs from her need to tell not only her own secrets, but also those of the people who she meets, because having secrets begets an internal struggle or conflict. As Crabb explains "[a]ll this is not a secret, but the emotion behind it is very secret, even to me it is secret. It scares me. It is the first locked up thing I've had since I learned to unlock (I feel stupid and dramatic and boring telling you these things.)"(12). For Crabb, listening to the secrets is a necessary humanitarian service, but one that causes her to take on other people's problems. The zine is intended to alleviate that tension for Crabb. It is also an act she wants her readers to adopt. Sharing secrets isn't just something she finds valuable for herself, it is a valuable process for others. She writes:

And here I am, handing you this thing full of my life, and I want to it to break down those barriers, and I want it to make it so people talk about their lives and secrets aren't secret anymore, and we're not all shut off and selfconscious and scared and cool and tough and alienated and quiet. I want the range of what we talk about to be so much huger than what it is now. and I know that this doris isn't gonna do all that, but that's what I want. (4)

The purpose of Doris zine is to create a moment where people think about the ways in which their secrets and hidden thoughts form barriers to the people and the community around them. Crabb's act of sharing her secrets is supposed help her work through the parts of herself and her life that she tries to keep hidden so that she can break down some of her barriers, but it is also her way of modeling this act to her readers. No matter how haphazardly *Doris* seems to be organized or how insignificant the topics may sound, there is a clear and conscious purpose behind her project that helps her to decide how and what she is going to include in each zine installment. Her reiteration of the purpose not only keeps her somewhat chaotic zine format centered, it also causes her to continue to check in with this idea of hers. As she continues to dialogue and explore various secrets of hers and others, she develops out the complexities of the idea that may or may not have been apparent when she started the zine.

In *She's So Very...Zine*, Melissa Ann, like Crabb, articulates the purpose for her zine from issue two on.¹⁰ Similar to Crabb's *Doris*, Melissa Ann's dialogue is derived from constant self-reflection of her main focus, shame. She explores both her own feelings of it and how she feels the world around her tries to shame people. She writes:

i'm starting to think of myself as a writer and artist. its very validating to apply those titles. while i may not write like other people, or express myself like others, that doesnt mean that my forms and my outlets are wrong. i have to grab ahold of my talents and never be ashamed. its not worth it. i am certainly unique in my

¹⁰ Issue number one is not available, so I have started my analysis with issue number two.

styles of things. and that is not wrong. i will not apologize. that is a major theme of this zine. finding myself, reclaiming my life, not being ashamed. it was suggested that i edit this zine. that would go against everything i wrote and ever reason i made this. this zine is reals. flaws and all and i will not be ashamed. you will see those words a lot in this issue. (2)

In this issue, we see Melissa Ann establishing the purpose for herself and a bit of her rationale for why she needs to explore this idea. What we also see is her insistence upon not editing and her reference to the virtues of flaws in accomplishing her purpose. Here we see her voicing what Booth has outlined as a major component of being an amateur. She isn't hiding her flaws. In fact, she is applauding them and embracing what her writing and her project gains from being imperfect.

Over the course of many installments, Melissa Ann revisits this idea of shame frequently, creating the dialogue that is so necessary for bricoleur work. In issue eight, she writes:

I worry that no one really cares about what I have to say, that no one wants to know about my life, that it's all terribly boring. But then I realize that I don't really care. There are people out there who are touched and inspired by what I write; and that's all that really matters. That, and the fact that writing this zine helps me deal with all the trash that's in my head; it helps me deal and move on.

In this rant, she struggles with the desire to censor herself, but then decides against it because her readers need to hear her honest thoughts. What we see in this small section is her questioning in some ways the very purpose of her zine, and then in others, her

ability to follow through with the project because of what it entails. Later in issue ten, she returns to her doubts, writing:

As usual, I worry about the relevance of anything I would ever have to say in this zine. It's that constant feeling of self-doubt. It often feels like I am too repetitive, that I go through the exact same things all the time, over and over again. But it is always different, at least to me. I'm growing—very slowly. This zine has always been about my struggle to find myself, to become who I'm meant to become, and until I do I will continue to write about my journey.

Again, she reiterates the original purpose and then we see her revise this by focusing more on the zine as a way for her to find herself. Ten issues in, it is no longer just about not censoring oneself or apologizing for being human. Now she refines it, telling her readers that learning to be honest with herself in person and on paper is about figuring out who she is. It's not a huge departure from her initial idea of the project. It is simply a more refined approach to her initial question of “why?”

While some zine writers are well aware of the purpose of their zines from the beginning, others find them over a period of time. This does not mean there isn't a reason in their minds, just that a full articulation of this reason may not make it into the zine for several issues. Their interaction with their materials—their dialogue—takes some time to find direction. This is the case for *Cardboard Cutouts Zine*. The zine has a purpose for being written, but it is either embedded in the pages of the zine or found outside of the zine completely at the beginning. Julia Viramontes is less direct about her intentions for her zine in the pages of the first nine issues, though her Facebook page,

presumably set up after the zine has been in production for some time, sums up the purpose. It states that “Cardboard Cutouts is a humor zine, don't take my attempts at literary work seriously. Cardboard Cutouts is a personal zine, documenting all my idiosyncrasies. Cardboard Cutouts is a compilation zine, compiling different forms of expression and making them fit. Cardboard Cutouts is a zine, it exists.” *Cardboard Cutouts* starts off rough, as many young zines do. The writing is scattered and the personal element is not as pronounced, but her intentions for the zine are vastly different from the other zines in this analysis.¹¹ Unlike *Doris*, *Pulse*, and *She's so Very...*, humor is the primary focus and purpose of the work. The essays, outside contributions, as well as her intro rants/outros reflect this. For instance, a staple in her zine are mock interviews in which she personifies her family cat and dog. The purpose seems only to be silly. So for the first seven issues, her intentions for this zine remain a question. In issue eight she writes, “The best part about it is I get to put whatever I want in here. I

¹¹ Indeed, what first drew me to this particular work is that it did not contain the personal subject matter that *Doris Zine*, *Pulse Zine*, and *She's So Very... Zine* did. At first read, her zine was silly, arguably not a good candidate for this project, but as I read through the issues her voice began to emerge, as did her personal stories. By issue number nine, it became obvious that her age may have contributed to her struggle to articulate her intentions for the zine, as well as her struggle to include the personal element. A high school senior when the zine first begins, the only personal information offered focuses on her goings on in school. I decided to keep working with the zine because, in my opinion, her voice eventually showed up. I have since changed my mind about my assessment of this work. The humor in an unspoken way is her voice and her intentions for the zine, even as her personal essays enter the text. Humor is not readily available in any of the contemporary zines in this analysis. Crabb employs a playfulness in her writing that seems to be particular to the moment she began her zine. The zines in this analysis that are contemporaneous to *Doris Zine* contain a similar playfulness. My findings could be due to the selections I have made, but overall in my research humor is something different than playfulness. While playfulness is one of the staples of zine writing, humor, intentional humor that embraces silliness and ridiculousness, is not frequently found. In my opinion, this makes *Cardboard Cutouts Zine* important to this analysis, especially since she eventually starts to cover some very heavy, serious topics in her zine. It becomes clear that humor is a way for her to process events and feelings in her life. The purpose of the zine, then, seems to partly therapeutic. As she feels a greater sense of comfort writing her zine and with the success of her humorous approach, she branches out into more personal topics.

know my h.s. journalism teacher would've never let me submit a whole article about my cats or shoplifting." This is the first indication of why she writes her zine, and if the reader does not have access to her Facebook page, this may be the only one. She writes this zine because she has topics she wants to write about that are unacceptable in her writing class. Her zine makes it possible for her to explore her humor writing, as well as unconventional topics of interest.

Pagan Kennedy's *Pagan's Head*, like the others, talks about why she got into zine writing in the first place and why she kept with it. What makes her probably one of the best sources for this analysis is that she wrote a book that reflects back not only on her zine, but her process from first installment to last. In this book, Kennedy speaks in greater depth about the purpose for pursuing this kind of project and what drove each installment. The result is a clear sense of her reason for starting the zine, what each installment was supposed to accomplish, and what she feels it actually accomplished. As she walks the reader through her work, she shines a light on how she enacted the dialogue between herself and the zine. She begins with why she chose to write zines in general:

That year it seemed as if everyone I knew had suddenly decided to produce a homemade Xerox magazine (or "zine"). My roommate Donna collected the ravings of insane people and turned them into pamphlets; Seth published a cartoon 'zine; Jason color-copied his psychedelic collages; Tony made comic books; Rob was working on a surrealist literary things; and on and on. At the highest pitch of the scene, the 'zine publishers formed the Small Press Alliance.

(The group fell apart after Shiva, the god of destruction, whispered into the ear of an anarchist pamphleteer that he must destroy the alliance and sue its members for "harassing him".) (8)

She is surrounded by individuals who are pursuing this kind of art, but her own dissatisfaction with her conventional writing career is the main purpose for her entering into zine production. She struggled with the limitations of mainstream publication, but in her zine she found the opportunity to develop and establish the voice she couldn't find elsewhere. She writes, "Almost instinctively I broke every rule of respectable fiction. I published my own work (for serious literary types, self-publishing is considered a sign of rank amateurism). I drew pictures. I wrote unpolished sentences and hardly went back to revise. I even scribbled in last minute notes. And most important, I talked endlessly about myself. [...] That must have been exactly what I needed, because suddenly I began churning out essays and drawings and cartoons" (9). The approach she took to her process was to consider everything that stood as a marker for good writing in her writing program and do the opposite. With each installment what we see is her processing out what she found so problematic about her MFA program's instruction and developing the voice and self that will lead her back into the publishing world. While her dialogue is quite transparent in her book, we can still see the dialogue in the zine itself. We see her creating a purpose for pursuing zine work and returning to the idea in each issue. As well, each issue shifts her into a different space until she seems to find an answer for her driving question.

Like Krissy and the others, it is the discovery (or rediscovery) of an enthusiasm for the creation process that captures Pagan. What we see her articulating after the fact is a much stronger sense of her purpose: to once again find herself in her writing. Clearly, she is looking for a creative outlet when she begins her zine work, but what she finds once she is within the process is the love of the process that Booth speaks of when he talks about his amateuring work. She writes:

I had rediscovered the sheer delight of creating something. How had I forgotten that this-- this absorbed, tongue-between-the-teeth, little girl feeling-- was the essence of art? [...] Suddenly I realized that I didn't have to wait for the literary establishment to anoint me. If I wanted to, I could do it all myself, turn myself into a star by publishing the 'zine. There was something oddly satisfying about remembering what I'd wanted so badly at age nine or ten and then being able to give it myself. (10; 26)

In this passage, we can see Kennedy's interaction and her dialogue with herself and her materials. By writing her zine and by continually having this conversation with her writing and herself, Kennedy realizes a long-since forgotten passion for writing and that she is the engineer behind it. She can make art that is meaningful to her, and in doing so, present meaningful work to the world. She writes, "Once I discovered my 'zine, I no longer wanted to belong... Besides, in some backward way, I had finally learned how to write the Great American Underground Novel-- though it ended up being a 'zine instead. And why should it be a novel? What literary masterpiece could have captured my life as well as a Xeroxed pamphlet full of scrawled cartoons?" (9) Kennedy will eventually go

on to publish actual novels, but her zine work opens the door to the thoughtfulness needed to create them. In terms of the bricoleur, we see Kennedy drawing from her world in her writing program and her former writing, and blending it with her kooky, younger self and her new community. The result is a writing presence that is not only successful in the zine, but later down the road in her novel work.

Retrospectively, Kennedy breaks her process down into various voices: Pagan¹, Pagan², and Pagan³. The first Pagan is the voice of the self that narrates the zine. While Kennedy likes to think of her as a persona created for the zine, Pagan¹ ends up playing a much greater role in this bricoleurian dialogue. She writes:

Back to Pagan wasn't really written by me, only by one part of me—a voice, a persona. This was Pagan, the cartoon character (from now on I'll refer to her as Pagan¹ to distinguish her from myself). Pagan¹ was revealed to me in the first issue as a bratty, self-obsessed, neurotic, and sarcastic woman. As the same time, she was redeemed by her genuine desire to be a good person, be her self-mockery, her humor, and her friendliness. She was a camped-up version of myself, a full-blown fiction. And yet, she was also the one who authored the 'zine. It was she who turned her career history into a cartoon, she who reprinted a particularly stupid letter from one of her readers and then ridiculed it. She did everything in a childlike frenzy, working by instinct; whereas I, the serious writer, labored away methodically on my fiction. (43)

The zine allows a part of her to come out and to buck all of the requirements of good fiction writing without asking Kennedy to give up her sense of herself as a writer. As she

writes, this persona starts off as a product of the zine and as a part of the zine that is the body of the bricoleur being offered up to the readers. She writes, “In the first issue, Pagan¹ was still a tentative presence. It was in the second and third issues that I began to understand her. Pagan¹ had none of my own vulnerabilities. She didn’t worry about offending people, or making bad art, or deferring to others. I recognized her as the id girl, too churlish for the real world” (43). But as she continues through the installments, this persona becomes more than just a narrating voice for her zine. Eventually, Kennedy finds this persona exists outside of the pages of the zine: “I turned into her when I met new people. She became a coping mechanism. I learned to be bold, though what I showed off was an invention, a fictional character” (44). Fictional or not, this character changes Kennedy and her interactions with the world around her. When she “dresses up” as Pagan, in some ways, she is collecting material for the zine. Her Pagan experiences get juxtaposed alongside her experiences as herself, which furthers her creative dialogue and seems to continue to pose her driving question: who am I in this writing space?

The small changes to title of the zine itself over the course of production also reveal this dialogue and demonstrate Kennedy’s shift from post-MFA Pagan to the Pagan who is ready to tackle the publishing world. At first titled, “Back to Pagan,” the zine changes to “Back to Pagan’s Head” somewhere between the first and third or fourth issue. By issue #5 is officially “Pagan’s Head.” While the changes are slight, they seem to indicate the changing negotiation between Kennedy and her work. The first seems to imply a need to find herself, while the second shows a shift from finding herself to understanding the thoughts in her head. The final title indicates a firm sense of being

inside her thoughts and herself. It makes sense that a few installments later Kennedy decides the zine is no longer necessary. It is through this bricolage zine project that she is able to confront one of the biggest questions in her life, and is eventually what helps her find the courage and the voice to pursue her dream of being a published writer.

While the zines we've looked at thus far progress rather smoothly from their first issue into many new ones and some continue to be produced 10-20+ years later, this is not always the case. Sometimes engaging in this bricolage work and dialogue shows the zine writer that project is no longer meeting the purpose or that the question has been answered. For some writers, this the end of the zine, but for others it marks a shift from one zine to new one. Like Kennedy, who changes her title a couple of times, zine writers will make small adjustments like adding outside writers or bigger changes involving the title, theme and scope of the project in order to best actualize their project. With each new zine, the process seems to begin anew. The driving question must be present, the purpose must be established, and then the zine must reflect the zine writer's conversation with themselves and the question.

In one example, *The Air I Breathe*, a zine written by Laura H, was formerly known as *Heart Attack*. The reason for changing the title remains unknown, presumably only that something about it didn't ring true to her. In another example, *Muffin Bones*, Emily also writes a zine dedicated to poems and illustrations, called *Ophelia's Dress*. *Muffin Bones* is a perzine that explores Emily's life. She could include her writings in her zine, as it is about herself, but something about that would take away from either the creative works or her zine—or both. She clearly has a different driving question and

purpose for each zine. Holden talks about “fumbling through the newspaper style zines” before finding a better fit with the perzine format. While the newspaper style didn’t prevent him from producing zines, it didn’t allow him to create the kind of zine that responded to his question/his need to write a zine. Even Crabb, writer of the long-running *Doris Zine*, writes about the feeling of missing the mark in the intro of her second issue:

What was I thinking? I tried to write Doris #2 and I hadn’t danced in a month I swear, what was I thinking? I didn’t even know what was wrong, why it wasn’t going right. I had even given up for the night when I remembered this tape I checked out of the library and I slapped it in the tape deck for a listen. Me and my sister, my most greatest sister, we danced and slapped our bellys and sweat and stunk, and now I know, that’s what was missing from doris. So I’m starting over. (16)

While she is not starting over with a new zine, or even a new purpose, she voices the feeling that she needs to start anew because the zine isn’t saying the “thing” that it is supposed to, or it isn’t doing it well enough. And the missing element is a part of herself that hasn’t been nurtured enough to contribute properly to the creation of the zine. In this small section, we can hear Crabb struggling, and without the need for a lot of elaboration, we understand that her process hasn’t run smoothly thus far. We don’t know how much of the issue she’s written already or attempted to write, but we do know that it hasn’t gone well. What she does voice is important to the connection to bricolage work because while she could write a zine issue without her physical presence in the zine, the

work doesn't come together. Once more, what is missing seems nebulous in this description, but upon further analysis boils down to essentially her need to break away from the rigors of everyday life and reconnect to her joy. In doing so, she connects to herself and finds direction for the issue. Once she realizes this, Crabb simply starts again, making the revisions to the work that maintain her purpose and contribute to the exploration of it.

With Pagan Kennedy's zine, we see what happens when the zine process-- that is the exploration of her question and her purpose, has come to an end because project has reached some distinguishable level of completion. Kennedy is candid about when she felt she had achieved her purpose for writing her zine, and so, when her need to pursue this project ended. After several years of working on the zine, her father's battle with cancer and his passing, her ovarian surgery and at least one major boyfriend, she finds she no longer has a driving reason to continue developing *Pagan's Head*. She writes about the moment she realized it was time to move on:

A friend of mine calls Issue Eight the 'dark issue.' For the first time, I showed my whole self in *Pagan's Head*-- not just the happy part of me, but also the despairing and angry part. I'd been able to divide myself during my father's death, writing about my nutty search for a car even as I kept my grief private; but now I no longer seemed able to do that, or wanted to do it. Once, Pagan¹ had helped me through hard times, but now I felt that particular coping mechanism didn't work anymore. Instead of dividing myself into parts, I wanted to pull

myself back into one... there's no room left for Pagan¹ in here anymore. I no longer wanted to live divided into two personas, or three, or four. (158)

After pulling herself apart to examine the various elements to her personality and the possibilities for her writing persona, Kennedy finds that she is ready to live and write under one voice. The exploration of self and writing self that was *Pagan's Head* is no longer necessary. She finishes out the project, but ultimately writes that "her voice was silent inside of me. To finish the 'zine, I had to imitate her voice-- as if I were mimicking the work of another author. Despite my efforts to bring Pagan¹ back to life, I never quite could, and I think that some of the writing in Issue Eight sounds forced and false" (156). The voice inside of her that had been the driving force for her work for so long was silent. The need to escape from a writing world she didn't feel comfortable in was gone as well. At once we hear something similar to what Holden expressed: her language wasn't true to her and herself in that moment anymore, and so it didn't sound right. It didn't sound like her, and consequently, the zine didn't feel right. The purpose of that final issue seems to be to help Kennedy see that it was time to move on. She calls herself out on the shift, saying "I lost parts of myself, too-- like my youthful feelings of invulnerability. And much of Pagan¹ is gone: the woman who masked herself in costumes, the woman who whisked into parties and blew air kisses, the woman who turned dating into performance art. I feel too rubbed raw these days to be anything other than authentic" (158). While she doesn't see Pagan¹ as an authentic part of herself by the last issue of her zine, ultimately we can see that it is only with this Pagan¹-- this uncensored and somewhat kooky Pagan-- that Kennedy is able to confront the impact of

her MFA program and her first attempts at mainstream publishing and establish a voice that will be viable in the writing world.

By the last issue of the zine, she is ready to pursue her writing in a different way. She writes, "I think I've changed too much to keep on producing the 'zine. Now I want to move on and find new projects-- projects more appropriate for a woman with one ovary and a few wrinkles starting around her eyes. But even so, even if I give up the *Head*, I know I'll never move out of this house made of art, this secret garden that sits in the midst of an anonymous city" (184). This a significant detail that she points out. While she is no longer planning to publish a zine because it has run its course in terms of why she needed to write it, and because she associates it in some ways with her youth, she doesn't plan on moving away from the voice she's developed in this project. Indeed, Kennedy has published several novels subsequently-- mostly on the independent publishing circuit, and they seem to always embrace an element of the kooky persona and voice that was so loved in her zine.¹²

The connection between zine writer and bricoleur isn't new, but what is apparent here is that fully understanding how that concept plays out in zine work is key to gaining some visibility of this art and artist—and to amateur work in general. Every time the zine writer poses their questions, they are the researcher going out to explore a topic, which in the case of most of the zines used in this study, is themselves. They work with

¹² The titles of her novels give us a sense of what kinds of alternative subjects she goes on to pursue and how related they seem to her zine. *The First Man-Made Man: The Story of Two Sex Changes, One Love Affair, and a Twentieth-Century Medical Revolution, The Dangerous Joy of Dr. Sex and Other True Stories, and Spinster*

whatever materials and ideas are at hand to try to answer that question. The statement of intention for each zine installment, then, is their declaration of visibility. They are showing us their work and their process, and in doing so, are declaring themselves as amateurs, more specifically amateur writers and thinkers. While it might seem redundant to declare this with every single issue, as they are bricoleurs and their materials and life situations are always changing, the question and the answer changes as well. Each new installment is the result of another attempt at research.

Doing this work of walking through the creation process and the dialogue that is created between the writer and the zine reveals both how personal this work is and how embedded it is in social and cultural context. There is a significance in the personal nature of the work and that has been discussed at length. Zine work as life writing is the most common approach to analyzing this kind of writing, and while examining the question of why and the purpose of each issue certainly harkens the analysis of life writing, I want to focus more on how Levi-Strauss positions the bricoleur as an artist who is producing social and cultural commentary. And this is where Booth's concept of the amateur is most relevant because it asks that we view non-professional work as being valuable beyond what the act does for the individual.

Levi-Strauss views the bricoleur as an artist. The zine writer is clearly a bricoleur and the zine work clearly bricolage, but do we always position the zine writer as an artist, and as such, the zine as a work of art? Even if we don't consider the aforementioned zines that seem merely to mimic the form of other zines, do we consider good zines serious works of art? Some might, but most probably would not. This is

because zine work and zine writers are squarely positioned within the realm of the amateur, and for many, are defined via classic notions of the term. Both Duncombe and Spencer connect zine work to the concept of amateuring and, like Booth, attempt to rescue the word from its limited definition. Duncombe writes that:

If pushed to come up with a single defining attribute I would have to say this: zines are decidedly *amateur*. While this term has taken on a pejorative cast in a society that honors professionalism and the value of the dollar, the roots of amateurism are far more noble: *amator*, Latin for *lover*. While other media are produced for money or prestige or public approval, zines are done [...]—for *love*: love of expression, love of sharing, love of communication. (14-15)

Duncombe acknowledges the negative connotations of the term, but places the bulk of the emphasis on the positive potential of amateur. He reinforces the notion that zines are not interested in monetary gain nor widespread approval or acceptance, which is what makes them amateur but also what makes them more valuable. The motivation for doing this work isn't how much money and widespread notoriety one will attain. Rather it is because they are driven to explore themselves and the world around them and to connect with others on a personal level. Spencer further develops this assertion, writing that:

It is interesting to look at the origins of the word 'amateur' which, although often carrying negative connotations, is derived from the Latin word for 'lover.' These little known origins reminds us that the amateur approach can be a more personal form of communication and does not have to be equated with sloppiness, an unprofessional production or a lack of talent. (16-17)

She once again makes the connection to the love that is at the heart of zine writing, but also draws the connection between amateur and the different way that zines are evaluated. As Booth emphasizes, amateur work is not necessarily synonymous with poor quality or lack of skills. It is a work in progress that promotes the personal connection within the work. Booth would suggest that the personal element is where we find imperfections and flaws, but that they are a natural part of the process. The amateur is a valuable figure for analysis because amateur work doesn't require one to hide mistakes and missteps. Flaws and imperfections are evidence of their amateurism and perhaps their struggle towards perfection, or that professional standard. Ultimately, the emphasis lies not on the perfected product, but the ideas that are present and the materials included in the process. So as Spencer points out, it's not that amateur work is lesser quality, it's that the process is more visible in the final product and that this work doesn't need to be as polished to be effective.

So, we see how zine work starts with the question of "why?" and we see that articulating a sense of purpose for the overall zine and the individual issues is important for the writer to work on answering that question. Seeing this particular writer as a bricoleur, and so their work as bricolage, reveals how the cobbling/cut and paste process creates a necessary dialogue between the writer and the writing. And it shows us how this dialogue is both the glue that connects the individual parts within the zine and the impetus for moving the work forward. In other words, it creates the atmosphere for visibility and the opportunities for internal rewards. With zine writers, the thought process, their feelings about what they are doing and why, and their feelings of what

they get out of the work are very clear and articulated. This isn't necessarily true of all amateur work. This is what makes zines particularly significant to an analysis of amateur work. It is not just that they are a large amateur group, but that they verbalize the process thus allowing us to view what might otherwise go unseen.

With the addition of Booth's amateur what is apparent in the question of why and the constant need to establish a sense of purpose is that there is more to this than Levi-Strauss is imagining. The moment of "why" isn't just to find a purpose, it is also an articulation of the feeling that this work isn't important. "Why?" is also "Why would anyone want to waste their time reading this?" The "why" acknowledges that this work is not professional, and as such, maybe doesn't deserve to be read. It is also the writer acknowledging that he/she is an amateur. In this sense, then, the purpose is to explain why someone should care to read it. It is also the game plan for the zine. What it seems to do is outline what the zine writer would like to achieve in the issue and set that intention for the reader. What it also does is create a sense of grounding for a work that might include some flaws and imperfections. As we discussed earlier, the hallmark of a good zine is a clear purpose and an attempt to realize that purpose. The need for a clean format and perfect editing slides down the list of priorities. Zine writers like Crabb (*Doris*) don't even attempt to "clean up" the margins, the grammar, and the handwriting. Instead, she includes rough doodles alongside of them. Her work is quite possibly one of the longest-running zines and a prime example of a good zine and good bricolage work. Her work is categorized as amateur for that reason, but as Booth and Spencer point out, that doesn't mean her work lacks in skill or cultural, social, or literary value.

The first writing that addresses the reader, beyond the title, is the intro, and it is arguably the best place to analyze amateurism in zines as it is the one place that zine writers clearly indicate their purpose. As well, they frequently update their readers on their progress in life and in writing and it is here, if nowhere else, that the zine writer directly addresses the reader. Thus, we can see the literal dialogue between writer and reader and how it works alongside the internal dialogue within the writer. Functioning much the same as any introduction to a book or magazine, in the intro the author presents herself, familiarizes the reader with her zine and the general theme behind this issue. Similar to conventional magazines, the intro guides the readers through the process of creating that particular issue usually includes details about her life during the writing of this issue and feelings about the process of writing. The significant difference between the introductions in conventional magazines and the intro in zines, particularly perzines, is that the intro breaks away from a more impersonal and distanced, but polite introduction and ventures into epistolary friendship. There is a warmth in the intro that radiates out from a perceived intimacy with the reader. The zine writer isn't writing to the faceless crowd that might read their zines, they are corresponding with people they consider to be friends or future friends.¹³ So unlike a conventional magazine's introduction, the intro rant is not simply an introduction to the issue, it's an introduction to the zine writer, his/her purpose for the issue, the overall zine and beyond. It stands in

¹³ Additionally, as is the case with a number zines in this analysis, the intro is an element that sometimes does not show up until several issues of the zine have been published. This seems to speak to the development of the zine writer's voice and her overall conceptualization of the zine—the purpose.

as a continuation of an intimate conversation and updates on lives and personal issues, as well as a detailed progression of the project and the writer's progress.

In *Doris*, Cindy enters her rants as if they were letters to a friend. She welcomes the reader with the news of her everyday life and any changes that have taken place. In issue #4, she spends a lot of time on details that might seem insignificant. In fact, in a conventional magazine it would seem pointless and out of place. What it shows is her perceived or intended familiarity with her readers. This is demonstrated not only through tone, but also through content. As she tells us about the restaurant she likes to frequent and the man behind the counter, we see her desire for familiarity. She and the worker struggle with a language barrier, but she will still go and spend money that she probably shouldn't just to see him. She writes:

this is doris, typed up in 3 different houses and a cold shed in another city. typed up with these sore fingers of mine. on desks and floors and beds and tables made out of milk crates and splintery wood. 4 months and 2 different typewriters. sissors, wax, tape and glue. and i still have hardly been to the ocean, my sister sees it every day when she walks out of her tent and into the farm fields. 4 months, and here it is my advice to you: never drive a hot car too slow on the highway. never go to uhkiah.

theres t his place in my new neighborhood i love. the sidewalk cafe. it had donuts and coffee and ethiopian food. its a tiny place, off the main road, and i think i am the only one who has ever ordered food there. last tim e the guy behind the

counter said they ere out of bread, but 5 minutes? he asked. and i said alright. he called up the other guy, and he brought down the injera, fresh and warm. the guy behind the counter doesn't know much english, we say what we can say to eachother, and i go in and spend my last dollar on coffee just to see him.

it's ssummer again, and my bike is broken. usually when something breaks on it, i just end up taking that peice off. i took off the thing you use to shift gears. i dont hardly have any brakes. but its the tire thats broken this time. im trying to figure it out and fix it. toasters, rollerskates, b ookshelves, i can fix them, but my bike, i dont know. like always doris is about strangers and secrets and stories.

This rant paints a picture of her writing process and her lifestyle. She writes this zine in four different locations and we get the sense that she is working long hours and making just enough to get by. But what we also see is a clear picture of both the bricoleur in her makeshift workshop and the amateur, plugging away regardless of life's circumstances.

There's a tone of confidence in this rant, which is common in most of her intro rants. Crabb doesn't seem to be wrestling with the question of "why" anyone would want to read this as much some of the other zine writers do. What is notable, though, are the consistent grammatical errors that would be major offenses in conventional writing. Not only has she forgone any focus on fixing typos and spelling errors, she doesn't place much value on transitions. Shifting into a new paragraph is a close to a transition as she gets. So while she isn't exactly questioning the value of her writing, she does present a much more visually amateur zine than some of the other ones in this analysis and it's not

just the handwritten parts and the doodles in the margins. Her amateur writing begins with the basic structuring of written English. She spells and misspells, consistently has typos, and makes crude attempts at flow; however, the content of her zines has been well-received for a long period of time. This seems to indicate that while her format isn't perfect and polished, the ideas that she explores about herself and the world are valuable. This reinforces the notion that the amateur is a significant counterpart to the professional precisely because they can work under less strenuous and rigid guidelines. And this flexibility allows for creativity and innovation to appear that perhaps would not within the professional sphere.

In this way, Crabb and her zine are also the epitome of Booth's amateur. Her writing doesn't follow many key grammar rules, but it has a sense of focus and there are clever, intelligent connections being made. Furthermore, she continues to return to the project and work on what she would like to improve. In this case, it's not necessarily proper writing skills, but rather consistency in publication and the exploration of her purpose. As well, she, like Booth, seems not only to have embraced her flaws and imperfections both as a writer and as a person, but her zine seems to thrive on them. *Doris* is one of the most successful zines out there, having started publishing in 1991 and continuing to do so today. She has worked hard to produce a zine and refine her ideas to the point that she publishes not one, but two books based upon the work, all the while not really fixing up the grammar or changing the cut and paste format. Her works are not widely known, but are by Booth's terms amateurishly successful.

Aby of *Crème Brulee* writes a typical intro rant in each of her issues that is more straightforward than *Doris* in some ways, but equally as relaxed when it comes to grammatical errors and typos. It embraces the personal approach and delves into the question of “why?” The following selection from the rant in her first issue is entitled the “getting to know me dept.” It introduces not only the initial reason for writing her zine, but herself as the writer. She writes:

hello, and welcome to creme brulee number one. i can't really tell you exactly what this zine is about, because i don't even know for sure. all i can say is that from here on out i'm going to use it as an outlet for whatever i'm thinking, whether it's about things i love, things that intrigue me or things that make me angry, and there's probably going to be a lot of it, because i've got a whole lot bottled up inside. most of it has been hard to release, (whether it's something intensely personal or even something trivial.) i don't know why this is so. perhaps it's because i can be such an incredible perfectionist sometimes and get easily disgusted with anything i create. so now it's to drop that personal baggage. so now i think i'll type it all up, paste it artfully on sheets of paper, xerox it and divulge it all to complete strangers.

First and foremost, what the reader gets from this rant is that this zine will be a space for Aby to work out feeling she has “bottled” up inside and that are causing problems for her in her life. She is going to use the zine as a space for releasing those thought. Moreover, she sees it as a space for all of her thoughts—personal or trivial. What is notable is that she is trying to break free from her perfectionist ways, which can be

interpreted in this context as wanting to create in a way that places more emphasis on the process and the messiness of the process than it does on a perfected final result. In other words, she is voicing the desire to be amateur because pressure to be “professional” causes her to not like her own work. Aby is frustrated with her perfectionism because it leads to her being “disgusted” by her creative work. What we see Aby saying is that she wants to create in a way that allows her to like her work and what is implied is that she needs a type of art form that embraces the flaws and the imperfections that are natural to the creative process. This will allow her to focus more on the content and the doing and less on how “good” it is.

While the purpose is still being worked out, we get the sense that it is more broadly intended to allow her to articulate that which she feels she can’t in the rest of her life. She has a sense of what she wants to include in the issue, but recognizes that this will be a process of trial and error. As well, while she might call her readers “complete strangers” at this point, but there’s a sense that in “divulging” her potentially “intensely personal” thoughts and concerns, like the fact that she gets “easily disgusted” with her work, she has already placed them in a space of intimacy. They are only complete strangers in that this is her first issue. Arguably, if she really felt that they were strangers, in the classic definition of that term, she wouldn’t see any value in sharing her deepest issues. Like many zine writers, her zine is not simply a place for her to talk about herself. It’s not a gratuitous focus on her everyday life. Rather, it is space in which she can represent herself in this moment, fears, flaws and all, to an audience who will listen. Her final two lines are partially tongue in cheek, as all readers of zines are by

standard definitions, strangers. Still, she will divulge sensitive information about herself with the expectation of a sympathetic audience, who will eventually become friends.

Finally, we can make the connection to Booth when he discusses the difference between a hobbyist and an amateur. As he writes, it is not simply about knowing the parameters of a skill, it is the desire to become better at it regardless of where an individual's "best" might be. There is the feeling that Aby wants to be a better writer because she is pursuing a writing project, but she also recognizes that she cannot be successful in the spaces she is writing now because this space requires perfection, even if it is only a perceived need for perfection. The zine presents a writing challenge that will improve her writing, but also allow her to be flawed in the ways that she needs to be. As well, we can infer from this intro rant that she intends this to be a long-term project.

We witness a greater trajectory of progress with the *Cardboard Cutouts*. Author, Julia Viramontes, includes an opening rant in all of her zines, even though often times they aren't very lengthy. What is also evident is the sense of this zine writing as amateur work. Like Aby, she includes what is going on in her life and how she feels about the progress of her zine and her writing. And just like Aby, this is a project that will be full of trial and error and flaws and imperfections. For Viramontes, the zine is both a challenge for her to write the kind of essays that she wants to write and to develop her own voice and a way for her to see herself in process. In issue five, one of her longer intros, she writes:

This is my last 'zine, EVER! As a highschool student that is! Most of the content in this issue is my own, so its been one of the most difficult issues to complete,

but I am proud of it. Like I said in issue 4, I'm starting a distro for 'zines and other handmade goods. It opens toward the end of July. I've named it Unicorn Express.

So if you're interested contact me.

In this, she gives the reader some information about where she is in life now-- finishing high school, and that this is the first zine she's written on her own, thus indicating that she has included outside contributions in the past. It demonstrates growth in her zine writing in that she feels comfortable enough to take on an issue all by herself now. This implies that when she started working on her zine, she didn't feel confident enough that her writing and her ideas would sustain an entire issue or that what she had to say would be interesting to readers. Here we can see the amateur feeling behind the "why?" She doesn't say that she's concerned that people won't want to read her zine, she assumes it and so includes other writers.

In issue seven, again, Viramontes gives us information about herself as she is introducing the zine, but creates a more intimate tone by starting into her rant without any formal introduction. There is a distinct confessional element in this rant, as many intro rants have, but it is different than the confessional kind of intro one would find in a magazine like *Cosmopolitan*. The structure of the intro from the sentences out is informal, as if coming from one friend to another. Not quite as informal as texting language, and certainly not sloppy, there is simply a relaxed feel to her language. She is clearly conveying to her audience what she feels is necessary for this issue, but without a formal tone or a lot of extra explanation. She writes:

I finished this issue 10 days late. I've been lazy and everytime I felt like working on it, I couldn't because my computer was occupied. I was uninspired and stressed, despite my currently stress free lifestyle. I have all the time in the world, because I don't go to school and don't have a job, but I still feel so pressured to do something & I don't know what it is. I took this time off to try to improve my lifestyle, but despite all the time I'm taking off for personal fulfillment I feel so unfulfilled. So finally tonight for the first time since June I feel like I've accomplished something.

Here we see Viramontes giving the reader insight into her life post-high school, mainly her struggle to find direction. This malaise generally infiltrates all aspects of her life. As she writes about it, she is really telling the reader about how she is processing (or not processing as is the case here) the pressure she feels to be a productive individual. She has taken time off from school, which is a deviation from the standard narrative, and she isn't working, which is the acceptable replacement for not going to school. She has internalized the need to know what she wants to do with her life. Taking time off was supposed to be a way for her to find her direction, but thus far, has not helped. Like Kennedy, Viramontes doesn't feel connected to what she is supposed to be doing, but hasn't been able to ignore or walk away from that expectation. Her zine, as she writes, gives her a sense of accomplishment as well as a place to reveal her feelings of imperfection. She doesn't feel as though she is living up to the social ideal others expect of her, but in her zine it is okay that it's late and it's okay for her to admit that she

doesn't know what she is doing. Completing the issue may not be the same as going to college or finding a job, but it is a small success and one that will help her find her way.

Viramontes and Crabb both have a mixture of light hearted and more serious intro rants. Frequently, the two elements are intertwined, so their rants are both meant to be informative/entertaining and personal. Their amateur voice appears on a number of levels in these intros, but what allows the reader to see all of these parts seems to be an invitation that stems from the writer's personal story. Which is to say, the zine writer invites us to examine his/her flaws and imperfections when they talk about them in their intro rants and then in the body of the zine. In doing so, the writer reveals their amateurism. Zines like *She's So Very...* have intros that assume a strong intimacy and familiarity with their readers. The entire zine seems to be based on a feeling of being flawed. Melissa Ann works from the beginning of the zine to establish a personal intro and each one is filled with her questioning the value of herself and her creative work. The following rant from issue number five jumps right into this concern. She writes:

hello. It looks like it is time for issue number five of she's so very... i do not live in muncie indiana anymore now i live in bloomington indiana. my best friend, heather, and i decided to move to bloomington because we figured it would be the perfect place for us to start over and concentrate on our band, maxi bannister. i have been here for five weeks and i haven't really concentrated on much. i feel so discouraged...about everything. myself, my life, my job prospects, my relationships, my band, my zines, my everything. most of the time i feel like i will never amount to anything, that i will never be able to do the things i want to

do because i secretly (or not so secretly) have no talent. it is a fear i have had all my life. everything is so hard and i don't have the drive. i am not cut out for life, how do people do it?

i like hiding in my fantasy worlds. it is a much more exciting place, my life in the real world is so boring. my dreams are exciting. budding romances with men who are forbidden, or men i will never meet...it is the kind of love i haven't felt in a very long time. the kind of love that is very bad for you. it is bad because it is such a whirlwind, and those never last, but they leave a lasting impact on you....

there are so many people that i miss so many people that i long for my longing is constant, I couldn't tell you what it is about these men that makes it so difficult for me to let them go. i don't think i even want to let them go anyway. i love them. i will always love them. and that is okay.

The beginning of the rant is clearly distinguishable as a rant; however, as she writes, her subject shifts from her relating the changes in her everyday life to a confessional moment, where she delves into her struggles with social settings and confidence. Like Viramontes, we see her struggling with a perceived need to conform and the feeling that she is failing to do so. Unlike Viramontes, however, she has set projects and has begun working on them.

We see Melissa Ann questioning whether or not she has talent, which for her pertains to her musical endeavors, and to an extent, this zine. More broadly, though, we

see her questioning her ability to thrive in life in general, which feels like a common 20-something moment. She knows she is supposed to pursue work that provides a living and that fulfills her, but she is still in a space where she is learning how to be successful. Failure and missteps in work and relationships are common, but in the space of her everyday life, make her feel incapable of success. In her zine, she can be the gal who loves a guy too long and the person who doubts herself. She likes to hide in her “fantasy worlds,” which in some ways includes the zine. Because it is an amateur space, where she can be flawed in all of the ways she feels flawed, it is also a place where she can fantasize success. By articulating her fears and doubts, she can afford to also play with the idea that she could be successful. This something she eventually does fairly regularly when she joins another band as the lead singer and navigates moving up to being one of the song writers as well.

Like *Doris*, there are quite a few grammatical errors, but unlike *Doris* Melissa Ann’s language is smooth. The writing is fairly strong. Where we see her imperfections the most is in her representation of herself. She is fascinated with her imperfections and their potential impact on her life. Her fears drive her to pursue her zine work initially, but eventually we see them taking a back seat to her ambitions. Her perception of herself as maybe tragically flawed doesn’t necessarily go away, which seems to solidify her position as an amateur. She continues her zine work for years, however, and so, supports Booth’s notion that amateuring is a lifestyle and a serious endeavor for those who undertake it.

As Booth alludes to in his work, amateuring is a special, and rather specific, space. It is the serious pursuit of work and skill that seems to be able to accept the limitations of the performers without stripping them of their intensity, “Although most true amateurs will never entirely escape being amateurish, they don’t just dabble at something that they sort of enjoy doing occasionally. Instead, like any serious professional, they work at learning to do it better. [...] amateuring not only entails practice, even what might be called laboring: it lands us in aspirations that can produce a sense of failure” (Booth 11). In terms of internal rewards, the amateur isn’t just dabbling, as Booth states. The amateur commits themselves to a consistent practice that can result in failure. And, it doesn’t end in conventional success. Most of these individuals will not suddenly find themselves in professional positions, and many of them don’t want to, which seems to indicate that they receive something from this work that outweighs conventional reward— i.e. fame, money, and success. What Booth and this exploration of zine writers demonstrates is that the internal reward that most motivates this amateur work is exactly what others argue: “the love of it.” This is the love of engaging in the work, in feeling like they are contributing to the zine community, and in failing itself. Because what these writers focus on isn’t money or notoriety, it is continued involvement in the work and feeling like they are succeeding in their own ways at their own personal goals.

Booth is arguing that we need to take the amateur body and mind and the act of amateuring more seriously than we do because in his opinion this is denigrated work. I would argue that it needs to be taken more seriously because we need to see the range of

amateurs. There needs to be a visibility of amateur work that isn't out there right now. Zines are not the most visible amateur work, but zine writers do make the process of the work visible and their process is based heavily on them declaring their visibility. Each zine installment is them stating what their amateur work looks like, that they are amateur, and what purpose their amateur work serves. Zines may not influence amateur work on a larger scale, but they do give us an example of how amateur can go about fixing the problem of visibility.

The ellipsis that ends Booth's very first quote in this chapter seems to suggest the open-endedness that comes with amateurism. While everything up to that point embraces the messy, often times flawed, amateur work being done, in his final sentence Booth acknowledges the existence of what we would consider success under normal terms. On occasion, the group does achieve something of a flawed perfection. The ellipsis seems to suggest that there is more to amateurism than this one example or even zines. The ellipsis seems to suggest that there is a wealth of possibilities that may stem from these amateur moments and a variety of ways to define amateur work. As the ellipsis trail off, they also seem to suggest the issue of visibility. It is not that there is one basic definition of amateur work or that there is a more complex definition, but that there is any number of new types of amateur work out there and we need to make them visible. Zine writers and their zine work show us how important this visibility is because understanding that their work is amateur is integral to these individuals experiencing the internal rewards that serve to motivate them to continue their work.

CHAPTER III

KOINONIA AND CREATING A SPIRITED COMMUNITY

As I identified in my introduction, the two most pressing issues for amateur work today seems to be gaining visibility and maintaining distance in order to preserve the work that is being done in amateur spaces. In the last chapter, I began my analysis of zine work as amateur work by looking at their process and how they make their work visible. Using Levi-Strauss' theory of the bricoleur, a concept that has already been linked to zine work, I examine how zine writers embrace a process that is similar to the one that Levi-Strauss attributes to the bricoleur. My goal in examining this process is to establish a consistency in the process. This is important when considering that zines tend not to adhere to any required structure or aesthetic. What we can examine is how they approach their work, what they are thinking, and how they feel about their end product. What I found was an example of the visibility that seems to be lacking in contemporary amateurism. While zines certainly seem to embrace a more traditional definition of the word, they do work hard to articulate what kind of work they are doing and why and this is valuable to other amateur work, as well as my analysis of glossies in the next chapter.

While zine work is still predominantly an underground community, there seems to still be a need to declare themselves as amateurs. How this is accomplished lies mainly in the dialogue that is created between the zine writer, their zine, and then ultimately their readership—or public as Robert A. Stebbins calls it in “The Amateur: Two Sociological Definitions,” his work about amateurism and the Professional-

Amateur-Public system. When zine writers establish their guiding question and their opening rants, they articulate their commitment to the work beyond a basic passing interest. They express a desire not only to continue their work, but also standards that they are working towards and the feeling that they are contributing to a community. Some might argue this is meaningless or that it doesn't indicate amateurism because the zine writers aren't necessarily using those exact words, but I argue that it is a declaration of their amateur status because there is no other justification for arguing that their work has purpose and discussing the impact of doing the work other than it being considered serious, committed work. The fact that these are self-published writings, and that these writers are aware and admit in their zines that they are not professional writers, confirms for me that this act is them establishing their status within the P-A-P system.

Furthermore, I find that zine writers are motivated by a feeling of progress and success, although these are not defined via professional standards. This feeling seems to be the internal rewards that so many argue drives amateur work. The importance of this is that knowing that their work is amateur and that they themselves are amateurs amplifies their ability to feel internal rewards. In the introduction, I looked at Essena O'Neill, the Instagram model who recently "quit" her amateur modeling work because she felt she was lying about who she was and the work she was doing. I argued that the issue at hand was the need for an amateur figure who also received compensation for services rendered. In other words, there's a need to see the various kinds of amateur work being done right now and understand it as amateur. What I found useful about this example is that without understanding what kind of work she was doing, O'Neill didn't

feel the internal rewards of her success. So once again, some might argue that focusing on how zine writers feel internal rewards is insignificant, but I would argue that it is a clear indication of visibility of amateur work both by the writers and their public.

In this chapter, I am going to pick up with the idea of internal rewards and how they are made possible and reinforced by an active, engaged public. This chapter looks at the spiritedness of the act as evidence of internal rewards, and so, evidence of the visibility of this amateur work. In particular, I look to the social element that is considered a necessity in amateurism. I consider how internal rewards are amplified by community members. I also argue that the development of the community is in itself for zine writers a type of external reward. In this way, I confront the concept that money is the primary form of compensation in amateur work. I argue that with amateurism that isn't Pro Am (professional amateur), external rewards aren't monetary. Rather, they are emotional and social. And, I will argue that it is necessary to acknowledge that external rewards are an important part of amateur work, as they are in professional work, and that money, while the most common type of compensation, isn't the only valuable reward offered. This is important when thinking about the overall significance of preserving amateur work because it shows us that even within the professional sphere, there might be other motivations than money and that complicates the overly-simplified notion that amateurs work for the "love of it" and professionals don't. Simply put, I see Booth's focus on the spirit and spirited community as a discussion of how engaged readership is a huge part of feeling internal rewards and that the creation of community is in itself the external reward that zine writers are seeking.

It is understood that what zine writers and readers are frequently seeking out when they get involved in the zine community is a kind of community that they have not found in their given communities. And it is understood that the community only works because there is active engagement on both the part of the zine writer and the readers. Now, do all readers respond to all of the zines they read? No. Do all zine writers produce zines with the intention of having contact with readers? No. Once again, the issue of consistency, and really of humanness, comes into play. The goal is to have readers engage, but the goal for most zine writers is to publish on a certain schedule and sometimes that doesn't go as planned. Sometimes zines are produced simply to get information out into the community. Dialogue isn't necessary, nor is it desired. There's a certain degree of flexibility that is applied in both directions. What I am looking at in my analysis are zines writers who enter into the act with the desire for communication with their readers, as well as zines that I feel have given me a clear sense that feedback is actively happening.

That being said, the biggest challenge of working with zines and zine writers for this chapter in particular is the rather consistent lack of consistency. This isn't necessary alarming or problematic because writers in the zine community tend to approach their work with the conscious desire to break with form. Where it becomes a challenge for me in this work is in my evidentiary component. The most notable is that of feedback. Most zine writers do not include the feedback of their readers in their zines other than to thank them for responding. I will approach this analysis with the assumption of feedback, though I can't always provide evidence of it, because it is one of the defining elements

of zine work. More simply put, zine work is notable for a number of reasons, but zine writers identify one specific aspect of it as being the most significant difference between regular publications and zine work and that element is reader feedback. When I can bring it in, I will.

What does it mean to be spirited? A basic definition of the word speaks simply to the idea of an individual having a lot of energy, generally implied to be positive though it can apply any number of types of “spirits.” Booth seems to function under that definition when he refers to the “spirited interpretations” that his music group creates and “spirited communities” that amateuring creates. In essence, spirited by Booth’s definition is to have a lot of positive energy that is both derived from and aimed at the amateur activity in which one is engaging. Spiritedness is a product of the work and the driving energy—that is, what draws people to the work. According to Booth, negotiating “a spirited interpretation” of the musical score is to do one’s best to play the music correctly, but also doing it with a positive and enthusiastic energy. The energy in some ways surpasses the need to meet the guidelines of the musical score. This is especially significant when the high potential for mistakes and imperfections in the play by individuals and the group in general is factored in. One can assume that the “spiritedness” of the work is necessary to find value in mistakes, particularly those that the individual musician or group members can’t seem to fix. Part of the struggle of group work is to “negotiate” the spirited interpretation, which seems to indicate both understanding each individual’s version of “spiritedness” and working with their specific flaws and struggles. Thus, a “spirited community” would be the group of musicians

engaging in the act, bringing to it their best “spiritedness,” and working together to figure out how to incorporate each member’s energy, while working with them to overcome their challenges.

Early in his book, Booth asks the question: what is the purpose of amateurism? Indeed, it is a question that preoccupies him for the vast majority of the work. It’s not just that he wants to define amateurism or prove that it exists, he also wants to better understand what draws him to such work. While the first chapter delved into this idea of purpose and the question of why, this chapter will investigate Booth’s answer. In his question, he is really asking what reason there is to continuing to show up to an activity that will never result in serious recognition. Part of his answer is the love that one feels for the activity and the desire one has to be their best even if it’s not *the* best. In fact, he frequently refers to his title “For the Love It” as he is trying to explain being involved in amateurism. Love covers some aspects of it, but what seems to go further for this analysis and better support Booth’s ideas is the other part of his answer: spirit. In response to his question, Booth writes that:

the answer is obviously nothing like a hope for perfection. Though we amateurs are often driven, and even plagued, by the desire to do it better, the real drive is the sheer love of the playing itself—not just the music by the *playing* of, with, through, *in* the music. It is our conviction that if anything is worth doing at all, it is worth doing badly. We usually manage to rise above the distractions and just play, for the sake of the playing. While the world is negotiating costs and benefits of a different kind, we are negotiating spirited interpretations” (6).

In place of perfection, there are “spirited interpretations,” which can be the result of the love that drives the individual or another, more specific way of describing the drive. I prefer the latter because it feels more useful and more tangible, especially later when I’ll bring in the related concept, spiritual. What Booth is pointing out in this passage is that there seems to be two major components to amateurism. First off, there’s the desire to improve one’s skills. Amateurs are not satisfied with just doing and accepting whatever outcome occurs. The amateur sees each attempt for both its successes and failures, and much like the professional, targets the deficiencies in order to improve them. Beyond that, or prior to that in some ways, is the love of doing the activity—successfully or not as successfully. What Booth is saying here is that there is an exhilaration that comes with engaging in the act, of being in the moment, and it is a feeling that is disconnected from any end result. Here Booth seems to be in agreement with Levi-Strauss and his concept of the bricoleur. What matters most to these figures is the act of doing, not what they end up producing. As Booth states, it is the “*playing of, with, through, in the music*” that is most important to amateurism. So, on those days when Booth’s group can’t seem to get it right, there’s still value in having done the work and they can still feel the love (or the spirit) because they aren’t focusing on the end result. Once again, flaws and imperfections are a noticeable part of the act, but not a detrimental one nor one that would stop the group from continuing to play.¹⁴

¹⁴ His final sentence in this passage speaks to how he differentiates the amateur from the professional world. For him, “spirited interpretations” stand in opposition to “costs and benefits.” That is, amateurism and this notion of “spiritedness” is different from acts and activities that require an understanding of what is lost and gained. The sentence implies that in the land of “costs and benefits,” what is being negotiated is

Spirit is a term that Booth returns to several times as he is explaining how his passion for music began and continued throughout his life. He writes, “Reading over my journals, I’m struck by how often I tried to describe the indescribable spiritual effects of music” (30). While most of his early life experiences with music are limited to listening to it, the same kind of spirit reappears as he is actually playing the cello. What he is doing here is identifying a feeling of spiritedness. It draws him in even when he isn’t actually playing. What is commonly referred to as being “moved” by the music is the spirit that Booth is trying to understand and articulate. Ultimately, he ends up defining “spirit” in conventional terms. Spirit is an energy, and in many ways, courage. More importantly, it is an intense energy that draws an individual in. In a letter to his wife, Booth describes a moment when he was finally able to connect to the spirit of the music, comparing it to the emotions he feels for her. He writes:

I may have heard it before but don’t remember ever ‘getting’ it. The mood was just right, the performance superb, and I was quite literally put out of this world. All my loneliness, all my aspirations, all my questions and answers, were somehow there. I listened over and over again, for three hours and another hour tonight. Each time new subtleties and wonders appeared. I prayed, I silently shouted and openly wept and longed for you, and exulted; I was *not sentimentalizing*, either, though this sounds like it. It was pure, the feeling I had of rightness, or power, of unearthly beauty [...] I was worn out when I finished—

financial or related to money and the making of money. Negotiating Booth’s spiritedness, then, is the part of life that has no monetary value, and as such, concerns itself only with what one gains emotionally.

I'm sorry to confess that B. has as much effect on my heart-beat and respiration as you have, partly, I'll admit, because you were associated in the enjoyment.

You were there; I had just read your letter...and it was such a good one. I loved you so much that the music was you. It's true. The beauty he creates is very close to your loveliness. That's impossible to explain, but very nice to feel (33).

In this passage, we clearly see what Booth feels is the spirit of the music and that, even when not playing it, he finds this connection. It is an intense emotional response to the music, but as he points out, not simply emotional. He gains a more complex understanding of the music as well and it is a connection that drives him to return to this particular piece of music to attain a greater understanding of it—of how it is executed and what it contains. So, Booth's idea of a spiritedness begins with a connection that is not limited to feeling moved by a piece, but to realizing a greater knowledge of it through the feeling one gets when involved with it. In other words, it is the internal rewards that are felt by doing the work that allow spiritedness to occur for the individual.

The spiritedness that is evident in zines is frequently embedded, revealing itself sometimes only in the execution of the zine. However, when asked what drew them into zine work, many zine writers refer to the energy either within the group of zine writers they encountered, from a friend who was also a zine writer, or with the zines they first read. And while they don't sound as intense as Booth does in his descriptions, there's a sense of that spirit that with which he is so fascinated. In issue #6 of *Pulse Zine*, Kelly Rose talks about reaching a milestone with her zine and her education. Normally a rather

sedate zine writer, and probably one of the least personal of the perzines in this analysis, she still hints at the energy that Booth finds so necessary to amateuring. She writes:

My desk is always a mess. As soon as I clean it I come back to create again and there is another mess. But I love it. I live for a messy desk. This mirage of magazines, letters, glue, scissors, stamps and staples partially defines me. I am a zinester. After six issues and a year and a half I feel I can wear this title proudly. I couldn't be happier with this zine and how far I've come in general.[...] I remember graduating high school not having a clue what I wanted to do with my life and dreaming about creating a zine but being afraid I wouldn't have the guts to actually do it. I've come a long way.

In this intro rant, Kelly Ann's energy reveals itself in her description of her work space and in the actual desk itself. As she states, "her desk is always a mess," and this seems to suggest that her impassioned work on her zine causes her to disrupt the organization she would like on her desk. And as she explains further, despite going through the effort to clean up her messy desk, she actually loves the mess because it is a signal that she has been working on her zine. In her opinion, her zine work "defines her." Therefore, her messy desk represents her zine energy, and as such, is evidence of the energy that Booth speaks about in terms of amateuring. This is something from which she derives a lot of pleasure and through which she finds pride. In this rant, we see her conflating to a certain degree her accomplishments as a student and her progress with her zine. One could argue that that is also an indication of the energy that people can get from zine work, and amateuring.

In *Entry Point*, which is a zine that is comprised of zine writers talking about what drew them to zine work, John speaks about his entry into zine work in the essay “My zine mess.” Throughout this passage, he hints at and directly calls out the energy that radiates from zine work and the zine community. His zine exposure begins when he starts working at Sticky, which is a zine-centered store. He writes:

Six months later, I had started as a volunteer at Sticky. My partner’s younger sister had started there not long after my partner in zine and I had first stumbled our way down there-- literally underground— and grinned sheepishly. The level of awesome that it was, well...I don’t think it sunk in for some time I was stumbling my way through an arts degree, majoring in professional writing and literature, and still reliant on my parents to pay my way through it all. I felt thoroughly tethered, and my enthusiasm for many things—life, the universe, etc—was bobbing around on the surface of it all. Nevertheless, I saw the glimmer in the eyes of those who entered the space, and slowly that glimmer planted seeds.

Despite feeling “tethered” to his college experience, and so focused primarily on college-related issues and what can be assumed to be parental pressure to perform that role successfully, John sees the energy of the zine store impacting those who walked inside. And as he put it, he watched as “that glimmer” imbedded itself in those individuals. The glimmer in this case sounds like the energy of which Booth speaks. The glimmer “planted seeds,” and that can be read as the energy being ignited in others with the intention of growing.

Eventually, John gets around to making his own zine, which he describes as, “an homage to the dying art of mix-taping” and after a year of working on it, he is ready to circulate it. The spiritedness that Booth’s speaks about is evident in how John expresses his feelings on the distribution of zines. He writes that, “This is one of the strongest lessons I have learned from zines: scatter your joy widely, and remember that it is your joy. Creation. Nerdy Fuckin’ creation. Nothing, then something.” What starts as a glimmer in the eyes of people walking into the store turns into joy. The joy is simultaneously the zine and the energy that gets passed along with that zine. And as John insists, that joy is “your joy.” That is, the zine writer’s joy. In Booth’s terms it is the spiritedness that the amateur possesses. This energy, according to John, is the defining element of zines because passing it along to others is one of the most important acts a zine writer can undertake.

In another passage in *Entry Point*, Chris Wrdnrd writes about Booth’s spiritedness. Her essay “the accidental zinester” is similar to John’s in that it speaks about her initial exposure to zines and the way in which the energy slowly began to draw her in. She writes:

I feel like I came to zines more by falling thru the rabbit hole than by walking in the front door. I mean, I did read about zines in “Sassy,” and I remember being intrigued by the idea—I knew the front door was there! But I think I also assumed that a hick like me, without a Tower Records or any other zine-friendly store in close range, just shouldn’t even bother. Where would I sell it? Who would buy it? Who would care?

Here Wrdrnd articulates quite plainly the question of “why” that was analyzed in the first chapter. She expresses the feeling of being an amateur, and as such, of not having the skills, the experiences, or the resources to qualify as a voice to which anyone should listen. She also starts to hint at the spirit of amateurism that draws her in and it’s not a slight energy that simply entices her through a door, as if she were window shopping and merely took a closer look. Rather, this energy grabs her and pulls the ground right out from under her. The spiritedness of zine work, like her reference to *Alice in Wonderland*, represents the passage into another world.

This entrance down the rabbit hole takes some time, presumably having to do mostly with Wrdrnd’s doubts about being good enough to write a zine, despite the fact that she is a trained writer and works in the publication industry. Clearly, she sees a difference between the writing required in the professional writing community and that which is done in the zine world. And more significantly, she seems to be positioning zine work as the more valuable kind of writing. She can do ordinary writing work, but zine work is special, and in her opinion at least, is held to higher standard. Eventually, Wrdrnd gets pulled into the zine world, however. She discusses the precise moment when she feels she was pulled in, writing:

And the next thing I knew, the Portland Zine Symposium was just a week away. A weekend devoted to independent publishing? Sounded kind of...exciting. But it was the same weekend as a reunion of the publishing house where I’d done an internship.

I skipped the reunion. Went to Portland. Realized everything I had been doing up to that point—the illustrated poems when I was 7, all the literary journals I’d edited in school—all of it was publishing. All of it was zines. I could do it myself! My life changed. I’d fallen down the rabbit hole. And I LOVE it.

When Wrdrnd is presented with the option of going to an event in her chosen profession or attending the zine symposium, she chooses zines. The spiritedness of the zine community which starts off as sounding “kind of....exciting” ultimately becomes something she “LOVES.” What she conveys in this second paragraph is her connection to the spirit of amateuring. Suddenly, she realizes that all of these little writings she had been doing from the time she was a kid have a place and a community. What she had been looking at as an art form that she wasn’t really qualified to do was, in fact, what she had been doing all along. The energy within the paragraph builds and seems to further emphasize this connection. Wrdrnd goes from a hesitant “kind of” to her “life changing” and falling “down the rabbit hole.”

What is fairly clear here is how the feeling of doing the work is important the continuation of being involved. These writers talk about finding a connection within themselves either that is new or something that has been there but hasn’t had an outlet. When these writers discover zine work, they discover their amateurism. The excitement and the validation they feel from the work is the internal reward. As Wrdrnd writes, she tried other forms of writing that just didn’t have the same effect on her. And John discusses how he felt disconnected from the work he was doing. Once we see them figure out that they are zine writers, we see them declaring who they are with

enthusiasm. Clearly, there is a kind of visibility that is gained when they understand they are zine writers and a desire to further that visibility by articulating it.

While it took John and Wrdnrd some time to fully connect with the spiritedness of zine work, and Kelly Rose some time to express this energy in her zine, for some zine writers the connection is more immediate. One example is lady pajama, a zinester from Missoula. In “How did I get into this mess?” she talks about how she gets introduced to zines. She is already editing an underground newspaper that her brother had started, but she positions zines as an entirely different kind of writing and community¹⁵. She writes:

And then Claire showed me the first perzine I ever saw which was “A real life diary of a boy” by phillipe (I think that was his name). I was fascinated. From then on I always had a goal to make a perzine of my own. But making the newspaper and a literary magazine in highschool I made nothing until I was 24. I was inspired by my friend Nathan, and so I compiled some of my work and came out with my zine *the typewriter papers*. After that the Missoula freeschool had a class on zine making that I went to. The instructor of that class, debby florence, was so impressed with the turn out that she decided to form a group for zinester in missoula called Slumgullion. Being a part of that group kept me creating. I wanted to have something new to show them all the time. Then I decided to move away I was worried that I would stop creating. Inspired by another girl I

¹⁵ I believe that the zine community at the very least overlaps with independent, self-published and underground newspapers, so while I think they exist within the same overarching community of underground, self-published writings, the distinction lady pajama is making between the two seems to be one of genre.

met in missoula I decided to start publishing a weekly mini zine. I was very successful [...] Making zines is completely ingrained in my life now. I am always thinking of different projects.

Lady pajama expresses immediate “fascination” with perzines and sets an intention to make one as soon as she can square away the time. In this passage, the spiritedness that may have already begun with the underground newspaper, certainly gets reinforced by the perzine. The connection is clear and direct. She might not possess the time necessary for making one at the moment, she knows this is something she definitely wants to do. And testament to the strength of this spiritedness is the fact that she doesn’t lose sight of this goal. It takes her some time, but she does eventually start making her own. What she ends with is, “making zine is completely ingrained in my life now.” Here lady pajama is expressing how connected she feels to the spirit of the act of zine making. It is so strong it causes her to “always” be “thinking of different projects.”

What is also valuable about this passage, and all of the passages here from *Entry Point* for that matter, is how the zine writers speak about the importance of other people in their entrance into the zine community. Each one of them has been “introduced” by a friend or a zine-oriented space. This speaks to the personal nature of zine work and the zine community’s emphasis on maintaining a friendship-like intimacy between readers and writers. The element of the personal is also significant to Booth and his analysis of amateuring. Booth spends a great deal of time in his work describing his cello playing in the context of group practices and performance. While he may have started off playing

and listening to his music alone, what he eventually comes to prefer is playing in a group.

Going back to the passage that focuses on Booth's letter to his wife, what is noticeable is the element of the other person as integral to the experience of this feeling. In this passage when he talks about how his wife and her letter were such a big part of him achieving this feeling, as well as being able to understand the intensity of it, Booth begins to articulate his desire to feel this spirit in a group. While there's no shortage of how much Booth loves music on his own, the impetus for writing this piece is how much better playing in a community has made his musical experience. He can tell his wife and friends about how much he enjoys a piece or enjoys playing, the ability to share the moment with others who are also feeling the spirit of the piece trumps mere letters or descriptions. He explains, "Obviously such private hours can be wonderful, but they rule out much that group playing provides: the multiplying of pleasure by sharing it. The player who never plays with others can be certainly be said to be 'saved,' as an amateur. But to me it's a bit too close to a deathbed repentance without a priest or family member present" (62). When Booth writes that playing in a group provides "the multiplying of pleasure by sharing it," it sounds remarkably similar to John's entry when he is directing zine writers to "scatter your joy." The spiritedness of the act can happen alone, but what truly makes zine work awesome and valuable is sharing that energy with others. Booth feels the same way, saying that one can be "saved" by playing alone. That is, the individual can feel the spirited connection to the music as he did while listening to music, but as he states, it's like a "deathbed repentance without a priest or family

member present.” The connections made, which here are being compared to the revelations made as an individual is faced with the raw truthfulness of the last moment alive, are incredible and life changing, but less so if not witnessed by others who are also experiencing the moment. In his eyes, playing alone is as ungratifying as atoning for one’s sins, but not having someone there to accept your apologies. What Booth is trying to emphasize is the need for others to validate, in the case of the deathbed repentance, and share the experience of spirited connection. Like the witness assures the dying individual that his/her apology has been heard and in some way accepted, other amateurs confirm the existence of and elevate the experience of the spirit as they play.

What Booth is expressing here is a significant element to amateurism that in his eyes is equally as important as the individual act itself. Amateurs do not necessarily need others to help them in the act of creating, but they do, as the zine writers in *Entry Point* and Booth express, need others to draw them into the work and to validate their work in a way that feeds the spirit of the act. Community is a big component for Booth in his understanding of how amateurism works.

This amateurism community is comprised of many individuals like Booth himself, trying to learn an instrument or sport –or learn to write. And all of them are striving for the best level of imperfection possible. As Booth points out, amateurism is not something that thrives in solitude. It is either the physical coming together as a group or the sense of a supportive and interactive audience that sustains this kind work. The work done by the amateur must be vetted by other amateurs and it must be done with a sense that other amateurs are working alongside you. Together, they create a sustainable

atmosphere for each other's amateuring. They are the vocal and visual praise for the small accomplishments and the voices of critique, and they create an energy that can overcome the feeling that this work is unnecessary or trivial and one that validates this alternative definition of success and reinforces that every time one shows up to play, write, or create they are doing something exciting and worthwhile.

What this also speaks to is Stebbins concept of the Professional-Amateur-Public system. In this case, it is the need for a public for one's work. And as he argues, even amateurs have publics, though they tend to be smaller and more intimate. One could argue that the size of the public is also significant to the development of amateur work. In other words, part of what makes amateur work valuable is that it responds to a different kind of audience. I would argue that even if it is a public that is shared with the professional space, the intimacy of the connection changes the way amateurs create their work. This is something that we see quite clearly with zine work as community and engaged readers play an integral role in the experience of internal rewards (spiritedness) and the development of the ideas within the publication.

The first job of the zine community is to attract non-zine readers and writers in. As Booth is initially invited into a playing group with which his wife is also involved, so the zine writers from *Entry Point* are "invited" into zine work, albeit in much less formal ways most of the time. John is introduced to zine work through a combination of friends and work. His friends bring him to the store and working there connects him to the spirit of zine work. Chris is initially introduced to zines by the now-defunct *Sassy Magazine*, a briefly published mainstream magazine that for a while managed to provide an

alternative voice to young girls and challenge social norms. Then, she is reminded of the work by her friend Joanna and is finally convinced to write when she attends the Portland Zine Symposium.¹⁶

Lady pajama's passage contains the most detail about how the zine community introduced her to zine, invited her to participate, and then supported her continued involvement. It is clear that she was "invited" into zine work when her friend Claire shows her the perzine. Lady pajama doesn't state whether or not Claire asks her to start writing a zine, but even by merely showing her the zine Claire functions as lady pajama's entry point. lady pajama is "inspired" by her friend Nathan, who serves as another invitation to get involved, and finds her way to a zine-making class and yet another individual who encourages her involvement. Lady pajama's instructor starts a group for zine work. According to her "being a part of that group kept me creating. I wanted to have something new to show them all the time." Here she is attributing her continued involvement with zine work to the energy of the group. Knowing that they were there and interested in her work feeds her desire to produce. When she decides to move, she is concerned that without her community to support and encourage her she won't continue her zine work, but once again the community shows her how to continue with her amateur work. She writes, "Inspired by another girl I met in missoula I decided to start publishing a weekly mini zine." This mini zine helps her to continue her work away from her physical zine community. When her friend "inspires" her to do this zine,

¹⁶ The Portland Zine Symposium is a two day event that has run every summer since 2001. It attracts zine writers of all kinds.

the friend shows lady pajama that the zine community isn't limited only to physical groups. Lady pajama can continue to create her zines and distribute them out to the larger zine community. While it will look somewhat different than her group in Missoula, it is the same community.

What is revealed with the entries by John and lady pajama is how the spiritedness that can be seen in the individual writers' explanations of how they got drawn into zine work is also at work in a larger way. The spirit of the community seems to precede the entrance of the individual into the zine community. Which is to say, the community and the spiritedness that Booth indicates as so important seems to be what draws new zine writers and readers into the work. It then encourages and sustains their involvement in the community. Booth's theory of amateurism seems to naturally encompass the zine community's philosophy and drive to write. It speaks directly to the imperfection that is accepted by the zine community. It acknowledges a sense of a continual "needs-improvement" and embraces it as a valuable part of the act of writing. At the same time, it captures the individual's striving for improvement and views that action as the unrelenting drive to be better with each issue. While his specific focus is on the amateur music community, Booth's ideas about a spirited community also speak directly to zine work, as most zine writers would agree that zine writing wouldn't exist if it weren't for their readers and fellow writers. And as John and lady pajama indicate, the spirit is necessary to some degree for recruiting zine writers in the first place. Without this "spirited community," there might not be a zine community like the one that exists today.

As Booth argues, it is the group coming together that sets the scene for this spiritedness. It's the communication, the dialogue, and the feeling of being supported by one's community. The spiritedness can be passed along and shared because each one of the amateurs there understands what it means to pursue this kind of work. Booth writes: "Sometimes, after a successful presto, always for us non troppo (which translates as 'to hell with Beethoven's metronome commands!') we will all be smiling, or even laughing, or murmuring our 'wow's'" (5). In this example, Booth focuses first on the imperfect performance that is so common for them that it stands in for their default playing mode rather than what the composer has requested on the musical score. And as the previous chapter argued, these flaws are not seen as marring their performance, but rather as being an indicator of the performance being their own. This is their kind of successful interpretation of the music. From there, Booth highlights the shared feeling, which is enjoyable, and at times, powerful enough to even "wow" them.

We could look at Booth's active musicians and amateurs and see their act of playing, of interpreting the musical score, of connecting to the text and to the spiritedness of the "spirited interpretations" as the coming together of the group to create a singular expression of the piece. Together, they negotiate the ideas of the music and the composer. They discuss ways the pieces have been played and what will be best for them as amateurs. Eventually, they agree upon the way they will interpret the text, and when they have reached that agreement, and only then, they have the potential to achieve this spiritedness. Indeed, many of Booth's stories about playing in practice groups focus on how they figure out what this piece will sound like in their hands. Frequently, there is

a discussion of how professionals make the music in question sound, how other practice groups have performed it differently, or how they have performed it differently at other times, but what they are working on in that moment is how it sounds in the hands of those particular individuals—how they can create a sound that is all their own. The spiritedness that Booth examines is created by an engaged, amateur community. The structure of this community is based primarily on networking, and it seems that these networking lines are the channels through which the spiritedness he speaks about flows. And it is through this interaction that each one of the members is able to feel the internal rewards of their work. They work together, they plan together, and so the playing experience is more rewarding.

The zine writers in *Entry Point* reveal some of the channels through which zine writers are drawn into zine work, but there are others that help to form the structure of this amateur community. In general, community is established in a number of ways. Sometimes, community is local and more physical, though in the zine world this isn't as prevalent. There are actual people, groups, and centers that encourage and develop zine work. This is more common in urban settings, where the volume of people is higher and pockets of artistic communities form. Zinefests¹⁷ and symposiums, which are another

¹⁷ Zinefests and zine symposiums are essentially zine fairs or conferences. They are events where many zine writers gather to set up booths to sell their zines. While they function as a localized space to see and buy zines, they also generally offer zine making workshops and speaking events on specific topics that are of interest to the zine community in that moment. According to Alex Wreck of *Stolen Sharpie Revolution*, the events “can range from local picnics, potlucks, zine readings and cut and paste parties to weekend long extravaganzas of trading, tabling, workshops, panels and fun!” (84) Not only are zinefests and symposiums a great way to network for individual zine writers, but they are also a great opportunity to examine current issues and trends in zine work and get a little more exposure for the zine community.

way to network, are generally located within these areas. More often, however, the zine community is structured by the distribution and consumption of the zines via magazines that promote zines, personal contacts, who are involved in the zine community, Distros,¹⁸ and the old-fashioned snail mail system.¹⁹ What remains to be the most

¹⁸ Distros are zine distribution centers. They can be physical stores, online stores, and/or sections in a zine. Sometimes active zine writers create a distro as a way of better disseminating their own zine and those of their friends. Sometimes, former zine writers or zine fans create them as a venue for other zine writers to sell their zines. Distros are good options as they are run like a business and sell various zines. Some of them buy them outright, while others work on consignment. The benefit to using distros is that they are places where zine readers go when looking for new zines. They can get the zines to a wider audience, which includes different areas of the country as well as simply a different community from the writer, and they sometimes have web pages, which allow the reader to browse (SSRT 71).

In the book *Make a Zine*, Bill Brent and Joe Biel write that the added benefit to working with distros is that “most distros, libraries, and resources do not actively compete with each other, and tend to interact as friends in a community, helping each other out, people who are currently active in the zine community are a great place to start when you are developing your ideas” (124). Since the zine community is based on the development and exploration of ideas rather than monetary gain, this makes sense. Stephen Duncombe argues that *Factsheet Five* and other zines whose primary function was to review zines, were the predecessors to distros. He states that these types of publications were, “absolutely critical. Without institutions like *Factsheet Five* that served as nodal points—or virtual community centres—there would have been either isolated publishers or scattered networks. But being able to see all these zines listed every month you not only had the ability to contact others outside your local network but you had a much larger sense of being part of a real subculture—a zine world.” Note that distros have not replaced review zines entirely. Distros are just another channel for zine promotion.

¹⁹ Another way zine writers are re-conceptualizing networking is through the Creative Commons movement. Along the lines of copyrighting, Creative Commons allows for a range of uses of creative works. As Katie Haegele points out in her essay “The Rad Possibilities of Creative Commons,” Creative Commons offers the potential to exchange ideas in a similar fashion to what the zine community has been employing for years. What was initially considered acceptable plagiarism, or cultural poaching, has now in essence become Creative Commons. In layman’s terms, this means you are allowed to use other people’s works so long as you don’t try to claim them as your own. In essence, use the work, discuss the work, open up more possibilities to think about the ideas, but attribute it appropriately and respect in what ways the writer sanctions use of his/her work. Creativecommons.org explains that CC is a way to help individuals share their knowledge and creativity publically and freeing for certain uses and on certain conditions. It is based on the idea of Open Content and it aims to be more user friendly than copyright for producers and users alike.

As the Creative Commons guidelines indicate, people other than the zine writer cannot make money off of the usage without special permission from the zine writers. This approach seems to protect the intellectual property of the zine writers’ work, but also requires that those using their works maintain that direct contact that the zine community demands. In order to use the works, one must be in contact with the writer, and theoretically, engage in a conversation about the project’s intentions and their usage. It gives the zine writers control over their work and embraces a very significant aspect of zine networking—

influential networking tool is word of mouth, the eager friend as we saw with John and lady pajama. Networking is the first way a zine writer can begin to access the zine community and their readers²⁰. It is through these networking lines that Booth's spiritedness is channeled and around which the spirited amateur community is built. As John and lady pajama's passages reveal, networking channels such as friends who are involved in the zine community serve as conduits for the amateur spirit. New zine writers and readers get a firsthand account of what it is like to create a zine and to interact with other zine enthusiasts.

Other networking channels seem to provide a similar infusion of spiritedness by helping new zine writers find their way around zine making. One such source is Alex Wrekk's *Stolen Sharpie Revolution*. *SSR* is dedicated to unveiling the intricacies of zine writing and the zine community and helping would-be zine writers understand zine

communication—when considering how these works move within the zine community and potentially beyond it.

²⁰ Alex Wrekk recommends sending zines to other zine writers, who review zines, with a note asking them to review it. New zine writers should look to trade their zines for other zines or objects of equal value. They should, in essence, reach out, and make the acquaintance of other zine writers, begin to actively engage in the community, and keep in mind that community in the zine world is communication with occasional face to face contact. Because this is a form of publication and writing that doesn't rely heavily on a physical or a well-known, public community, it is important that zine writers seek out interactions with other zine writers and readers.

She also suggests that, "The internet is a good place to promote your zines. There are a few message boards, e-mail lists, web pages of listing and resources, Livejournal communities, Etsy storefronts, Myspace communities, zine profiles on Myspace and Facebook, and the zine social networking site We Make Zines is an amazing resource. With a little searching online I'm sure you can find them yourself" (67). An individual can make fliers to be inserted or included in zine orders or to be traded with other zine writers, who will include them in their own orders and help a new zine writer network. There are handouts that are meant for posting in local areas or places where a zine writer will be—like a zinefest. They are also a convenient way to connect with other zine writers and get some help in establishing a network of readers (68).

etiquette and ways to better access and experience this world.²¹ In *SSR Wrekk* focuses heavily on the aspect of communication and in doing so speaks to the spirit that is encouraged and sustained through various networking channels. She emphasizes that zines are, “made by a diverse spectrum of people throughout the world from all ages and walks of life. People who make zines can build and participate in communities that celebrate the tangible written word and support each other’s efforts to do so” (6). In her basic definition, the zine community is based on the support of zine writing efforts from other members. The community is not focused on the end result, so the support is for the act of amateuring not just the actual zine that is produced. She talks about “creative exchange” because “ideas are meant to be like that, shared and passed on so that many people can appreciate them” (4). Here she is identifying “creative exchange” as a network with the zine community and arguing that its major function is to shares ideas so that others can “appreciate them” because that is the point of knowledge. What she is noting is that what also gets passed along with the ideas is the spiritedness of thoughts, which is something with which Bill Brent and Joe Biel agree. In their work, *Make a Zine*, they write that zine writers “communicate very passionately in a medium that is intensely personal” (13). Wrekk’s “creative exchange” is Brent and Biel’s “passionate communication.” Both suggest that there is more that gets passed along than just what someone is thinking. There’s a spirit that both creates the desire for making the zine and

²¹ A zine-like print source created to help zine writers get started in zine making and navigate the zine community, it has been in print for over ten years and continues to this day to be edited and revised. In some ways, it is one of the best sources to use to represent the values of the zine community.

the desire for communication and a spirit that causes the readers to want to engage in actively reading said zines.

By passing along information on how to create and network a zine, Wreck provides a support structure for new zine writers and this gives them a better chance at creating a successful zine and successfully engaging with others in the zine community. While Wreck's work is primarily instructional, *SSR* is a source that introduces and guides the new zine writer and in doing so it helps individuals like John and lady pajama move from their initial introduction and interest in zine work to actually making their own zine. The spiritedness that draws them in can now be explored further as they engage firsthand with zine construction. As well, Wreck's work walks the zine writer through various networking options, how to use them, and what others are expecting. In doing this, she is showing them how this idea of spiritedness manifests in this particular community and how to connect with it.

For instance, at one point Wreck talks about the element of friendship that forms with the exchange of zines. What starts as an interest in the zines can potentially lead to a relationship that is separate from that. Friendship is an element that is emphasized by the zine community as an asset to the zine writing, if not a necessity. Wreck writes:

There are lots of ways of creating zine communities besides things you can do from your home like making and trading zines, or making connections through mail or the internet. When I was 19 I had a goal that I hoped would be fulfilled through zine connections. I hoped that I could meet enough people so that I could travel the country and always find a penpal to stay with. Well in over 15 years of

creating zines I have met dozens and dozens of penpals in their own cities, been on two zine tours and shown lots of people my city of Portland, Oregon. I'd like to say that I have reached that goal and I hope that it continues on! (55)

Wrekk is speaking about the kind of spirit that exists within the zine community that is both embedded within the writing and seems to flow beyond it. She writes that "there are ways of creating zine communities," which suggests that there is more to the work than just what is produced on paper. It also argues that there should be something more than just the zine. Wrekk is clearly utilizing her zine networks for a fun, personal goal. What allows this to happen, though, is the spirit that passes along these networks. She can aspire to such a personal goal because she feels a shared sense of spirit with these zine contacts. Pen pal suggests an intimacy beyond just being a reader of her zine. There's a friendship. While they may not be close friendships, they are the kind that offer housing when a zine friend is in town and show them around the city.

Pagan Kennedy is good example of how the zine community is formed via networking channels and how Booth's spiritedness appears and is sustained. Kennedy lived within a zine-supported and producing community. Through her writings and reflective work, we can see the impact of both the physical community, which seems to push her to start writing zines, and the greater zine community, which spread out well beyond her New England neighborhood, town and region. In fact, Kennedy is a good example to work with when considering what Booth is talking about because she is both the solitary writer and the active community-oriented artist. We see where she is perfectly capable of being a writer without the zine community or her MFA community

for that matter, but we also see that her love of writing only really begins to return to her as she is writing and working within the zine community.

Kennedy demonstrates the need for that spiritual feeling of a shared writing environment and one that is shared with individuals who are as equally passionate and enthusiastic as her. While in Baltimore, when working on her graduate degree, she writes about the separation of self that she felt. In some ways, she felt she belonged in the MFA program and in the graduate student community, but a part of her didn't connect and that was the part that drove her to find an apartment away from her fellow graduate students. The MFA program should have been a space that fostered her creative works, but ultimately, it wasn't. She writes:

As a writer, I belonged at Hopkins. But the part of me that was Pagan didn't. I was getting by on \$500 a month, hanging out with Hungarian performance artists and hippie musicians, and living in a neighborhood where many students refused to go at night. No matter what city I moved to – Baltimore, Boston, New York—I always seemed to end up in the same place: Underground USA, a low-rent sideshow of people who didn't just *make* art—they *were* art [...] By the end of my stay in grad school I had stopped writing about the hipster demimonde and begun trying to produce 'normal' fiction. (6)

In this passage, she is speaking to her need for a community. While she finds herself living in a part of the city that promotes art and creativity, the writing program has a greater impact on her work. She loses sight of her ultimate goal— to write the great, underground American novel, and begins to conform. This seems to suggest that while

part of her physical environment should have fostered her distinct creative approach, it wasn't enough and so it didn't. In addition, the place where she is looking for help with her writing is pushing her in a different, less comfortable direction, which in the end snuffs out her spirit and her passion for writing.

Kennedy eventually moves into a communal home in Boston that just so happens to be within a zine community. In her initial descriptions of it, it seems similar to the low-rent living space she had in Baltimore: "That fall, I moved into a group house, a rambling Victorian mansion with fireplaces and stained-glass windows and eight weird residents. In the heyday of that house on Farrington Ave, only one or two of us held real jobs. We sat around working on projects, gossiping, making cookies, practicing guitar, designing clothes, refinishing furniture. I subsisted, as usual, on part-time copyediting" (8). Like the neighborhood in Baltimore, this was a space filled with individuals who were focused more on creating than replicating the 9-5 lifestyle. She writes about the appearance of zine work in this community:

That year it seemed as if everyone I knew had suddenly decided to produce a homemade Xerox magazine (or 'zine). My roommate Donna collected the ravings of insane people and turned them into pamphlets; Seth published a cartoon 'zine; Jason color-copied his psychedelic collages; Tony made comic books; Rob was working on a surrealist literary thing; and on and on. At the highest pitch of the scene, the 'zine publishers formed the Small Press Alliance. [...] My friends couldn't understand why I didn't have my own publication. I

often contributed cartoons and essays to other people's 'zines, so why didn't I buckle down and start my own? (8)

As she explains, Kennedy is surrounded not only by individuals who are doing zine work, but friends who are doing zine work. She is literally living with individuals who, by virtue of simply making their zines and by talking zine work up to Kennedy, will invite her to enter the zine community. As she writes, she starts off by contributing to other people's zines. Ostensibly, while she is still trying to complete the novel she started in her MFA program.

Kennedy is finally away from her program and the task at hand is to write the novel she had set herself up to do as she was leaving grad school. Only, she finds that she can't. In the retrospective commentary in her book, she laments the lack of desire to write. She cannot complete the book, despite her certified preparation and the accolades she has already received for her writing. Her grad program has made her feel like she isn't writing with her own voice, in her own way. However, unlike her time in Baltimore, now Kennedy is immersed in an environment that is entirely Pagan-friendly. In other words, it is full of people who are creating in the same way that Kennedy does and who encourage her to pursue the kind of writing voice and topics that she wants to pursue. Unhappy with how her program has positioned her and her writing, Pagan is drawn to her zine-writing friends and their less-structured, lower-stakes productions. The result is in this community, where she doesn't have to be the epitome of the mainstream writer, she is finally able to start working away from that identity. Her zine community pushes her to seek her own voice and supports her enthusiastically as she does. This

situation could be read as Kennedy bowing to the pressures of her current community and conforming to their kinds of creative work, but what makes me argue that she is finding her voice is that when she speaks about working in the Boston community she no longer talks about feeling torn between who she feels she is as a writer and who she feels she should be. As well, she follows the pattern that is discussed in that last chapter. Her zine has a clear sense of purpose and a clear progression through that particular moment in her life to the when she decides she no longer needs to write the zine. What is evident from this is that once she finds her voice, she moves back into novel publication, which is what she wanted to do from the beginning. All of this makes me believe that her choice to enter into zine writing was a conscious decision to work on her writing and not to simply satisfy the desire of her friends. And she does it because she has a need to feel the internal rewards for writing once again. While she was in the program, she didn't connect with her writing. She didn't feel like herself. Amateur work and the validation of her readers helps her to feel the rewards and the spirit of her work once again.

Kennedy connects with the spirit of this amateur writing as well as with the spiritedness of the community. The energy of networking is felt almost immediately. She writes:

A few weeks later, the first issue of *Back to Pagan* came out. It had a circulation of fifty—I handed them out to pals and housemates, and also mailed copies off to friends in other cities. Soon after I distributed the 'zine, people began calling me to tell me they'd read it in one sitting, and then they had lent it to their friends, acquaintances would ask how they could get copies. Through some kind of weird

publishing karma, *Back to Pagan* proved to be far more influential than the *Voice*—at least in my little circle. *Back to Pagan* traveled through the world with a magical ease, flying from hand to hand and ending up in every group house in Allston. (25)

While Kennedy's physical community was a mere few blocks big, the networking techniques of the zine community not only helped her zine gain notoriety in that more localized space but beyond as well. People "read it in one sitting," which speaks to their desire to engage with her writing, but also the kind of spirited energy that was in her zine writing. She had had literary success before, but it hadn't felt like this. While she admits that her "influence" was limited to the "little circle" that was the zine community, *Back to Pagan* still managed to connect with her readership better than her older writings had with the readership of the *Voice*.

The impact this reception had on Kennedy was a surge in energy that pushed her to want to publish more, to be more connected to this community that seemed to not only accept, but desire her writing. What can be seen in this example is the way in which a spiritedness binds the zine writers together and encourages new writers to want to get involved. It also reveals how impactful the element of spirit is on a writer's desire to write and the feelings he/she has about his/her writing. Kennedy has already been validated as a writer in the professional publication realm. She has the validation of an MFA program. So what can be ascertained from that is that she has had experience with networking of some variety and has had success in utilizing those networks. What seems to be different about this writing community isn't the idea that there are writers

and an audience or that networking is an important part of the writing process. What is different is the spirit that underlies Kennedy's descriptions. What makes the difference for her is the feeling of spirited connection to her zine community. It predates her actually writing her zine and only seems to be amplified by her zine work. As she writes, there's a "magical" ease with which her zine moves through her zine community.

Booth's notion of spiritedness bonds the individuals within the zine community both in writing and as people. As we look at the zines, we can see his idea of community and that there's an enthusiasm for it. However, he speaks to more than just enthusiasm. His idea of spiritedness is on par with what most would consider a religious experience, as we see him articulating in those listening moments. As he listens to the music, and later plays it with his practice groups, he is lifted away from his physical surroundings and connected to something intangible, but emotionally meaningful. Through listening, he is able to take a break from his battle-weary life. By playing music, he is able to forget his struggles as an academic, and to feel this kind of connection to a higher emotion with more than just himself. As he explains, connecting on a spiritual level as a group is even more powerful than playing on his own. However, he also admits that he's not the world's best cello player. On his own, he can play and work through the music, but it seems that only when he is in a group is he able to achieve the same connection as he did when he was simply listening. He needs the company of others and their energy to create this spiritedness he finds so very interesting and necessary to amateurizing.

Spirit makes sense in a conversation about music, athletic teams, and even communities. Music is expected to have an emotional impact and musicians are

supposed to play using their emotions. Team spirit, and its presence or lack thereof, is frequently discussed when analyzing a team's success or ability to be successful as a unit. Community spirit can be seen in festivals and street fairs as well as in times of crisis, when community spirit pulls individuals together into a cohesive support unit. Spirit in these examples speaks to an individual's connection to an idea or activity. While this doesn't seem to be separate from the spirit that Booth is exploring, his idea seems to add an element of complexity. It isn't just feeling connected, it's feeling a kind of connection that transcends the limits of time and space. He writes, "music, and the repetition of music, by going deeper and deeper, arouses thoughts and feelings that for me can only be called religious, or at least spiritual" (204). The feeling he gets listening to and playing music is on par with those felt by individuals in a religiously spiritual community. It is more than team spirit or community spirit. He writes, "whether we think the religious impulse behind such speculations wild or sane, the sheer amount of human speculation about how music ties us to this or that center is, while not decisive proof of any one connection, impressive evidence that music *connects* us to more than music" (207). As he points out, this feeling is something that transcends the act of playing and which connects the musicians in a higher way that bonds them together in a shared feeling. As he wrote to his wife, it isn't mere sentimentality. It is a feeling that stirs a deeper part of the soul and on more complex emotional levels. And, for the most part it is contingent upon a community of musicians. While he is able to attain a spiritedness alone as he is listening to a group of individuals playing, in order feel it as *he* is playing, he must recreate the community of musicians. He must have individuals

playing with him in order to create a space where they are all reading and interpreting a text together.

Since it is the spiritedness-- both of the moment and within an interactive community-- that is the defining element for Booth, it seems useful to consult with a text aimed at better understanding of the way spiritual communities create a space for their spiritedness. Linda L. Gaither speaks to Booth's notion of "spirited interpretations" in her work *To Receive a Text: Literary Reception Theory as a Key to Ecumenical Reception*, which is a look at the ways that reception theory may be useful in understanding the technique religious communities employ to receive and understand religious texts²². In her research, Gaither finds that authentic reception by ecumenical communities requires both formal reception, from the ranking individuals within the religious community, and juridical acceptance, in which the members of the community are asked to interact with the texts and come to their own consensus. In fact, according to Gaither, this is the only way to attain authenticity in reception. More simply put, in order for the spirit to be truly felt and move the individuals involved, both factions within the church need to be actively involved in reading and interpreting the text. For a religious community, this means the religious officials, who guide religious study and worship, and the congregation, who read and apply religious concepts to their lives. Of course, the text in question is the bible. For the zine community, this structural

²² She focuses specifically on the Catholic/Apostolic community and the two groups' long history of working to find common ground in their various interpretations of the bible and of religious practice.

breakdown is slightly different²³. There are no “authority figures.” Rather, there’s the zine writer, who is the authority on their own zine. Then, there are the readers, who in this sense seem to be positioned like the congregation. Their job is to read and question the text. Gaither writes, “The participation of the entire concretely-structured community was essential for authentic reception to occur. It is this participation by the whole body of the faithful, each in his or her appropriate way, which has been referred to as a spiritual *process of reception*” (7). As she points out, the only way spirit can develop in this equation is if both groups are actively involved. In her analysis, both the religious authorities and the congregation are reading the bible.²⁴

The focus in this passage is on how the entire church community—clergy and parishioners alike—are necessary and responsible for creating a spiritual community. The process occurs when parishioners receive the word of god via clergy members and religious texts and then communicate their experiences and interpretations of various religious teachings. What they hope to achieve is reception of the Holy Spirit. Success is only possible if the clergy members encourage dialogue and active participation and the parishioners join the conversation and contribute their own interpretations. When this

²³While I don’t mean to use this work as a true comparison, I do think what Gaither identifies as significant for the transference of the spirit from text to individual and between community members provides, like Levi-Strauss’s theory of bricolage, concepts and a structure that can help when analyzing how Booth’s spiritedness functions within an amateur community. As he invokes the feeling of spirituality, which arguably differs slightly from the term “spirit,” I have sought out a spiritual text. Further justification falls with the actual definition of “spiritual.” It’s most commonly defined as relating to religious beliefs, but it is also defined as being related to or impacting of the human spirit or soul. It is defined as the opposite of material or physical things. So while I don’t mean to imply that zine communities are spiritual (religious) communities, they are spirited communities, and as such, Gaither’s work bears some relatable and valuable concepts for this analysis.

²⁴ And while neither group is authoring it, the concept still lends itself to zine analysis, especially when considering the presence of dialogue within the zine process and the importance of feedback, which I will examine later on.

happens, the Holy Spirit may be truly received and felt by all within the community. Simply put, it requires that the individual not just practice at home in their own time, but enter into a spiritual community that will help them, through conversation and dialogue, to better understand both the texts and how to receive the spirit. It requires that those who are involved in these communities educate themselves, while also helping one another to understand. Receiving the Holy Spirit is then contingent upon a community that understands the role that the individual plays in helping sustain and improve the overall religious community.

The key element in this work is the notion of “koinonia.”²⁵ A Greek word found many times in the bible, koinonia roughly translates out to mean communion, community and the active participation of individuals in the reception and the gifting of this spirit. In other words, it is the term that encompasses both the act of coming together as a community and the spirit that is passed amongst the members. Within the Catholic/Apostolic dialogue, koinonia is the Holy Spirit that is represented most tangibly within the host, eaten during communion, and less tangibly as the overall community of the parish and the diocese. It is the interaction of church members with the clergy, the religious text (bible) and teachings, and with one another. When thinking about the zine community, koinonia is a feeling of community, the act of creating and establishing fellowship within the community, and seems to also be the spiritedness that Booth

²⁵ What Gaither’s model of koinonia provides is similar to what Levi-Strauss’ theory of the bricoleur provides my analysis in the previous chapter. It lends this examination of community some language through which I will attempt to distinguish the zine community as a particular kind of space and the interaction between the zine writers and their readership as on whose reliance upon Booth’s idea of spirited work functions in a similar way as Gaither’s ecumenical community.

identifies specifically within the amateuring community. The act of participation, of sharing with one another, creates the conduit through which the spirit of the amateur may pass from writer to reader, and writer to writer, and reader to reader. It is not simply the making of the zine, though that is significant in itself, it is the sharing of it and the talking about it with an audience that fuels the passion so many zine writers express.

What makes the term “koinonia” particularly useful for the analysis of the zine community is first that it seems to stand in for the entire process. So when we look back at Pagan Kennedy’s account of her zine community and the reception of her zine work, we can see koinonia in action. What is evident in her passages is how important the give and take of the community and the individual is. Koinonia can be seen as the reading and creation of a zine, but it is also the feeling of fellowship and community about which Kennedy speaks. It is the way her zine “flies” from person to person within the community and how she feels about this overwhelming reception. As the zine writers featured in *Entry Point* demonstrate, koinonia isn’t merely the reading or the writing of a zine, just as spirit isn’t simply being enthusiastic. Koinonia is reading with the expectation of responding and creating a dialogue. It is writing with an intimate audience in mind and with the desire for dialogue. And in terms of energy, koinonia is not just liking something, as Booth’s hobbyist might do, it is feeling a connectedness that only comes from committing to developing oneself and one’s craft over a long period of time and despite experiencing the failure and flaws that were discussed in the previous chapter.

While Gaither defines this term by its ecumenical definition, *koinonia* doesn't have to be so strictly interpreted. What a looser definition of the word offers this analysis of zine work, and amateuring in general, is a concept that describes the full act of amateuring as Booth imagines it. *Koinonia* better articulates Booth's somewhat vague term of "spirited." It helps ground the feeling he talks about in tangible actions and it allows us to view what seem like normal, everyday interactions as containing the potential for what Gaither calls "authentic reception," what Booth calls spiritedness, but what we might call genuine human connection. *Koinonia* articulates what makes something like amateuring more than just an enjoyable hobby or moment with other people by targeting the need for commitment not only to the activity but to the individuals involved. The amateurs must all be engaged with a text that is, like the bible, open to dialogue. That is, the text must be one that is actively asking its readers to question and discuss. Zines function very similar to the bible in this way. For the most part, they are not meant to be the end result. They are written with the idea that readers will give feedback, and with this feedback, the zine writer will continue to develop the zine. Or in the words of the previous chapter, they will continue to pursue the answer to the question, "why?" So, *koinonia* is a useful concept for this analysis because it encompasses all aspects of the interaction—the writer, the readers, the texts—and determines that it is only when all three are engaged that the transference of the spirit can happen.

Booth offers up another example in which he and his wife are playing with other musicians at a musical retreat. The groups are randomly selected and change with each

session. One afternoon, they are placed in group with Larry, a musician who is notoriously difficult. Going into the session, they are all wary of how it will go. Almost immediately, Larry makes his presence known and it stops the entire group from playing. While their dialogue allows them to air their grievances and to get back to playing, ultimately, koinonia is not achieved. The feeling of the session isn't one of spiritedness and this seems to be because Larry doesn't commit to the rest of the individuals in the group. He puts himself first. Therefore, the group doesn't commit the way they need to in his opinion and the connection is never made.²⁶ This example supports what Gaither is arguing about authentic reception and koinonia and what Booth suggests about spirited play.

What ties this idea of koinonia most to Booth, and ultimately to the zine community, is the emphasis on active participation, as well as sharing and receiving the

²⁶ Half an hour later, everything begins with cool cordiality, but I can see that Jim is already edgy. Then, after only a few measures, Phyllis and Jim half-flub a rapid duet; it's so uneven that they *almost* don't make it together to the end of the elaborate phrase. Then they miraculously do end the phrase together, and we are going on for a couple of seconds when suddenly Larry stops playing pounces.

Larry: You two weren't at all together there. We should start over and...

Jim (almost shouting): I'm sorry, but I just cannot tolerate that kind of interruption. It upsets me. It really upsets me. It's rude. Phyllis and I were already back together when you started criticizing. We already knew that we hadn't done it right; we knew what it should sound like. You don't have to tell us we didn't do it right. You must think we're ignoramuses. Why do you do that? That kind of criticism upsets me so much I just can't...

Larry (interrupts, looking pale): I didn't mean it as criticism. I just wanted to...

Jim (standing up): You didn't mean it as criticism? When you rudely stopped us and...

Wayne (hoping to moderate): Well, ah, Larry, because you play so well you probably don't realize how your comments do often feel to others like destructive criticism...I don't you know mean it that way but...

gift of the spirit. While Booth certainly practices on his own and the zine writers write solo for the most part, these actions wouldn't amount to much of anything without a sense that they were going to eventually interact with a group or audience. Even if a zine writer does not live in a physical zine community, the emergence of zinefests and symposiums have begun to allow for that opportunity to be in the same room or space with other zine writers and to experience the togetherness that Booth and Gaither see as so important to the spirit of the community. As well, as Wreck points out, there are ways of creating moments similar to this on one's own. Establishing pen pals and networks within or outside of the town/city where a zine writer lives can potentially be opportunities to gather and interact face-to-face.

Even without face-to-face contact, though, interaction with other zine writers and readers is prevalent. The push for communication and dialogue within the zine community is a constant place of interaction. As Julia Viramontes points out a few times in her zine *Cardboard Cutouts*, it is precisely the awaiting community that drives her to finish the zine when she is otherwise uninspired to do so. For *She's So Very*, it is the need to allow her readership to hear her insecurities and support her that motivates her to continue producing her zine, despite feeling as though no one could possibly want to hear about her struggles. There is a sense with both of these writers that they write because they know people are waiting to hear from them and because they want to—and need to—hear back from those individuals who have committed to being involved in the development of the work and the writer.

First and foremost to achieving koinonia in zine work is the concept of dialoguing. As chapter two explored, the act of engaging in a dialogue is a vital part of bricolage work. In that analysis, the focus was on the writer alone, but in this analysis the act of dialoguing extends to the reader and the general zine community. Gaither refers to the relationship between the religious authority and the parishioner as a kind of “dialogue partner.” The term “partner” suggests an intimate, connected relationship. They are partners, therefore they are committed both being present in the conversation and listening to each other. As we saw with the bricoleur, dialogue means repeated interaction and in the zine world that translates out to the seriality of the zine. According to Gaither, “In the ecumenical context, the dialogue experience has shown that the *reception process* or *consensus process* is dependent on a re-reading and reevaluation of the Apostolic faith. [...] Participants must be open ‘ready to learn from the other something which they have overlooked up to this point’ (8). As Gaither indicates, there is a repetition involved in understanding the text and one that is dependent upon other people’s interpretations—their feedback on the subject. Repetition, in this case, seems to ensure a better interpretation of the text, that is— an interpretation that is closer to the actual meaning of the text and how it forms meaning for the community. Dialogue is crucial to developing and sustaining both the structure of the community and the process of reception. With zines, it appears mostly within the intro and with feedback from the readers.²⁷ The intro represents the writer’s active role in the process, the feedback²⁸ is

²⁷ Feedback is implicit with zine work. It is a defining characteristic of this kind of writing. While feedback is always present for the zine writer, it isn’t always incorporated into the zine itself. I included

the readers. The text, which in this case is the zine issue, is actively engaged in that the writer and reader are speaking and there's content about which a dialogue will develop.

The intro/outro section plays a huge role in the creation of dialogue within the localized zine group. It is the place where the zine writer directly addresses their readership, but also the place where they discuss the intention for that particular issue alongside what has been going on in their lives. These intros are usually meant to better explain the focus of the issue, but are also personal in the sense that they are meant to help the readers better interact with the writer themselves²⁹. The zine writers ask their

feedback when I could find it, but even if there's no hard evidence of it in the actual zines, it is assumed that it exists.

²⁸ Most zine writers rely on feedback as a way to gauge the engagement level of their readers and to help enact koinonia. What is a conversation immediately following a practice session for Booth or a study group for Gaither is feedback in the zine world. As Brent and Biel point out, "Criticism and feedback are one of the strongest elements of community and growth in the zine world. Your peers are invested in such a manner that they want to create a current that raises all boats. As Gillian Beck says in the documentary film *\$100 and a T-shirt*, 'Zines are one of the only mediums where people care enough to give feedback and criticize your work' and it's because you are all part of the same community, with similar, though unstated goals" (Brent and Biel 3). Feedback is the sign of the truly engaged member of the community. Erica Bailie of Pander Zine Distro underscores the importance of feedback to the life of the community, saying, "Zines have realized that the strength of the zine community lies in communicating directly with one another, helping to provide resources and shared knowledge so that other people can start to write their own zines" (Spencer 34-35). Zines aren't made to simply be put out into the world and exist silently, they are meant to be the center points for discussion, for meaningful dialogue. They are meant to inspire others to join in and engage in the art. As the zine community expands and more distros crop up, the emphasis on feedback becomes even greater. Bailie writes:

The major downside to this [distros] is the feedback factor: too many people think that because they've received a zine from a distro that instead of the zinester this means they are exempt from having to write to the zinester about their zine. If no one ever offered feedback and made connections this scene would die" (34—need speaker) [...] "If you're not receiving feedback, what's the point? You wouldn't be involved in the scene at all, you'd just keep your publication to yourself. But the point is that you want to share, you want to experience that sense of community, because it's comforting (mostly) and exciting to find like-minded people who share your passion" (Spencer 34).

Bailie reinforces that feedback is the lifeline for this community and argues that the community needs to stay vigilant in enforcing this element. The appearance of distros has increased the community's networking capabilities, but at the same time, it seems to pose a threat to an extremely important aspect of zine work. As the zine writer above points out, the whole point of zine writing is to experience community. Without feedback, this isn't possible.

²⁹ I have chosen to work with perzines for this analysis, so the intros and the content of the zines are

readers to consider ideas as they are reading through the zine and then ask for feedback on the ideas presented, as well as the overall execution of the zine. In these sections, zine writers frequently provide their contact information, ask for such things as feedback and writing or art contributions, and thank their readership for being a part of their zine writing community.

Pulse Zine doesn't start working with the intro function until the fourth issue, but even within this first intro, Kelly Rose recognizes the sense of community she feels with her zine readers as she is actively interacting with them. She writes:

It's hard to believe PULSE ZINE has made it to its fourth issue. It's been an incredible journey since I started PULSE in September of 2006 and this is the first time I've ever done any kind of intro page. Making this zine has not only given me a chance to meet a ton of cool people and get my voice heard but it's also been therapy for me, something I can go to when I feel down and be able to get inspired again by the process of creating. I want to encourage everyone reading this to use art as therapy. Painting, collage-making, zine-making, music-making, use whatever art you're into to help you when you're feeling depressed or stressed the process of creating will make you feel more productive and creating art can be a good way to get all those crazy feelings out.

connected directly back to the zine writers' lives. The intros are personal, which with this genre of zines means that they read more like a letter to a friend than an introduction to a magazine or a book.

So this issue is as usual a combination of things (I don't work well with themes). There are essays about growing up and facing those hard choices we never have to think about as kids, articles about accepting ourselves despite the pressure from the outside world and sooo much more. I want to thank Lacy Love for doing a short interview about her awesome online thrift store (see page 16) and everyone who has traded with me, bought PULSE and supported this zine these past 10 months. Without you awesome conscious people issue four of PULSE would not be. Thank you for reading and supporting this zine!"

In the first paragraph of the intro rant, Kelly Rose recognizes the basic sense of community. She's "met a ton of cool people" through her zine work. As well, she is aware of how this zine allows her voice to be heard. It allows her to begin the dialogue that will sustain her zine. The "thank you" section in the second paragraph indicates the feedback that may not be visible, but Kelly Rose has apparently received. Not only has she had a contributor (Love), she has had people trade with her and buy the zine. Here we see the active engagement that Gaither speaks about when she is establishing how koinonia works. Kelly Rose writes about her purpose for the zine and why she is drawn to creating the zine. She reaches out to her readers when she encourages them to engage in their own kind of creative work as a form of therapy. Her readers have responded to her because she talks about feeling supported by them. She refers to them as "awesome conscious people" and reinforces that without them she would not have written four issues of this zine. As well, she has networked and connected to the non-zine writer who helped contribute the interview about thrift shops.

As Gaither points out, it is the active participation that allows for koinonia to present itself and to be passed along among members. There needs to be a sense of the community and a dialogue with distinct interaction on either end. This feeling of connection seems to grow and build momentum as she works into her zine issue. In the next intro rant, we see her giving more of herself and her situation to her readers and recognizing even further the type of interactions she is having with her zine readers. She writes:

Welcome to Issue 5! This issue has taken me months to finish. I've been so busy this summer with school, work, moving and trying to figure out what I'm going to do since I am graduating college in December. Everything has been changing so fast. I went from being a little college girl looking for what she wants to do with her life, to being almost done with my bachelor's degree and searching for the next step. I went from living along in my own apartment to moving in my boyfriend and my brother. I went from part-time employee to 40 hour a week worker. I have had a summer of change and with that has come much personal growth and evolution. It hasn't been easy. Yes, I've been scared shitless, had heart-pounding moments where I felt so unsure of my situation, had moments at work where I just wanted to cry because work can be so complicated, but I survived this summer of change and am now a better person because of it. So that's what I want to bring to readers in this little rant/introduction of issue 5. Don't be afraid of change. Things will always change and the more you can embrace this change, the more you can grow as a person and realize that change

is scary, but it's also really exciting. Change brings about new possibilities, new chances for opportunity and new chances to see things from a new perspective.

That's always fun right?

[...]I want to thank Jaymi of Girlistic.com for doing an interview about her great website and Julie of Cardboard Cutouts Zine for contributing the awesome article on page 2. I also want to thank every person reading this zine for supporting Pulse. Your zine trades, comments, letters and emails have made me feel like I am giving something positive to people with this zine and that is the inspiration that pushes me to keep writing Pulse.

So thank you everyone and I hope you all find something interesting in issue 5!

As always please contact me with questions, comments, things you liked, things you didn't like, thoughts on life or if you would like to contribute to future issues! [contact info]

Her opening paragraph talks about a huge transition she makes after graduating college and the various steps within that transition. As she works through this moment for her readers, she asks them to interact and to consider change in their own lives, whatever that may be. She once again initiates conversation by posing the question "That's always fun right?" She then continues to invite a dialogue when she asks them to contact her with "questions, comments, things you liked, think you didn't think, thoughts on life or if you like to contribute to future issues." Kelly Rose broadens the scope by asking for

general questions and comments, as well as specific likes and dislikes and/or thoughts that are unrelated to the theme, which could be an indication of her confidence that her readers will and are responding to her. In other words, this can be read as an indication of the active engagement required to achieve koinonia. As her readers respond to her, she responds back with even more energy. And we can see that her readers have been interacting with her, as she points towards the end of the second paragraph. Her readers have continued to trade for and buy her zine, but they have also sent comments, letters and emails. Clearly, she has an engaged readership. Consequently, she achieves koinonia and articulates that when she says all of the feedback makes her “feel like she is giving something positive” to her readers and that it is “the inspiration that pushes me to keep writing Pulse.”

After opening her intro rant as she normally would and including a section about the purpose of the issue, Kelly Rose concludes issue 7 with:

I want to thank everyone who has helped me learn and grow so that I am able to become a stronger woman, everyone that has contributed, paid-for, read or reviewed Pulse, wrote me a letter or sent me an email. Your support is why I love the zine community so much. So be bold, be brave. Face your fears, face yourself. Don't be afraid to hold your head high and be proud of who you are and how far you've come. I know I am. I'd love to hear from you so CONTACT ME!

Let me know what you liked, didn't like, your thoughts, your own experiences.

As with issue 5, the feedback Kelly Rose receives increases. She once again thanks her readers for their contributions, for paying for or reading the zine, and for sending letters

and emails. Now, it seems that her networking has increased and other zine writers have started to review the zine. This shows that she is better connecting to other zine writers and that her zine is gaining notoriety within the community³⁰. As well, in the final paragraph there is an increased sense of affinity by Kelly Rose for her zine community that has been created by the support of her readers. She writes that their support is “why I love the zine community so much.” In issue 5, the support is what pushes her to continue to write. In this issue, the feeling has grown. She is feeling the love and the spirit of the community, and so, is feeling love in return. This seems to be the achievement of Booth’s spirited connection and Gaither’s koinonia.

Melissa Ann’s intros in *She’s so Very* aren’t as lengthy, but they demonstrate the same sense of community and interaction. In the issue seven intro, she writes about her insecurities with writing about her life and experiences:

I have that nagging feeling again. I’m reading what I’ve written for this issue and I’m thinking, “No. This is crap. You’re annoying and pathetic. You can’t let anyone read this, especially not *him*. It’s too embarrassing and too scary. Don’t do it!” and when I feel this way I know that it’s something I must do. All of those things may be true, but I work against my fear. I’m trying to do all the things that scare me (within reason, of course). So, here you have it. Issue number seven of “she’s so very...” typed up for your reading pleasure with no second-guessing and no apologies. Like Brian Kinney. He has a great jaw line, but he’s not real.

³⁰ Kelly Rose also employs the use of the reader poll as a way to encourage reader participation. She includes reader responses in next issue of the zine. By doing this, she brings her communications with her readers directly into her work.

Gale Harold is, though- so he's the one with the fantastic jaw line. I'm really into jaw lines these days. It makes me hot. Yeah. Welcome to issue number seven.

Melissa Ann seems to have a need to preface her work with her concerns—the things that could potentially prevent her from writing her zine. Mainly, it seems to be focused on her writing not being good enough and her content being scary to her readers. She is afraid to fully reveal herself to her zine community. However, as she is on issue seven, we know that they already have a sense of who she is and so this expression of fear is less about confessing a new concern. It seems to be more a plea to receive continued support for a long-standing fear that she hasn't been able to overcome.

Unlike Kelly Rose, who seems to easily fall into a dialogue with her readers, Melissa Ann struggles with the actuality of the interaction. In order to initiate the conversation, she has to open up to her readers and it must be truly intimate information about herself. She admits that when this moment to hold back appears, she knows it is precisely the time that she needs to push through and write. While this can simply be nerves and her recognizing the intensity of what she is about to share, and so seems normal and relatively insignificant, in terms of *koinonia* and the transference of the spirit, it is her recognizing that she needs to share the experiences that are most impactful to her in order to accomplish the full, spirited connection with her readers and for them to fully connect with her. Where Kelly Ann seems to need to dispense advice and analyze bigger themes like feminism, Melissa Ann needs to feel raw and exposed to her readers. Kelly Rose shares her feelings and major experiences, particularly with body issues, but it feels more controlled, perhaps guarded. Melissa Ann invites her

readers into a dialogue about her fears and insecurities. It is more personal than Kelly Rose's zine and less overtly analytical, but it seems to be the way in which Melissa Ann feels comfortable engaging her readers. Ultimately, it is when Melissa Ann is able to drop the proverbial robes that she can set the stage for koinonia to occur.

While the longevity of her zine indicates that Melissa Ann experiences engaged interaction from her readers, it's not always directly addressed in her zines other than with somewhat vague statements like: "typed up for your reading pleasure" or with "I hope you enjoy it." In issue eight; however, we get a better sense of the feedback that Melissa Ann is receiving. As in issue seven, she is battling how she feels about her visibility and now there also seems to be a concern about her ability to connect to others. She writes:

Sometimes I think about quitting the zine business. I worry that no one really care about what I have to say, that no one wants to know about my life, that it's all terribly boring. But then I realize that I don't really care. There are people out there who are touched and inspired by what I write; and that's all that really matters. That, and the fact that writing this zine helps me deal with all the trash that's in my head; it helps me deal and move on. So welcome to issue number eight of "she's so very..." I hope you enjoy it.

The insecurity that grounds so much of her zine work appears here in her opening rant, but after questioning whether or not people want to read what she has to say, she admits that "there are people out there who are touched and inspired by what I write." This statement could be interpreted as her acknowledging the support and feedback that she's

received from her readers. Once more, the question being posed here by Melissa Ann isn't whether or not the interaction is happening, but whether or not the size of the community matters. She seems to be saying no. As she indicates, so long as others connect to her, koinonia can occur and can be impactful. And she is confirming for us that it has and does happen and she does feel the connection, which causes her to continue writing her zine. She states that she sometimes thinks about no longer working on her zine, but then she remembers the connection she has with her readers and pushes her to publish.

It is in her outros that Melissa Ann encourages her readers to connect. There is a sense of how her community is interacting with her. She writes, "I'd love to hear from you! Please write to me!" [contact info and which issues are available] "Thank you: to sassyfrassy for the comic (and so many other things) to ben (I love you) to camera obscura for being awesome. To you for reading! xoxo Melissa Ann" (issue seven). Despite being rather short, the enthusiasm for feedback is similar to that of Kelly Rose, and like Kelly Rose, Melissa Ann indicates specific individuals who have been supportive of that issue.

In yet another outro, we see how Melissa Ann's zine work has set up a visitor situation like the kind that Alex Wrekk of *Stolen Sharpie Revolution* speaks about:

thank you: *Gordon, for always welcoming me to athens with open arms. You are one of my all time favorite people in the world. *darren and judy, for helping to make my vacation in Athens the greatest one yet. and for staying away until sunrise with us. *sassafrassy, for being the best friend this grrl could ask for. you

mean so much to me. *jerk alert, for letting me be in the band. *YOU, for reading this.

She has clearly found a community via her zine work, and it has in turn provided her with the opportunity to connect with people in ways beyond simply writing her zine. She is able to travel and stay with zine friends. And with this outro, she gives a direct shout out to “*YOU, for reading this.” While the “you” here is not particularly specific, the emphasis she adds to just this word seems to indicate a sense of connection with whoever is reading her zine and to a certain degree it might be even more significant than her friends who are present in more aspects of life than just her zine.

In these outros, we see less concern for how Melissa Ann’s content will be received and more a simple recognition of the support and her encouraging future interaction. She writes in one outro: “please feel free to contact me!!! tell me how much you love idlewild, or crispin glover, or pudding... whatever. Send me your deepest thoughts, hopes, dreams, fears and secrets. Send me what makes you cry and what makes you laugh. Send me your zines, or mix tapes, or even a box of minty chocolates send me whatever, id just love to hear from you.” Like Kelly Rose, she begins to ask for more specific interactions. She wants her readers to respond to her content with their own stories of what they need to be brave about and work past. She is opening herself up and wants her readers to match that. Her “thank you” section becomes more specific with new issues, and we see the results of her asking for more connection. She writes, “thank you *stuart. belle&sebastian. it is obvious why. *corinna. for helping me to realize that there was more to life and that i am the director and star of my own movie.

*sam. for being there when you were. it was magic. *nathan. for saying all the things you say. thank you: ben, harry and the potters, placebo, heather, christina, kyle and sassy motherfuckers everywhere.” We see the spirit of the connection in every thank you she presents, yet for different reasons which could indicate the variety of the intimacy of the relationships she has established with her readers. Some are obviously personal friendships or relationships that cross over into her zine writing, some of them are bands, whose music speaks to her, and some are simply her general zine readership. Her spirit seems quite different by this last outro where she thanks “sassy motherfuckers everywhere,” which indicates the spirit of koinonia has been achieved.

Evidence of koinonia grows as Melissa Ann continues to publish the zine. In a much shorter intro, Melissa Ann once again shares her concerns. And once again, she recognizes the feelings she has in sharing the information she shares, which in this case has to do with a sexual assault. She writes: “ this issue has been hard for me to write, its been a very emotional time. im actually scared to let people read it. its very personal. i share things that ive never told before. ive been too afraid, but i am conquoring my fears this year. i am moving beyond the things that hold me back. itll take a lot of time and a lot of hard work, but ill make it. i will. everything will be okay.....right?” The difference with this intro is its ending. In ending on a question, she seems to be directly reaching out to her readers for support because she knows that they can ensure that it will “be okay.” It is clear here that she knows that her readers are there, actively supporting her. She can ask them this question without worrying whether or not they are reading because she knows they are there. Even without the evidence of communication

between her and her readers, we can see that the connection has been made and that, in a way far different from Kelly Rose, Melissa Ann is experiencing the spirit of this community and of this interaction. We can see that in this moment, she is truly revealing her deepest concerns in the starkest way possible because she feels totally connected to her readers. As well, the kinds of issues and insecurities that she shares escalate. She goes from being concerned about people wanting to read her zine to opening up about a sexual assault in this issue and later an abortion. What this seems to suggest is that not only does she feel supported by an engaged readership, she feels a spiritedness from them that evokes a kind of trust that allows her to dig even deeper into her troubles. It allows her to share even more and create an increasingly more significant dialogue.

Like Kelly Rose and Melissa Ann, Julie Viramontes of *Cardboard Cutouts* uses her intros and outros to speak to and thank her readership. Since hers is a zine that is based primarily on humor, it takes a little longer for a more serious tone to appear. In her eighth issue, which is her one year anniversary issue, she reflects on the work she's done, writing:

It's been 1 year since the release of my first issue of Cardboard Cutouts. I don't even know how to express how happy that makes me. I didn't think I could do it and honestly I didn't even want to make this issue. I don't know what kept me going. I think it is a combination of things. I like the way completing an issue feels and I guess I had forgotten that in the 3 months since the last issue I also like the way I get to trade my zine with people from all over the world and the way people anticipate the next issue. The best part about it is I get to put

whatever I want in here I know my h.s. journalism teacher would've never let me submit a whole article about my cats or shop lifting. I hope you guys enjoy this issue and keep looking forward to future ones.

As she ponders the year of zine writing, she opens up to her readers in a more straightforward way, revealing that this was in fact a serious endeavor and one that she didn't think she would be able to accomplish. When she thinks about what motivated her to continue, we see a similar response as with Kelly Rose and Melissa Ann. She writes because there is something to be gained in connecting with people through the act of writing and because she enjoys knowing that people are there wanting to interact with her and her writing.

Viramontes ends issue eight with an outro that indicates what kind of interaction she wants from her readers, which in this case is mostly contributions and gifts: "Issue 9 submissions due March 22nd I like short stories, reviews, art, articles, comics, photographs, and random things. Still looking for zines, buttons, small crafts, cds for my distro Unicorn Express. to learn more about submitting go to: Unicornexpress.us Please send me feedback to put in my next issue. Also send Mad Glibs." More than the other two zines, Viramontes asks for active participation in the actual content of the zine. Her zine frequently includes outside contributors and the feedback she receives is intended to be included in the content as well. She is making it clear that she expects her readers to actually give to the creative process. What she is looking for isn't the emotional support of *She's So Very* or the inspirational work of *Pulse Zine*. Rather, Viramontes is looking for her readers to fuel her sense of humor and the playfulness in her writing. By doing

this, her readers help her to improve her voice and her presence in her writing and to gain confidence that her style is good.

In issue ten, after a family vacation, Viramontes speaks directly to those who have answered the call for outside contributions. She writes: “Hello. I am back from my zine hiatus. I missed you Cardboard Cutouts. Thanks to my past readers who continue to take interest in my zine, and to new readers, thanks as well. Nick, I used your short story submitted 10 months ago. Sorry it took so long. Thank You. Special Thanks to the creators of the book “Whatcha Mean What’s a Zine” for helping me get my enthusiasm for zines back. Welcome to Issue 10!” Once again, there is a less overtly humorous, though maybe not hugely serious tone and there’s a recognition that zine writing requires “enthusiasm” or spirit in order to continue the work. As the previous chapter pointed out, zines come to an end all of the time when the zine writer feels there’s no longer a purpose for doing the work. Whether Viramontes was questioning the relevance of this zine to her life or whether she was simply distracted and drained by other parts of life is unknown, but what is known is that she lost her sense of the spirit for the work and regained it by connecting to another zine source.

More importantly, Viramontes apologizes to a contributor for not working his piece in sooner and then thanks a zine book for helping her with her enthusiasm. We see her apologize directly to a reader again in issue #16, only this time it is for not getting the zine out quickly enough. She writes, “P.S. an apology to reader, Tina, for making her wait for this issue. I hope you don’t hold it against me!” Both actions—apologizing and acknowledging the influence of other zine writings-- speak to the process of koinonia.

She is in dialogue with her contributors and readers and recognizes that there's the potential to lose the spirit of the work if she's not actively engaging them on a regular basis. What can be seen here is how important it is for both the writer and readers to be present and engaged in the process, as well as how easily this spirited connection can be lost if one or more of the parties fails to do their part. It also shows us the importance of the extended zine community. That is, the community that exists beyond the smaller one that is Viramontes' zine readership. Not only does she need to stay connected to her readers, but she needs to keep contact with the bigger zine community because within that space is potential for different spirited connections.

To that end, Viramontes begins to build on her zine networks. In issue twelve, she reflects on a year of zine writing, outlines some loftier writing goals for the coming year after critiquing her productivity level for the year, and then reveals how her networks are gaining strength and numbers. She writes:

Welcome to Issue Twelve. Two Year Anniversary! It really doesn't seem like it. This issue was a lot more fun to make than the last one. The cover was drawn by Benson Edles (weakshit.blogspot.com) and it is awesome. Thanks Benny! Also, Nick has submitted another short story to boggle & blow your mind. It is sad, but wonderful. Thank You Nicolas (Nicolas Juarez.blogspot.com) In the last year Cardboard Cutouts hasn't been up to much, as you might be able to tell with this being 1 of only 4 zines I made this year. This year I hope to expand this zine/especially locally is Southern California. I also plan on attending the Portland Zine Symposium this summer. Also I will be making lots of copies for

my zine distro which will be up soon. Visit Julieevee.blogspot.com for updates about zines, distros, and my life! Thanks for reading.

This year, she has expanded to distro work and a blog for some online presence, and plans on attending the Portland Zine Symposium. She is actively engaging with more network options within the zine community now that she has seen success with her zine. Additionally, Viramontes is engaging with her outside community as much as she would like her own readership to engage with her work. By promoting her outside contributors, she becomes the reader and enters into a dialogue about their work. She is not just looking to open a dialogue to her readers, she is also an active participant in other people's conversations.

While feedback has been hinted at and implied in these three zines, Pagan Kennedy regularly includes feedback from her readers in *Pagan's Head*. Around the time of her second and third issue, Kennedy starts to engage her zine networks and to see the results of doing so. She writes, "In the first issue, Pagan was still a tentative presence. It was in the second and third issues that I began to understand her. [...] I had a lot more readers now because I'd listed the fanzine in *Factsheet Five* (a Who's Who of 'zines). I began to receive piles of mail from subscribers, correspondents, art-types who wanted to involve me in their projects. I wrote back to people in my Pagan voice, flippantly demanding they send me money or toys" (43). Reaching out via *Factsheet Five* opens her up to more interactions from a variety of new readers. She responds in character. This might not seem to fit with how zine writers should interact with their readers, Kennedy's character is the purpose of the zine. Maintaining that persona is key

to creating a connection with her readers. In other words, they expect her to be snarky and flippant based on the voice she uses in her zine. The result of all of this feedback includes helping Kennedy to better understand her zine persona, and leads to two opportunities for fan clubs, which she describes in the following passage:

One of the most scary and wonderful letters I received was from a guy in Kentucky, an anarchist friend of-a-friend. He said he wanted to run a Pagan fan club. He had me fill out a long questionnaire, information he would use for his fan newsletter. The questions perfectly echoed the dopey kind of interview you'd read in an issue of *Tiger Beat* from the early seventies: What's your favorite color? What do you eat for breakfast? What are your turnons and turnoffs? It seemed like he might spin off a 'zine from mine, sending dispatches to hipsters all over the nation about my doings. (What really happened was that he lost interest after a while.) Pagan loved this overblown adoration, but it made another part of me—the sensible part—squirm. Did I really want to be an idol, except in my own imagination? Did I really want to turn into a cartoon character? When yet *another* guy wrote me that he, too, wanted to start a fan club, I said no. I didn't want this thing to spin out of control. (43-44)

This is wonderful because it is a sign that Kennedy's zine is successful. However, the prospect of a fan club is scary because it can open the door to a much wider notoriety. It could even spawn a zine based off of her own zine. While Kennedy ends up not really liking the fan club idea, what we can see here is the way in which the fan response asks her to think about her own project and how she wants to interact with her readers.

Allowing fan clubs to exist would certainly help her visibility, but it would also expand the project beyond her own control—and for the purpose of this analysis, beyond her ability to communicate with her readers. While fan clubs might seem to be the epitome of experiencing *koinonia*, it appears to disrupt the writer/reader connection. The fan clubs are a separate entity from the zine writer, and as such, remove the writer from being in control of interacting with her readers. The discomfort that Kennedy feels, while partially her being able to control just how crazy and bizarre her character gets, seems to also be about preserving her connection to her readers.

In the next two examples, it is apparent how important being able to directly engage her readers is to Kennedy. One reader writes, “I love *Back to Pagan*. I am in the process of finding special places for the stickers. The whole package from front to back is all wholly pure hoot, no negative projections. [...] The only qualification I can [note] is the little reference/allusion in the first issue to Pagan being a writing fellow at Johns Hopkins University. It makes one suspect the whole Pagan creation is only an illusion. Mr. Pseudonym, Iowa” (48). Being a trained writer in some ways makes Kennedy, and her work, suspect. However, there’s no reason to believe that this reader feedback isn’t attempting the same tone as is found in the zine. Rather than calling her out as a fraud, this reader seems to be playing along with her and encouraging her to interact, which Kennedy is more than happy to do. She responds with an extra helping of Pagan sass:

Pagan’s response: You’re the only one who’s figured it out. Pagan Kennedy is merely a character created by a style council. We realize there’s a big demand out there for a star who’s cool but also frumpy and shy; intellectual but

fascinated with pop culture; self-promoting but also anxiety-ridden. [...] That's why we're launched this little magazine. We're testing 'underground' consumer market's response to Pagan Kennedy's character. If she's popular enough, we'll get a team of writers to come up with a novel 'written' by Pagan. If that turns a profit, why then, we'll hire an actress, give her the trademarked 'Pagan' glasses (another product tie-in), dress her in black tights and a ripped dress and send her out on tour. (48)

Based on the level of detail in this response, it seems feasible to argue that this is an example of successful koinonia. She has connected with her reader in such a way that he adopts the tone of the zine and addresses her character, rather than Pagan herself.

Likewise, his commitment to being engaged to her zine connects with Pagan. She takes his energy and runs with it. Kennedy develops a conspiracy theory that is befitting her character's attitude. This exchange is clearly spirited and the result is a true connection that enriches the reader, the writer, and the zine itself.

Kennedy frequently engages like this with the feedback she receives from her readers. In this second example, Kennedy receives a letter from a southern reader, who writes:

From the Southern fan club: Things are as usual here in Kentucky, which means everything seems like a cross between *Children of the Corn* and *The Ninth Configuration*, with random cuts into *Rumble Fish* and 'Hee Haw,' scripted by Kafka and directed by Luis Bunual on Quaaludes and Listerine. [...] What are you going to be for Halloween? I'm still deciding between an evil perverted

clown, a zombie Elvis, Twiggy or an amorphous enigma. On the other hand, should I stay home and distribute subversive literature to the kids? [...]

Regarding fan club funds, we've already received a few thousand dollars this month, plus several strand of David Cassidy's hair—should be enough to let you quit your job. (48)

Again, the reader's letter seems to play along with Kennedy's silly persona, encouraging her charade. It embraces the same outlandish tone and engages her with questions. In her response, we can see how the two are joining to discuss the "text" at hand. Kennedy writes, "See the back cover for details on joining the fan club. Remember, every dollar you slave at your job to send to the fan club keeps Pagan unemployed. [...] I plan to be Liberace for Halloween, but I'll probably have an anxiety attack at the last minute and stay home" (48). Her response isn't as lengthy as the reader's letter, but it is obvious that she is moved to connect. Koinonia has occurred, and furthermore she reaches out to other readers, albeit in her Pagan voice, to encourage them to join her fan club.

The impact of the reader's feedback and the reception of Kennedy's zine was huge. She writes:

I did everything they'd told me not to do and I loved it. My fanzine was a fuck-you to *The New Yorker* and the University of Iowa and the Bread Loaf writers' colony and Ticknor and Fields and Raymond Carver agents named Bitsy and John Updike and the twenty-two-year-old novelists that *Newsweek* told me hung out in the hottest clubs and English Comp jobs. The whole respectable writing crowd could gather in their country club, sip tea on the long green lawns, and

discuss elegant style without me. Once discovered my 'zine, I no longer wanted to belong. (9)

As Kennedy writes, with the support of her zine readers and the energy she receives from their feedback, she is finally able to break free from the conventional publishing world that has stifled her so much. Her zine becomes a “fuck-you” to that world and with each issue she rejects everything it seems to represent to her. Ultimately, she gets to the point where she says she “no longer wanted to belong.” Integral to that evolution was reader feedback. Ultimately, it is the community around her that resurrects and sustains her passion for writing beyond her zine.

What many of these zine writers seem to be doing both within their intros and in the responses to their readers is offer up bits and pieces of themselves in hopes to entice their readers to connect and to reach out with some feedback. Within the realm of *koinonia* is the concept of “osmosis of reception and gift.” Gaither defines this as the “reception of the gifts of the Spirit among the baptized, enabling and sustaining the mystery of communion” (99). In the most basic sense, reception is those parishioners taking in the Eucharist with the gift being the Eucharist itself. In general, osmosis speaks to the movement through semi-permeable membranes that may also be motivated by an imbalance between the sides. It is also characterized as the gradual absorption, adoption or mingling of ideas that can be conscious or unconscious. In Gaither’s religiously-focused analysis, osmosis implies the act of the Spirit moving to individual via the host. For amateurism, and for zines, there’s the sense that osmosis due to an imbalance might be applicable when thinking about the way a community gives and returns spirited

energy. It also seems to be the gradual mingling of ideas. With each “gift,” the amateur receives a bit more feedback or response from other amateurs.

Gift-giving, and the idea that it is an active decision, speaks to the idea of external rewards. Most people who do work do so with the expectation of financial compensation. There is a conscious thought that performing a service will yield a desired outcome, which in this case is money. However, even the mention that the goal of someone’s work is money bears with it less friendly feeling. That is, money tends to indicate business and that isn’t generally viewed as a warm exchange. When it comes to zines, though, gift-giving is a major part of the work, and it seems to be done in order to evoke some feeling or act from the reader. I argue that by gift-giving, zine writers are trying to encourage community building. They are giving little pieces of themselves in order to get more from their readers, only in this case it’s not money. They are looking to solidify their community via giving. Thus, community functions as a kind of external reward. If the zine writers didn’t receive anything in return for their gifts, they wouldn’t continue the practice. Just like if one was not paid for work done, he/she would no longer do work for that person.

What Gaither calls the “Spirit-centered communion” seems to be more than simply the communion portion of the religious service (99), and as such, more than just the solitary act of gift-giving and receiving. She expands her initial definition to include all activities between members of the community that are in keeping with the notion of *koinonia*. She explains:

Within each communion, the osmosis of gift and reception takes a particular form in the visible structures of common life. In the process of mutual reception, there is a proper role for all baptized, actively exercising their particular gifts and receiving the gifts of others. [...] The judgment and discernment exercised in faithful reception are key to the ‘forward, perfecting movement’ which defines a community. (99)

Gaither argues that gift and reception is a part of the “visible structures of common life.” In other words, it is an everyday act. As well, she argues there is a “proper role for all baptized.” Each person who is “baptized,” or officially part of the community, can participate. Once more, in order for mutual reception and *koinonia* to take place each person must “actively exercise their particular gifts,” which seems to imply that everyone gives in their own way and offers the gifts that they have. And in order to have mutual reception, they must be open to “receiving the gifts of others.” When members are “actively exercising,” mutual reception can occur and this allows the community at large to proceed, as Gaither states, in a “forward, perfecting movement.” The community works on “perfecting” their “forward motion,” which means they are in dialogue about the needs of the community and looking to move forward. That is, they are gaining strength by members being actively engaged and in sustaining a give and take in their communication.

The idea of “gifting and receiving” is something that speaks to Booth’s work. In his reflection of his years of amateuring, he writes:

Though sometimes the body does feel a bit bruised in the service of my love, the fact is that here in 1998, still *getting better all of the time*, even the practicing is itself mainly a kind of dancing. [...] So you see: the laboring, even when it's in solitude, has rewards that almost match the joys of joining other lovers. And when it yields the joining the spirit of amateuring can look the philosophical skeptic in the eye and say, 'Even if life provided nothing more than this, even if everything else were mere suffering and want and loss, to live even one of these timeless moments is to have been given a priceless gift. (84-85)

Amateuring produces a connection that goes beyond simply going through the motions. In doing so, all individuals involved in the act receive the gift of the spirit. And as Booth points out, it is something so valuable to amateuring that it could be considered beyond any notion of cost. Indeed, it is so vital for Booth that he considers it the ultimate purpose of how one spends his/her life. He writes, "That's what life is for, one of the great gifts: hours of love with Phyllis and former strangers and with those not-really-dead composers. It's a kind of spiritual communion unsurpassed by anything else I have known" (146). Like Gaither's religious communion, Booth's amateur one is as profound and dependent upon a sense of community and mutual give and take.

Booth sees the little exchanges among group members and the musical score itself as a form of musical communion. So, the spiritedness that gets created in the dialogue and the feedback is based on the feeling that each individual is giving and receiving something of a gift.

Something must pass between the members, and that something must be an aid in helping the individual feel the spirit. Booth describes the act of playing in a group, saying:

The way we players join, the way we blend, the way we fuse together, will always elude my verbal celebrations. [...] how could they ever express the mystery of our 'gift multiplications' as we play together, when we are at our best? The gifts of the other players to me—their very existence as produced both by tradition and by their years of practice—have been infinitely greater than anything I could ever have given in return, even if I had become pro-amateur. The paradoxical, boundless fact is that everyone in this playing community could say the same thing about the gift of the others: all of us, even the best of players, receive more than we give. (162)

For Booth, the gift is the experience that each group member brings to the music. Notably, he positions reception with a similar level of importance as Gaither does. In his music groups, everyone gives of themselves, just as everyone receives. However, what one receives in the moment bears more significance than anything they give, even if they are the better musician. The spirit/spiritedness of the moment lies in being able to receiving it. It starts with the desire to give, but is fully realized when it is received. This seems to speak to my discussion of zine writers and the dialogue and feedback that is necessary for a successful zine. Pagan Kennedy's interaction with her readers demonstrates what Booth is talking about best. She offers herself up, albeit in character, which draws the reader in and inspires them to respond back. In turn, Kennedy is drawn

in and is inspired to respond back. What is established is a cycle of gifting and receiving, but what bears the spiritedness and causes one to give more is the feeling that one has received a gift from the other.

As part of the idea of giving and receiving, Booth includes the passing of objects—literal gifting of an instrument to another, which to him transfers more than just the object at hand. He receives a cello from a friend, who makes cellos and whose father made cellos. Booth writes, “Carl Becker did not, after all, invent his skill in cello making; he inherited most of it, from his father who in turn inherited it from the long tradition of makers. Though in one sense Carl had to earn my cello and I had to pay for it, in fact it was largely a gift from tradition, a gift that he graciously passed along to me. [...] Something like that mysterious embodiment of centuries of labor and experimentation may help explain why many players, amateur and professional cannot resist talking sentimentally of their beloved instruments“(160). For Booth, this gift is the passing along of the tradition, the history—the part of an object that contains the owner or the maker, as well as the object. So, gifting can be the compliments or criticisms shared between group members, the music itself, and it can be actual objects.

Gifting is an interesting concept when applied to zines because there are ways in which zine writers give actual gifts, and it seems that this is simply an offshoot of the exchange culture/larger cultural context within which these works exist. Often times these gifts are stickers or pins and are usually homemade. For Wrekk “Stickers, patches, and pinback buttons or badges can be made easily or bought at a reasonable price. They are fun things to trade and are good for advertising and networking” (68). These gifts

serve the purpose of engaging the readers in little ways that might make them connect better to the zine and may help in getting the zine noticed on a larger scale. Kennedy seems to agree, though her suggestion for using her stickers is a bit sillier. She writes, “And best of all, the back cover is a sheet of stickers. Wear BTPH stickers on your shirt, bike, hat or leather jacket and make a political statement as well as a fashion statement.” Julie Viramontes of *Cardboard Cutouts* makes her own stickers on plain white label paper. Sometimes they are in the very construction of the zine i.e. ribbon and yarn place holders or origami-like folding that resembles the folded notes of school kids in the 80s and 90s. Frequently, there are personal “thank you” notes on the envelopes used to mail the zines and some personal artwork. What could be passed over as a silly or insignificant gesture is, in fact, another way for the zine writer to send a piece of themselves along with their zine. It is a way to better connect with their readers, to personalize the work and to encourage these moments of “osmosis of gift and reception” to move toward and create koinonia. And in creating a stronger sense of community, they feel rewarded for their work.

As Gaither points out, there are many ways for this kind of communion to appear. There are the aforementioned intros and outros where the zine writers are able to give insight about their lives to their readers, but there’s also another fairly consistent element in zines that falls under the umbrella of gifting. Once again, they appear as minor or insignificant aspects of the overall zine. They appear as silliness or perhaps fillers and last-second add-ins, but when considered in a different light—as potential gifts to the reader— they become like the intros and outros. They seem to hold a lot of

value in the transference of the spirit of *koinonia*. One of the most prevalent gifts given within the writing of the zine is the playlist. In older zines, this comes in the form of an actual mix tape. Today's zines will either provide a playlist, or provide a CD with the songs burned onto it. As zines are closely connected to the music community, music seems to be a huge element of the work, even within perzines. Writers interview their favorite bands and include the lyrics of songs that are impacting them at the time when they are working on a particular issue. These lists are offered up as gifts to the readers and ways for the readers to connect with the writer beyond the actual writing.

In the book *Mix Tape: The Art of Cassette Culture*, several individuals involved in making mix tapes and the music industry paid homage to their mix tape pasts. Writer and artist, Matias Viegner, describes mix tapes as a kind of poetry, a type of writing with sounds. He explains that "The mix tape is a list of quotations, a poetic form in fact: the cento is a poem made up of lines pulled from other poems. The new poet collects and remixes" (35). Like bricoleurs, the mix tape artists collect and draw from the objects they've collected. They create from music that already exists and shape the song lists and tapes into a new piece of art, made in the moment as a way to capture and save a musical snapshot of their lives. The final product is specific to the individual who made it. As he explains, "My taste as a mixer tells you even more about me than my taste as a consumer already does. No mix tape is accidental" (35). The final piece of art speaks to the artist or individual who made it. Seeing it and listening to it gives the recipient the opportunity to better understand the giver. They, in essence, get to see the person in a

different way, and for zine writers who may never meet their readers, this is an important option.

While mix tapes required a great deal of work just to construct, they aren't that different from a modern day playlist/burned CD. The energy behind making them is the same. There's a desire to give the other person a moment in your life that is captured in a certain calibrated list of songs. Jutta Koether, a German musician and artist, confirms the idea that gifting music—be it via mix tape or song list, was and is a way to initiate a closer connection. She writes that:

Making mix tapes for friends and acquaintances that served as letters/conversation pieces/gifts was a prominent element in a complex practice of his, a way of keeping in touch, exchanging, communicating thoughts and feelings—a practice of excessive yet sensitive articulation that I cherished and admired and very much loved to share. It also was a kind of mapping out of Jochen's tastes and references to his own developing coming of age as musician and songwriter. (50)

The act of making the tape was the act of reaching out to the person on the other end. As they discuss their mix tapes, most indicate a more intimate relationship with the recipients of the tapes—they dated, they were friends or they worked together, however, this type of intimacy is what the zine community seeks to build between writers and readers in general. The exchange of mix tapes, or now song lists, is a way to communicate thoughts and feelings. It's a way to initiate and extend conversations. Mostly, in keeping with the bricolage-esque aspects of zine work, this is because a mix

tape takes time to create. Musician Dean Wareham states, “It takes time and effort to put a mix tape together. The time spent implies an emotional connection with the recipient. It might be a desire to go to bed, or to share ideas. [...] There’s something narcissistic about making someone tape, and the act of giving the tape puts the recipient in our debt somewhat. Like all gifts, the mix tape comes with strings attached” (28). While the phrase “strings attached” might sound more obligatory than being inspired of one’s free will, I think in this statement it bears a meaning that is similar to that of feedback in the zine world. No one can require individuals to provide feedback or to feel connected to a work if they don’t want to; however, if they want to experience the spirit of the act, they need to feel the “strings” that are “attached.” They need to feel like they, too, are part of the process.

There is an expectation of feedback, of a dialogue about the music and the feelings behind the choices of music that were made. In giving the mix tape or playlist, the giver is hoping to gain a direct connection to the receiver. The impact of giving/receiving a mix tape was often times the development or deepening of a relationship. Allison Anders, a film director and script writer, writes about how a mix tape helped network and establish a working relationship. She writes, “I made tapes for Wim Wenders of girl-group music which is how our mentor/mentee relationship began, that with a detailed song list and an accompanying 35-page letter” (62). On the other hand, she writes about how receiving a mix tape changed the status of her relationship with a guy she was interested in, “I received a tape from a man about ten years ago which definitely pushed me from a crush to a full-blown love for him. I had given him a

tape first after we met, which was all my favorite songs [...] his tape back to me was much more emotional than mine, it was ALL love. The songs promised to never leave, devotion, acceptance, and a real understanding and kindness about who I am and what I meant to him” (62). Four years later, when the two broke up, she mailed the tape back to him. While it was an appropriate action in that the mix tape was instrumental in taking the relationship to the next level, she immediately regretted the act because the tape had been such a tangible piece of his feelings for her. Giving it back truly meant the end of the relationship. Her regret in that moment about how this would break a bond that was created, reinforces how mix tapes and playlists can truly forge meaningful connections.

Zine writers include playlists for the same reason that people exchanged mix tapes. They are an opportunity to show their readers a moment in their lives as opposed to having to tell them in their writing, and, they are a gift to the reader. Zine writers include music that they have recently discovered or old music to which they still listen. They are an invitation by the writer to the readers, an invitation for them to enjoy the music and/or to learn about a new band and at the same they are an invitation to the reader to better understand the zine writer. They are an important aspect of the zine to consider when thinking about gifting because, as Anders writes, the play list is “truly a window into a person’s soul and it’s a great humanizer” (63). They put into words the emotions that perhaps the zine writer has not been able to articulate fully, and they cobble together the zine writer in a lyrical collage of sorts.

Julie Viramontes of *Cardboard Cutouts* includes one “Mix Tape” after quoting a song by *Arcade Fire*. In keeping with the tone of her zine, her list is upbeat and obviously meant to be enjoyed as such:

1. Love is Equal- The Prequel <Do the Whirlwind (EP)> Architecture in Helsinki
2. Whooh! Alright—Yeah...Uh <Pieces of People We Love> The Rapture
3. Tribulations <LCD Sound System> LCD Sound System
4. Collar Bone <Transparent Things> Fujiya and Miyagi
5. Fake French <Feminist Sweepstakes> Le Tigre
6. Let’s Make Love and Listen to Death From Above <CSS> CSS
7. Operate <Father Fucker> Peaches
8. I Go Hard I Go Home <Beams> The Presets
9. Magick <Myths of the Near Future> Klaxons
10. Tits and Acid <Tits and Acid (single)> SMD

Viramontes features a picture with the words “Don’t Drink and Dance” pasted onto it after the list. While this list isn’t as emotionally complex as the play lists that we will see in *She’s So Very*, it gives the reader a sense of Julie as a person. There’s a combination of lesser known bands with bigger name 90s Riot Grrrl bands like Le Tigre. This list is presented to the reader as one that is supposed to be enjoyable for being upbeat and will perhaps encourage the reader to share their favorite bands—indie or otherwise.

Similarly, Kelly Rose includes playlists that keep with the tone and intent of her zine. They are usually music that is supposed to be motivational. As a gift to the readers, they are simply meant to give them good, positive energy. Her playlists tend to fulfill this one goal. In issue #3, she writes “looking to be inspired? Here are some books and songs to get you going.”

1. Self-Evident—Ani Difranco
2. Bowl of Oranges—Bright Eyes
3. The Sunshine Song—Baz Luhrmann
4. Ain’t No Reason—Brett Dennen

5. Mona Lisa and Mad Hatters—Elton John
6. Make Yourself—Incubus
7. The Ghost of Corporate Future—Regina Spektor
8. Fuel—Ani DiFranco
9. Oxygen—Willy Mason
10. Shelter From the Storm—Bob Dylan
11. Float On—Modest Mouse.

With this list, the reader gets more mainstream music than they did with Julie’s list, and it is a list that spans more than one decade. There’s a combination of classic feminist, folk music (DiFranco), hipster scene (Modest Mouse), mainstream (Incubus), anti-folk (Spektor), and retro (Elton John/Dylan).

In issue #8, Kelly Rose once again presents the list as songs to energize or inspire her readers, but then also asks for feedback: “here’s a list of awesome songs to get YOU going. Please feel free to send me a list of awesome songs you think I’ll love. I’ll try any artist once.”

1. Secret Candy—Bitch and Animal
2. The Rake’s Song—The Decemberists
3. Black Math— The White Stripes
4. Drown—The Smashing Pumpkins
5. Beautiful Like Me—Joydrop
6. Napoleon—Ani DiFranco
7. C.Y.O.A.—Heartsrevolution
8. Spill Yer Lungs—Julie Dorion
9. Free—The Martinis
10. Monkey Gone to Heaven—The Pixies

Here we see a selection of music, though less diverse in terms of genre than the previous list. We also see how Kelly Rose is engaging her readers and asking them to return the favor of the playlist. She is looking to start a dialogue, which will help her expand her horizons, as well as get to know her readers better. Together they can create more, and perhaps stronger, inspirational moments. In other words, they can gift one another

inspirational thoughts via their music selections and together can achieve a spirited connection.

In issue #9, Kelly Rose simply presents a playlist of songs she thinks her readers need to have in their music libraries, which seems in keeping with her playlist request for songs and bands her readers like. She writes: “Playlist—a funky mix of songs you should download!”

1. Dirt—Phish
2. Talk to me—Peaches
3. Code Monkey—Jonathon Coulton
4. Sherry Fraser—Marcy Playground
5. Flightless Bird, American Mouth—Iron and Wine
6. Used to be Friends—the Dandy Warhols
7. Sleep to Dream—Fiona Apple
8. Six Underground—Sneaker Pimps
9. Warning—Incubus
10. Burning Flies—Looper
11. Coming up Roses—Elliott Smith
12. Boys Wanna Be Her—Peaches
13. Edge of the Ocean—Ivy

This list is a decidedly 90s oriented compilation, yet it still maintains a certain amount of diversity within that smaller timeframe. Kelly Rose presents a list of mainstream and lesser known bands, which seems to read as a collection of bands that she has grown up with, and so, is something that should be downloaded in order to have a better understanding of the different music that was being produced in the 90s. It also shows the reader what music shaped her as she was growing up and continues to as she returns to it.

Melissa Ann of *She's So Very* gives the reader a little more when she includes her playlists. In fact, her lists are probably the most complex in that they are both for the

reader and function as an entity in her own life. The playlists she shares in her zine are ones that she has made for significant people in her everyday life. In including them, she is giving her readers a way for them to better understand how she feels in that moment. In Issue #2, she introduces her first listing, saying “so i made my crush a tape the other night.” Clearly, she made this list for a reason that is separate from her zine, but she includes it almost as an update on her life. She writes:

- Snowy paths on a mountain, side a
- Dance song 97—sleater-kinney
- Eau d bedroom dancing—le tigre
- Live in a hiding place—idlewild
- A place called home—pj Harvey
- Prettiest boy—tiger trap
- Fucking charming—the moves
- Train wreck—bangs
- Hey, im gonna be yr girl—the donnas
- Overlap—ani difranco
- Side b
- Word and smiles—tiger trap
- What you are—drill
- Good fortune—pj Harvey
- This bouquet—ani difranco
- Oh!-- Sleater-kinney
- Cutie pie—all girl summer fun band
- All mine—portishead
- Every angle—ani difranco
- You held the world in your arms—idlewild

Melissa Ann ends the list with: “yes folks, that’s one hell of a ‘gee, I really like you’ tape. I am damn proud. Mmmhmmmm.” The reader has sense of what the purpose of this list is just as they do with Viramontes and Kelly Rose, but unlike the other two, the list isn’t initially intended for the reader. This is a list of songs given to another individual, but as she is writing about the ups and downs of her dating life, the list becomes an added way of understanding what is going on with her. There is still the

element of gifting involved, despite intending the list to be for one specific person. She is proud of her work, and so, wants to show it off to her readers and share it with them. She always gives pieces of herself in her intro, but here there are pieces with which the readers can interact in their own ways. So it is in part about showing the reader what is going on with her, but also giving them something she finds comforting or enjoyable and allowing them to integrate these songs into their own lives.

In Issue #7, we see a different side of this dating moment. Melissa Ann starts off her lists with: “he’s leaving, so of course I made him a going away mix. It tells a story. The first part is the story of his journey. The second part of the story is mine. Here’s the song list. It’s a good one.” Again, she is proud of her list and its purpose.

- “By the Time You’re 25” by Sleater-Kinney
- “Get Away from Here, I’m Dying” by Belle and Sebastian
- “Disconnected” by Idlewild
- “O2” by Sleater-Kinney
- “Act of the Apostle Part 2” by Belle and Sebastian
- “Roam” by The B-52’s
- “Light-Rail Coyote” by Sleater-Kinney
- “Interlude” by Julie Ruin
- “Stay Monkey” by Julie Ruin
- “Wrong Side” by the French Kicks
- “Don’t You Forget About Me” by Simple Minds
- “After Dark” by Le Tigre
- “Like Dylan in the Movies” by Belle and Sebastian
- “Come Home” by Placebo
- “For Tammy Rae” by Bikini Kill
- “Wicked Little Town (Hedwig’s Version)” from Hedwig and the Angry Inch
- “Come Back From San Francisco” by Magnetic Field

At the end of the list, Melissa Ann writes, “I cry every time I listen to this. I hope it makes him cry, too.” As she is writing about how this list makes her feel and how she hopes it makes him feel, she is also including her readers in this emotional moment she

is having. Once again, she is giving them a list of songs that they can use if/when they are feeling the same way. She is gifting a moment in her life that she has captured in a list of songs. The songs are the host for the movement of the spirit from the giver to the receiver and it is done as a way to invite the readers to interact with her zine and with her.

In Issue #13, Melissa Ann forgoes the playlist for her Spring/Summer reading list. Meant to be something she is going to undertake, she includes it in her zine much in the same way she does lists. The list of books is gifted over to her readers.

- 1. My Horizontal Life by Chelsea Handler (April 2009)
- 2. Candy Girl: A Year in the Life of an Unlikely Stripper by Diablo Cody (April 2009)
- 3. The Sand Castle by Rita Mae Brown (May 2009)
- 4. Bit of 4 random books about taking care of housecats.
- 5. Are You There Vodka? It's Me, Chelsea by Chelsea Handler (May 2009)
- 6. Weetzie Bat by Francesca Lia Block (May 2009)
- 7. Why We Suck: a feel good guide to staying fat, loud, lazing and stupid by Dr. Denis Leary (May 2009)
- 8. Witch Baby by Francesca Lia Block (May 2009)

Sometimes zine writers will also list their favorite zines. This seems to serve the same function as music or the books in that they are a piece of the writer in that moment and they are something that the reader can really interact with in their lives. The placement of these elements in zines is significant because it is another opportunity to engage the reader in dialogue and to encourage feedback.

In Issue #11, Melissa Ann features a large section that is dedicated to reader feedback on their top favorite albums, including the lists from the band she interviews. In previous issues, she has started to request that they send her their favorite songs and bands. What is significant about this in terms of gifting is that it clearly demonstrates her

readers answering the call to engage and the effectiveness of Booth and Gaither's notions of gifting. Melissa Ann makes a near three page spread of various top albums and songs that she's gathered in her feedback and interviewing and that she is now presenting to her readers. Clearly, her readers have responded to her music list gifts and have returned the energy. They have received not only the music, but the spirit through which she sends it and have been inspired to give back. There is a sense of enthusiasm for the shared activity and a feeling of successful koinonia as a result of gifting and receiving. The evidence of her community lies in that spread. When she gifted her songs and the feelings behind them to her readers and asked for them to join in, they did. Her external reward for her continued work, for her serious commitment is a caring, responsive community.

While Booth is but one voice in this greater dialogue about amateur work, what I like about him is the focus on the feeling of it. Many attribute the concept of "for the love of it" to amateurism, but don't really attempt to explain what that looks like and what that feels like. Is it love or is it pride in one's accomplishments? Or is simply joy for having been involved? I don't expect this analysis of zines to fully answer those lingering questions. What we see with Booth's discussion of spirit is the feeling that passes through someone when they are engaged in amateur work. As we can see, what these individuals feel is a variety of emotions. Yes, it's a sense of accomplishment and love for an activity, but it's also the joy of connecting with themselves and with others. It's finding a sense of direction in life and a way of communicating. The spiritedness of the act of amateurism is a whole host of feelings, but what it can all be boiled down to is

internal rewards. Whatever the feeling, this experience demonstrates that an individual has connected to amateurism. They have connected and they feel good about it. More importantly, in the bigger picture this means that not only do the individuals engaging in the work understand themselves to be amateurs, but that their publics do as well. And this means that there is a visibility about this kind of amateur work.

Additionally, what I hope this chapter also demonstrates is that external rewards are as important to unpaid amateur work as they are to Pro Am work and to professionals. The only difference is that money isn't the reward. What these individuals seek out when they pursue zine writing is a community that they don't feel they have. They want to have people who will read their work. They want to replicate what Alex Wrekk talks about when she writes that her zine friends helped her travel by taking her out and letting her stay at their homes. It becomes especially clear that this is, in fact, a conscious desire of the zine writers when we consider the act of gifting and receiving. These writers are actively courting their readership for a better feeling of community. Yes, they want people to read their work, but more than that, they want people engaged in their work and with them as friends. And what we see is that this is effective. What this says to me is that community is in its own way an external reward. If readers are responding, and doing so with multiple, unconnected zine writers, then we can consider this an external reward.

CHAPTER IV

GLOSSIES AND THE FEMINIST MIDDLEBROW

In his work “Amateurism and professionalism in work and learning,” Richard Edwards talks about how amateur work is integral to the professional sphere. He argues that amateurism functions under fewer restrictions than professionalism and with that flexibility comes the ability to think and work in different ways. He believes that amateur work “opens up the possibilities for conceiving new forms of work, worker and sets of working relationships based upon different conceptions of expertise” (Edwards). Moreover, he is interested in how money is perceived within this community. He acknowledges that the common understanding is that the amateur is not paid for services rendered. Amateurs work “for the love it,” and in doing so, uphold a higher standard to which all individuals in that field, including professionals, should aspire. Despite the fact that most who theorize amateurism argue against the idea that money automatically corrupts amateur work, the basic, and very binary, definition of this work is what prevails.

The reality is that there are a number of kinds of amateurs and various types of amateur work. Some of it is done “for the love of it” and some with the expectation of, or the desire for, financial compensation. It seems that the philosophy of Web 2.0, which encourages everyone to have a voice and to express themselves, has blurred the lines between paid and unpaid work. In doing so, it has complicated what we understand to be amateur work and the amateur ethic. At the same time, Web 2.0 seems to have merely

shined a brighter light on changes within the amateur community that had been going on for a considerable amount of time. Arguably, the rise of social media and other forms of internet-based technology seem to have accelerated the process, but it is a process that was already in the making.

Where does this leave my analysis of zine work? This is a type of amateur work that has eschewed any online presence and adamantly refuses to make the transition to the internet. While some zine writers have corresponding blogs, they are few and far between and they generally make it clear that their online work is a different kind of work than their zines. Yet, I am arguing that zine work is a valuable example of contemporary amateurism. I argue in the second chapter that the process of creating a zine demonstrates an awareness of self and work as amateur, and in doing so, provides a potential model for other types of amateur work to establish their visibility. I examine the feeling of internal rewards and argue that this is evidence of a personal awareness of self and status that Essena O’Neill, an Instagram model who struggles with how to articulate her own work, is missing.

In my third chapter, I continue examining this idea of internal rewards via Wayne Booth and Linda Gaither’s concept of spiritedness. I argue that this feeling of spiritedness is how we can see the zine writer experiencing a sense of internal rewards. I also argue that the readers of the zines contribute to a feeling of internal reward for the zine writer because spiritedness is something that is shared between amateurs and their publics. Finally, I see the act of gifting and receiving within zine work as proof that zine writers are actively seeking external rewards, though these rewards aren’t monetary. The

development of a personal community is the external reward and it is part of what the zine writer is seeking out when he/she pursues zine work.

So, money isn't necessary an issue with zine work—at least directly, but a related body of work does speak to the idea that money and amateurism don't mix. In this third chapter, I am going to take a slight step away from traditional zines. In this analysis, I will look at glossies³¹, which are magazine-like publications that have roots in the zine community, but aren't still functioning as actual zines. I am hoping to establish that these types of publications challenge the binary that divides magazine publications into mainstream and other. I am going to examine how the concept of middlebrow literature when applied to glossies and mainstream magazines reveals a space between professional magazines and amateur ones that has the potential to challenge assumptions made about either group. And by bringing in the concept of the Pro Am, though these glossies would most likely no longer be considered that, I hope to demonstrate that the assumed binary between zine and professional magazines is overly simplistic.

Glossies, in this case feminist glossies, can be said to exist between zine work and conventional magazines. They are produced with financial compensation in mind, if only to maintain the publication's existence. However, what we will see with my analysis is that at the beginning these publications were clearly pre-professional and borderline Pro Am publications. What we see now are two professionally-published

³¹ The simplest definition of a glossy is that it has a glossy finish to its pages, usually both the cover and the inside pages. Currently, both *BUST* and *Bitch Magazines* are fully glossy, though it took some time for *Bitch* to achieve this and their inner pages aren't as glossy as the ones in *BUST*.

magazines that in some ways haven't strayed too far away from their amateur roots.

What I am interested in examining is what they are trying to challenge by remaining in this in between position. By resisting adopting every convention of mainstream magazines, these glossies are actively confronting some element of magazine work.

For this analysis, I am going to be working with the two of the best known glossies available today: *BUST* magazine and *Bitch* magazine. Not only do both of these publications have direct roots in the zine community, they also have a long and established history as glossies³². *BUST* ranks at the top, producing between 250,000 and 500,000 copies of each issue. *Bitch* would probably run in second. So while there are other glossies out there, I am choosing to focus on these two primarily because they are the ones who have achieved the greatest level of success. Moreover, *BUST* and *Bitch* are more contested by zines because of their zine roots than they are by professional magazines. By incorporating the concept of the Pro Am, I hope to show that the range of amateur work is far greater and more complex than what zine writers are assuming. By disregarding works simply because they look to make a profit, the zine community fails to see how *BUST* and *Bitch* challenge conventions and hold the potential to bring new

³² "Feminist glossies" is a term that is being used, but a search of it only leads to magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, and several articles aimed at teen magazines. Most of the sources I found discuss how Third Wave Feminism is being employed in mainstream magazines, mainly teen magazines, in order to promote agency and women's issues. The general consensus is that these are empty acts that don't really address the issues in their totality. As such, the term "feminist glossies" doesn't seem to consider, nor include publications like *BUST* and *Bitch*. The other glossies that I am referring to are: *Bamboo Girl Zine*, *bint magazine*, *Blue Jean Online*, *Exoticize This*, *Fat!So?*, *Feminist Utopia*, *Feminista!*, *Fierce*, *Guava Magazine*, *h.e.r.s. magazine*, *Hip Mama*, *lip magazine*, *Mama Zine*, *Miranda*, *MotherVerse Magazine*, *Nervy Girl!*, *New Moon*, *Ovature*, *Radiance Magazine*, *Said It Magazine*, *The F-WORD magazine*, *Tint Magazine*, *Venus Zine*. Some of these are online sources right now, but because a number of them have been print publications and/or vacillate between print and online, I've decided to include them in this list. As well, some aren't actively being published right now, but again I feel like this is a normal occurrence and speaks directly to their roots in the zine community.

life and ideas to the professional magazine community. As Robert A. Stebbins and William Haley argue, amateurs are integral counterparts to professionals and are responsible for infusing the professional realm with their unconventional research and techniques.

Edwards identifies the Pro Am (professional amateur) as a particularly interesting figure to the discussion of amateur work and financial compensation. The Pro Am is identified as one of the types of amateurs in Stebbins P-A-P system along with dabblers, pre-professionals, classic amateurs and post-professionals. Like the rest of the types of amateurs on this range, the Pro Am occupies its own space. The dabbler is one who is interested in becoming an amateur, but still in the process of learning. The pre-professional is looking to make the move into the professional realm, but it just getting started. The classic amateur is the “for the love of it” poster child for amateurism and the post-professional is someone who has left a fulltime professional position, but wants to remain semi-active in the work. And then there’s the Pro Am. According to Edwards, “Pro-ams have many of the defining features of professionals, including a strong sense of vocation, the use of professional standards to assess performance and the forming of self-regulating communities producing non-commodity services and products. They are well versed in a relevant body of knowledge and skill and have a strong sense of tradition and identity.” In other words, this figure has the characteristics and the skills of the professional, but wants to remain as amateurs. The Instagram model is a perfect example of the Pro Am. There is the desire for money and even to earn a living that way, but not as a professional.

Booth asks throughout his work *For the Love of It: Amateuring and Its Rivals*. He asks “why amateur?” and what he means is: why do this work if you aren’t ever going to be professional. The Pro Am seems to ask a related question: If one has the ability, the skills, and the knowledge to be a professional, why wouldn’t he/she do it? The answer to this seems to lie in what Stebbins and Haley discuss when they talk about the flexibility that comes with amateur work. The Instagram model gets to do her own work, her own way, and on her own time. If she wants to make money, she has to play by some of the rules, but there are distinct advantages to doing your work your own way. So the Pro Am is not someone who can’t make it as a professional. The Pro Am chooses to remain amateur because they prefer the ability to work as Caroline Dinshaw argues, “in a different temporality.”

However, the Pro Am as a concept is one thing. The Pro Am in reality isn’t as well known and understood. In sports, it’s general seen as a combined professionals with amateurs event, but beyond the athletic world and that limited definition, the Pro Am isn’t that visible. Yet, as we see with the Instagram model and the proliferation of reality shows on television, this figure is quite prevalent. The lack of visibility, and awareness of the range of amateurs out there, makes this amateur a contested figure within the amateur and professional realm. While this isn’t going to be an analysis of an existing Pro-Am publication, *BUST* and *Bitch* began as pre-professional amateurs and have situated themselves in such a way that they seem to feel closest to Pro Am amateurism.

Let's consider the range of magazines that are available today. First off, there are literary magazines, which are firmly found within a highbrow reading community. They are intellectually-challenging: the kinds of magazines some might deem as overly-academic. Then, there are popular, mainstream magazines like *Cosmopolitan*. They are generally light—filled with relationship advice and fashion spreads; however, with the inclusion of some more serious articles, these publications offer their readers some intellectual reading. The issue of taste is geared towards what is socially and culturally acceptable. They promote it. They promote the feminine via motherhood, domesticity, and fashion, but there's also a way in which they try to present different kinds of sexuality and to address the ways in which women are unhappy with their lives. At the other end of this spectrum are the tabloids found in any grocery store aisle and in certain areas of most book stores. These publications are decidedly low-brow. They are geared toward the unthinking, undiscerning reader and/or the reader who is simply looking for passive entertainment. Supporting this is the knowledge that many of these publications are based in questionable facts and rumors. Their information comes from “anonymous sources” that are “close” to the subject at hand. The need for verified facts, let alone depth and intellectually complex articles, is nowhere to be found. They are pure, guilty-- and factually-questionable-- pleasure.

Of course, pleasure isn't something that is only relegated to tabloids. Arguably, pleasure is one of the driving motivations for reading magazines. For many readers, magazines are an opportunity for lighter reading. There is a range of pleasure that starts with a more highbrow definition of pleasure that is primarily intellectual-challenging and

goes to the more visceral pleasure of the tabloid. Publications like *Cosmopolitan* and *Redbook* fall somewhere in between these two extremes. While pleasure is a less cerebral endeavor in these magazines, there's also an emphasis placed on truthful information and an element of storytelling via articles that are meant to be informative and thought-provoking. Generally speaking, however, these articles are easily accessible to a wide audience and are written in such a way as to appeal to the emotional side of the reader.

Where in this do *BUST* and *Bitch* fit? According to the spectrum I just established, they would fall into the same category as *Cosmopolitan*. They are female-centered, with fashion spreads, featured beauty products, and articles about current events. Their general mission is to be an enjoyable read, much like other glossy magazines. However, what this analysis is going to show is that they aren't the same as those other magazines. While they might appear to be the same and they may have adopted similar content, their roots in the zine community prevent them from becoming just another glossy woman's magazine. And the magazine community seems to have reinforced their outlier status.

Walk into any Barnes and Noble and make your way toward the coffee shop area. There it is: the magazine rack section. Usually comprised of at least two or three rows, this section is filled with magazines of all different topics—weddings, fishing, fashion, crafting, weight lifting, running, golf, sex, literary works, world news, and politics. Here it seems like all magazines are created equal. Tabloids sit next to *Redbook* and a few steps down is *The New Yorker*. Even *Playboy* and *Hustler* can be found in

there despite the mixed ages of the store's consumers. What we see in this image is a space that is dedicated to magazines of all shapes and sizes. When looking for a more obscure publication, this is one of the first general literary places to look. The sheer amount of magazines—mainstream and otherwise-- suggests that this is a relatively innocuous space that exists simply to offer the consumer any option they might want in terms of magazines; however, if we look more closely we can see some lines being drawn.

In the Barnes and Noble magazine section, all of the magazines can be found within a similar proximity to one another. The defining lines drawn here seem to only be that of organization by subject matter, much like the books that can be found in the rest of the store. Granted, *Playboy* and *Hustler* and any other nudity-based magazines are tucked away more and/or covered so that their explicit materials aren't easily seen. There are a few magazines in those stacks, however, that most don't see, don't know are there, and for which don't know how to search. While these magazines seem to have provocative titles, they generally present with covers and content that is no more titillating than those of *Cosmopolitan* and *Vogue*. Yet, like *Playboy* and *Hustler*, they are frequently hidden behind that lip underneath the top rack or obscured behind other, less-titillating sounding titles. What this seems to indicate is that in this treasure trove of magazines, a publication is likely to be judged by its cover, and more importantly, that potentially the real issue is a content-based pecking order. It is clear that there's something about these publications that is still perceived as subversive after all of these years. It also seems to indicate that they are successful, on some level, with disrupting

the comfort zones of readers and what people commonly expect to see in women's magazines.

Editors for both *BUST* and *Bitch* see their magazines as necessary alternatives to mainstream magazines and the messages those magazines present. Much of what they do in their glossies is to amend the kind of message about common topics i.e. clothing, makeup, body image, etc. that are found in women's fashion magazines. In essence, the editors of both of these magazines have set out to fix problems they think exist in mainstream magazines by presenting the reading public with a smarter version of what's already out there. In doing this, both publications seem to be maintaining their connections to the zine world. Zines are primarily created to speak back to mainstream culture. Zine writers use their works to add ideas and voices that they don't see out there already and to confront ideas and messages that they think are faulty. So while both *BUST* and *Bitch* look like other magazines such as *Vogue*, *Redbook*, and *Cosmopolitan*, they don't approach their content the same way.

Despite the fact that both *BUST* and *Bitch* have legitimate roots in the zine community, they are contested and questioned by the zine community for stepping away from the zine ethic. By trying to compete with or join into the conversation with commercial magazines, they are, as Stephen Duncombe (*Notes from the Underground*) frequently points out, choosing to be a part of that consumer, mainstream culture. Zines, on the other hand, strive to function outside of the mainstream and pride themselves on creating new products that are for the most part the antithesis of contemporary magazines. As he points out, zines work very hard to be free as possible from the

constraints of consumer culture and to play by their own rules. While there are any number of smaller issues that zine writers might have with glossies, there are a few big ones that they identify rather frequently, with the biggest being paid advertisements and the handling of the content within the publication.

However, what Lucia Vodanovic shows us in her essay “The New Art of Being Amateur: Distance as Participation” is that distance, while necessary for the development of amateur work, can’t actually separate the amateur from the professional. There must be space for both to do work without the other, but there needs to be engagement. Like Stebbins’ P-A-P structure, there is space for both, but each one’s work is contingent upon interaction with the other. Zine writers work to be separate from professional magazines, but they frequently respond to the content of these magazines and use their zines to challenge professional magazines. In this sense, even though they say there needs to be a separation, the reality is that they are forever linked.

Glossies rely on advertisements to a certain degree to cover production costs above what subscriptions and magazine sales earn. This makes it look like they promote consumerism, just like any other fashion magazine out there. Now, their choices of advertisements are usually small, female-run businesses, but being that the space is used to sell already-made products, it is considered consumerism by zine writers nonetheless. Part of zine writers’ issue with glossies, then, is that they see the publications as placing an emphasis back on consumerism. They also believe glossies water down their content to either conform to the standards of other commercial magazines or to their advertisers featured in the publication. Stylizing the glossy to compete with or mimic the

mainstream magazine means valuing, in some way, looks over ideas. While zine writers certainly put a lot of thought into the visual element of their zines, they are usually looking to disrupt the normal reading process.

The criticisms of *BUST* and *Bitch* by zine writers are in some way accurate when holding glossies to the definition of zines; however, it's hard to dismiss the publications altogether. Yes, they do not meet the standard of zines in many ways, but at the same time, they don't meet the standard of conventional magazines, either. There's something to be said for that—and to be analyzed. They are both magazines by look and according to their business plans, but they don't perform “magazine” the same way that other, more popular magazines do. They are more intellectual and overtly feminist, but not to the degree that zines are. Essentially, these publications have adopted the look of popular fashion magazines, but the feel of a zine. In doing so, they are situated in a space that is neither one, nor the other. These glossies are in many ways the souls of publication not sanctioned by either party—zine community or conventional publication. They are, as we can see, deemed as questionable. While neglect seems mostly non-applicable here, the sense that there's a transition in progress is strong, although I'm not certain that what is actively in transition are the glossies. These works are in a state of uncertainty, not so much for themselves, but for those who are trying to determine their purpose. But what if that space was conceptualized differently?

BUST and *Bitch*, as we can see, are in a space that should make them just like *Glamour*, *Redbook*, or *Shape*. After all, each of those magazines addresses a specific facet of female life. One looks mainly at fashion, one is aimed at married life, and the

last one addresses issues of women's health. Why, then, are *BUST* and *Bitch* not simply the glossies that cover feminism in a group of magazines that seek to represent all aspects of a woman's life? All of the aforementioned magazines, including *BUST* and *Bitch* would be included in a discussion of middlebrow literature.³³ Even within the magazine spectrum, they are the middle space. They are the publications that are neither dedicated to intellectualism nor interested simply in frivolous entertainment. They are, in some respects, a hybrid of the two and in other respects, a completely different kind of production. While it's fairly easy to see the difference between the content and the intentions of the various types of magazines, it would be good to have a more comprehensive understanding of "the Battle of the Brows," as Virginia Woolf called it.

What is middlebrow? The term itself was coined to describe the development of culture and the middle class between the 1920s and the 1950s. Most notably attributed to Virginia Woolf, the term middlebrow is used to discuss both cultural works and characteristics of social class. According to Nicola Humble, the term middlebrow "has been applied disparagingly to the sort of cultural products thought to be too easy, too insular, too smug" (1). Melissa Schaub agrees, arguing that a piece of writing that is called middlebrow is generally thought to be "less authentic, groundbreaking, or radical." Jaimie Harker elaborates more writing that "In common usage, 'middlebrow' is an invective that dismisses writing that is neither trash nor art, but somewhere, uncomfortably, in between. Depending on the context, 'middlebrow' can mean 'middle

³³ While I am not arguing that any of these publications would actually embrace a middlebrow label, after considering how this body of literature gets defined and positioned, I've determined that this is an accurate label.

class,' 'effeminate,' 'polluted by commerce,' 'mediocre,' or 'sentimental'"(16). At its very basic, it is, as Harker argues, "a dirty word," but as these increasingly more detailed definitions indicate, the term middlebrow is a lot more complex than that.

Being "uncomfortably in between" and neither/nor" seems to speak directly to its association with the middle class. The term middlebrow itself is simply a derivative of the terms highbrow and lowbrow, which preceded it, and it represents the emergence of an "expanded suburban middle class, more affluent, [and] newly leisured" (Humble 10). This is what Humble refers to as a new reading public that was concerned with "matters of middle-class identity and taste" (10). What she means by this is that middlebrow writing addressed the concerns and desires of a group of people who were neither wealthy/intellectual nor working class and driven by simpler plot lines. And it was a body of literature that both reinforced notions of social class and educated individuals about what it meant and looked like to be middle class. Middlebrow literature addressed the home, domesticity, sexuality, and the family unit. It also crossed into a number of literary genres. In this category of "leisure reading," as Humble refers to it, the range included everything from "intellectual, abstruse novels" to "light" ones and it "acquired middlebrow status because their intense interest in class and domestic interiors spoke to the increasing middle-class fascination with status" (13).

A work became middlebrow in a couple of ways. While some writers actively wrote in a middlebrow fashion, some were deemed middlebrow by association. According to Humble, "A novel was therefore middlebrow not because of any intrinsic content, but because it was widely read by the middle-class public—and particularly by

the lower middle classes” (13). A piece of work could “become” middlebrow depending on how it was embraced by certain readers and its level of mass popularity. Being too popular, as would be the result of some Book-of-the-Month club selections, was not viewed positively by writers. It took away from their serious intellectual potential. Other major complaints about middlebrow literature were aimed at the element of fantasy or escape, which was considered bad for the body. One should be concerned with not spending too much time on light, leisure reading (20). As well, it was considered an “empty form” that potentially either misread highbrow culture or failed to present enough intellectual challenge so as to disrupt the “comfort” of the middle class lifestyle (22). Foremost, however, was the perception that middlebrow literature was too focused on the “physical pleasure” of reading (24).

Virginia Woolf captures the concerns that arose around middlebrow culture in her essay “Middlebrow.” She writes that highbrow is “the man or woman of thoroughbred intelligence who rides his mind at a gallop across country in pursuit of an idea” (Woolf 177). On the other hand, lowbrow is “a man or woman of thoroughbred vitality who rides his body in pursuit of living at a gallop across life” (178). The distinction she makes is that the highbrow individual sees intellectualism as the vehicle for forward progress and for driving one through life. The lowbrow individual is one who relies on physicality, on his/her body to get through life. She sees a great respect between the two groups because, although they function differently, each has a valid approach to life. She also sees the two groups as being dependent upon on another because as she writes, highbrows do not know how to do things in life. That is, they

don't know how to be hands on and engage physically with life. But, the highbrows are responsible for showing lowbrows the intellectual side of life. It seems to be the typical brains v. brawn argument.

According to Woolf, the middlebrows, however, are “neither one thing nor the other. [...] Their brows are betwixt and between” (180). The primary issue she has with this group is that they are situated in between and so their identity seems to be either a blending of the two or something new entirely. The inability to determine this seems to bother her. Woolf writes, “The middlebrow is the man, or woman, of middlebrow intelligence who ambles and saunters now on this side of the hedge, now on that, in pursuit of no single object, neither art itself nor life itself, but both mixed indistinguishably, and rather nastily, with money, fame, power, or prestige” (180). Again, what seems to be a problem is that the middlebrow individual tries to do both—to adopt both highbrow and lowbrow interests. She explains further that is it also that the goal of this blending has to do with gaining social status. Thus, this group doesn't live this blended philosophy because like the highbrows and lowbrows it is who they are, they do it because it is a means to an end. It makes parts of life and culture commodifiable that Woolf doesn't think should be.

So the middlebrow is certain kind of literature that develops out of a specific cultural moment and is attached to an economic class. Middlebrow writing and culture, like the middle class, was viewed as an entity in perpetual “in betweenness” and it is the uncertainty of this space that generally gives middlebrow a bad name. A direct offshoot of the developing middle class and middlebrow is the idea of taste, something that Woolf

finds particularly damning. Taste also seems to fall victim to this “in betweenness” and the uncertainty that comes along with it. Consequently, the consumer choices that middle class individuals made, including their reading selections, were questionable and, as Woolf points out, viewed as driven purely by upward mobility and the desire to appear more affluent and intelligent than one actual was. Middlebrow taste, for Woolf and others, was superficial as it was only concerned about the projection of a certain image rather than genuinely embodying it.

Most of the works I’ve looked at want to reclaim this literature because they find something deeply valuable about what these works reveal and what they represent. Frequently, these writers also feel that “middlebrow” writing has been too easily overlooked and dismissed because middlebrow is such a vague, malleable term. In turning to these writers, especially Janice Radway³⁴, I, too, am looking at middlebrow as a space that holds valuable potential; however, I also want to work with the concerns about middlebrow taste and writing because it helps to understand the tensions that surround glossies like *BUST* and *Bitch*. Zine writers and the zine community raise similar concerns as Woolf about the “in betweenness.” Like Woolf, there’s the sense that

³⁴While Humble, Harker, and Schaub all offer up good detailed analysis of middlebrow writing, and all of them aim to reclaim some facet of these works from the generally negative view of middlebrow writing, Janice Radway’s focus on the Book-of-the-Month Club and the readers that this institution helped to foster works best for my analysis of glossies and this “middle” space that they seem to occupy. In *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire*, Radway examines the establishment and function of the Book-of-the-Month Club as an indicator of a different kind of culture and reader. She examines middlebrow culture as it was initially defined and then moves to reclaim this institution and the writing it promoted as valuable. What she argues is that a substantial thinking group of people can be found between the two ends of the intellectual spectrum and that their desires as cultural consumers are both valid and unique. Both her work and her own experiences with the Book-of-the-Month Club seem to offer us a new way of conceptualizing the space of glossies.

glossies are only looking to appear smart and edgy, but that in reality they are economically-driven just like mainstream fashion magazines. On the other side, hiding glossies away seems to indicate not only their level of popularity, and as such ability to sell, it also suggests that they don't deserve the same opportunity to be visible. Something about their content, and potentially their intent, makes them questionable to more mainstream magazines.

The idea that this middle space is questionable helps us to think about contemporary fashion magazines as successful middlebrow publications, and to consider why glossies like *BUST* and *Bitch* magazine are especially questionable, even by the standards of other "middlebrow" works. Magazines like *Cosmopolitan* try to bridge the gap between the more literary essay-based magazines and the tabloids. As Humble points out, middlebrow publications are meant to be pleasurable reading. Fashion magazines certainly answer that call by balancing out shorter, emotionally-charged articles with discussions of stereotypically feminine elements like dating, makeup, and fashion. Judging by the sheer amount of these magazines that are available on newsstands every day, these magazines are successful at providing light, entertaining leisure reading. By masquerading as a fashion magazine while reporting like a more intellectual literary magazine, however, *BUST* and *Bitch* magazine incur the wrath of both zines and fashion magazines, which aren't quite sure how to situate these publications. Let's take a look at how these *BUST* and *Bitch* have situated themselves within the general magazine community.

Both *BUST* and *Bitch* started off as zines and within the zine community. The *BUST* creators describe it as a publication with a sassiness and modernity about it, writing: “With an attitude that is fierce, funny, and proud to be female, **BUST** provides an uncensored view on the female experience. **BUST** tells the truth about women's lives and presents a female perspective on pop culture. **BUST**ing stereotypes about women since 1993.” Founded by Debbie Stoller, Laurie Henzel and Marcelle Karp, this publication was developed as an alternative to magazine culture that according to the editors lacked female-positive messages and honesty. The editors wanted to create a work that was reminiscent of the original *Sassy*, a glossy magazine founded in 1988 that provided frank conversation about issues that impacted young girls. Unfortunately, eventually advertisers forced *Sassy* to censor its work, it was absorbed into a new publication called *TEEN*, and it become indistinguishable from all of the other young adult glossy magazines. Stoller, Henzel and Karp remembered what *Sassy* had managed to accomplish when it was initially published. For them, this was a work that had broken the safe, censored norms of young adult magazines. For once, there was a publication that seemed to echo the needs and feelings of teenage girls. And, it didn’t present any sexual or social agenda. Instead, it told it like it was. *Sassy* was a bold outlier in the realm of conventional magazines. Stoller, Henzel, and Karp were particularly impressed with this publication, and so, decided to create a publication that walked a similar line. They wanted a publication that would provide frank conversations on all issues—sensitive or not—and embrace, while revising, the feminine, girly culture that was the hallmark of mainstream magazines. Stoller states, "Our intention [...] was to start a

magazine that would be a real alternative to *Vogue*, *Cosmo*, *Mademoiselle* and *Glamour*, something that was as fierce and as funny and as pro-female as the women we knew. [...] What I have done is try to create an embraceable culture by going back and looking at the things traditionally associated with women and seeing if there is anything salvageable” (Kuczynski). From the start, the editors had the notion that this was going to be a publication that would serve as an alternative voice to fashion magazines they were reading, and finding so very disappointing. So we can see that both *BUST* and *Bitch* and magazines like *Vogue*, *Cosmo*, and *Mademoiselle* seek to provide a similar kind of publication. The editors at *BUST*, however, conceptualized their publication as one that would challenge other, more conventional magazines.

As the *BUST* editors crafted what would go into the work, they thought about building a bridge between the average reader and the more informed one. They looked to the content in mainstream magazines as a platform from which to build. As Stoller explains, it was supposed to be different from the rest. She writes:

Instead of making our readers feel inadequate, we would celebrate them—and ourselves—just as we are. We would print the stories no other magazine would dare: about our confusion and at times ambivalence about relationships, careers, motherhood, and what our lives—we, the first generation of women to be raised on feminism--would or should be like. While other women’s magazines ran stories about how to please your man, we’d encourage our readers to learn how to please themselves; instead of schooling women on how to climb the corporate ladder, we’d advise on how to fulfill oneself creatively; where other magazines

told women how to lose weight, we'd emphasize that all sizes are beautiful.

(Henzel and Stoller⁷)

The intention of the work was to enter into the glossy space and contend with other glossy magazines. However, it wasn't done with the intention of achieving acceptance into their club, but to attain equal footing as an alternative option to the mainstream. The goal was to develop and contribute a different voice in a sea of sameness. This voice would speak to those individuals, who felt like outliers when reading conventional magazines, and to the general reader, who might not love or connect with all aspects of these mainstream publications. *BUST* was intended to shine a light on those moments, discuss why perhaps they were uncomfortable or less enjoyable, and work to provide a new way of thinking, seeing or doing.

Stoller firmly roots the first few of years of the publication of *BUST* in the zine community. The publication was homemade, collectively written and crafted, and distributed by hand and word of mouth. In her book, *The BUST DIY Guide to Life: Making Your Way Through Every Day*, which was co-written with Laurie Henzel, Stoller steps the reader through the magazine's startup process, writing:

After all, *BUST* itself was an entirely DIY endeavor. When we came up with the idea for the magazine, we were three girls—myself, Laurie Henzel, and Marcelle Karp—working at low-level jobs at a children's TV network. We didn't know anything about business plans, investors, profit margins, or other thing that most entrepreneurs would consider when starting a new business venture. That's because we considered *BUST* to be more of a cause than a commodity. [...]We

began asking our writerly friends and colleagues if they had stories about their lives that they felt weren't being told by the mainstream media, and if so, if they would like to contribute. [...]Then we asked out graphic designer colleagues at the TV network if they'd be willing to help lay out the magazine during their off-hours. [...]Within a few months we had our first issue, printed out on regular old copier paper, filled with first-person stories, artwork, fiction and more. We stayed late at the office to surreptitiously make copies and got sore wrists from stapling them all together. But finally, there they were: 500 copies of our little 'magazine,' or 'zine, as this kind of homemade publication is called. (7-8)

The first issue's 500 copies were stapled and photocopied behind the scenes at Nickelodeon³⁵ where they worked during the day. They relied entirely on free submissions for the first six years of publication, but the magazine continued to grow until it needed to be treated and managed like a full magazine³⁶. It needed to have a better infrastructure when it came to its finances and to distribution. Stoller and Henzel relinquished this aspect of what was now a fairly good-sized business so that they could better focus on the content of the publication. In this move, we can see the magazine, which started off very much as a zine, shift into the conventional magazine world. Elements like finances, payroll and advertising become more significant. As a zine, these

³⁵ Nickelodeon is a TV network that was established in 1977 and caters primarily to young children and teenagers ages 2-16. The programming is a combination of cartoons and ensemble shows.

³⁶ While *BUST* started off like a zine, which means it was handmade after hours at work, relied on free services from other artists, and distributed by hand and word of mouth, it eventually got to a point where it was selling enough to be professionally printed and marketed.

parts of production were treated as zines treat finances. They were side notes and relatively unimportant in the grand scheme of publishing the work.

But when the dotcom bubble bursts in the late 90s, we see that the magazine hadn't transitioned fully into a mainstream magazine. Stoller and Henzel are left with the option of allowing *BUST* to fold or to resume control of all aspects of publication when the financial management company they had sold the magazine to goes under. Not wanting to see their years of hard work go to waste, they make the decision to buy the magazine back and continue working on it on their own. Stoller writes:

It was tough to lose our backing, but we pulled ourselves up by our bra straps. At this point there were just two of us running the mag—myself on the editorial side of things and Laurie heading up design. We set up shop at Laurie's house and started the magazine again, and that's how we've carried on for the past ten years (although now we have an actual office and a full-fledged staff). Today, *BUST* continues to be a completely woman-owned, woman-run independent operation, with no owners or investors to tell us what we can and can't publish. And how did we get here? Yup; we did it ourselves. (8).

In some ways, the *BUST* editors go back to their zine roots as they attempt to restart production. The intention had always been to develop into a self-sustaining glossy, but we can see here that they don't fully break from the zine philosophy with which they started. As Stoller points out, the magazine worked its way up to a full time staff and the standard office conditions of most mainstream magazine. With the dotcom crash, they were back to working the magazine on their own from home. Yet, despite the shift into

the realm of conventional magazines and the acquisition of a financial manager, the editors never really lost sight of their zine beginnings. So when their financial security was lost, or threatened, they fell back on their original mode for publication and recovered their publication. While they have worked to remain within the realm of conventional magazines, there is a sense that what was learned by the dotcom bust was that they don't want to get too far away from those zine origins. This translates into a hands-on method of production that, while larger than a zine, maintains freedom from corporate ownership and the influence of mainstream advertisers.

As Stoller indicates, the editors at *BUST* continue to view the magazine as a voice that speaks back to mainstream publications and to their content. And they see their zine roots as the reason why they have been able to reconfigure their game plan and keep the magazine afloat. As well, there is a strong sense of ownership in the language used to describe their process and one that isn't simply about the status of being a magazine editor. There's a sense of pride of creation that echoes the pride that zine writers have in being able to produce their zine or to sustain it over time. There's recognition that despite the forces that tried to shut the magazine down, and the editors' naivety about how the magazine business works, they have persisted and found success as they initially and continue to define it. They are making the product they set out to create and to offer to the magazine world. And while *BUST* mimics the structure and content of mainstream magazines, the emphasis is heavy on the "mimicking." The structure borrowed from long-standing magazines like *Cosmopolitan* and *Redbook* are seemingly used to develop a comfort zone. The content, while girly and feminine,

subverts the ways in which the reader would normally consume the information. This is decidedly zine-like (Chafin).

Similarly, *Bitch* started off with zine roots. Like *BUST*, they worked their way up to become a bigger production. According to their website, they had a similar reason as Stoller, Henzel and Karp for starting the magazine:

Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture is a quarterly, nonprofit magazine about pop culture, feminism, and media criticism. [...]The first issue of *Bitch* was published in January 1996. The founding editors, Lisa Jervis and Andi Zeisler, were totally sick of both their day jobs and their love/hate relationship with pop culture. Inspired by publishing ventures from *Ms.* and *Sassy* to *Pagan's Head* and *Beer Frame*, they decided to create a public forum in which to air thoughts and theories on what is all wrong (and the few things that are right) with the way women, gender, and feminist politics are treated in the media. The aim was to use feminism as a lens through which to view pop products—and to offer ways for readers to speak up and talk back to the culture at large. (bitchmagazine.org)

The editors at *Bitch* voice a similar discontent with the options in mainstream magazines. Like the editors at *BUST*, they felt there was something lacking in the representation in those publications and there were voices and conversations that were notably absent.

As well, while *BUST* is notably mimicking the look and feel of more mainstream women's magazines, *Bitch* has taken a slightly different approach. Up until recently, the magazine's only glossy feature was its cover and the cover was some time in the

making. When *Bitch* initially appeared on the scene, it resembled the now defunct *Off Our Backs* more in both content and physicality. The magazine was newspaper-esque with black and white print on off-white paper. Today, the glossy paper has taken over for the black and white, but the content remains the same. The articles are grouped within a theme, but tend to be longer and more complicated than the ones featured in *BUST*. Those who write about both publications tend to characterize *Bitch* as having a more academic feel. While there's still a focus on the feminine—domestic life, fashion, makeup, etc—the bulk of the magazine is dedicated to essays that are more critical than those in *BUST*. With its longer essays and reviews of music and books, *Bitch* maintains a much closer relationship to the zines that inspired it, while co-opting the look of mainstream magazines.

The editors describe the mission of *Bitch* as the goal “to put a lucid, balanced face on feminism for all kinds of folks, including people who aren't really aware that feminism refers to more than women who don't want to shave their legs, or simply getting more women into positions of power. Similarly, we encourage people to consider feminism as a necessary part of the broader social justice movement” (bitch.com). Here we can see both the differences and the similarities between *BUST* and *Bitch* emerge. *Bitch* is focused on feminism and how it is generally presented by the media, which isn't unlike *BUST*, but the playfulness of *BUST*'s self-description isn't found here. Arguably, there is a playfulness within *Bitch*'s pages, but not in the same way as *BUST*:

Bitch looks at the media and its products through a lens that takes into account the historical and cultural representation of gender in pop culture. Movies,

television, news magazines, fashion magazines, blogs, comics, advertising, music, computer games — all are media that have traditionally reflected a narrow vision of what women and girls are and can be, whether it's the dumb blond, the needy wife, the castrating mother, "the I'm-not-a-feminist-but..." woman, or the heartless, man-shunning domestic media mogul (to name but a few). We seek to look at all pop culture through an analytical-yet-witty, sharp-yet-sympathetic lens, as well as to celebrate the feminist culture-makers who are transforming the media with their unique contributions. (bitch.com)

We get the sense from this description that *Bitch* is focused on presenting a greater sense of depth in their analysis and a more varied scope of media. While *BUST* is heavily-focused on the girly, *Bitch* looks at the broader spectrum and at the intellectual level of the writing and content. As well, similar to the *BUST* editors, who want their readers to walk away with an empowered feeling, the *Bitch* editors want to provide a level of content that recognizes the intelligence of the individuals reading it. They understand that a common flaw with mainstream magazines is the assumption that women are only interested in a limited number of topics, through a decidedly heterosexual perspective, and on a superficial level. The goal for the magazine is to provide readers with the kind of female-friendly and female-positive content that can't be found in other magazines.

Bitch takes a step in a slightly different direction. Where *BUST* plays with femininity and girliness in general, *Bitch* focuses the critical lens more directly onto representations of women in the media with the intention of helping readers confront

those problematic representations when they appear in their own lives. The website states:

Bitch is about formulating replies to the sexist and narrow-minded media diet that we all—intentionally or not—consume. It’s about critically examining the images of femininity, feminism, class, race, and sexuality that are thrown at us by the media. [...] It’s about asking ourselves and each other questions: Where are the female-friendly places in the mass media? Where are the things we can see and read and listen to that don’t insult our intelligence? How can we get more of them? *Bitch* is about saying, we can make them. (bitch.com)

The editors not only target the problems with media representation, but also seek out those individuals, companies and moments that *are* female-friendly so that they can applaud the work and work to replicate it. Finally, with a nod to their zine roots, the editors call out themselves and their readership when they say “we can make them.” The magazine is about being that engaged audience, being that producer of materials rather than a passive consumer. What the editors are saying is if the readers don’t like what they see in the media, they can make their own media. They can create what they want to see. Just as the zine writers invite their readers be more active—make a zine, write an article, be more active in the community, the *Bitch* editors invite their readers to change what they don’t like. They can replicate and develop what they do.

What we see here is the obvious “in between” position. They are both glossy and zine because they adopt the elements of each that will help them produce a successful product. The editors want to appeal to current issues and to rethink the conversations that

are being had by fashion magazines. So, there is the sense that they want both *BUST* and *Bitch* to be a part of the mainstream space. At the same time, the editors want to maintain a zine ethic by taking a decidedly feminist, activist approach. Both sets of editors want their publications to send the message that readers need to read and think more actively and to get involved in the conversation, whatever that may be. What is implied by this message is there are other readers out there who need and want a smarter version of the mainstream magazine.

What we also see is a struggle that is similar to the Pro Am. While the Instagram model shows us an example of the Pro Am who isn't aware of her status as amateur and so doesn't feel confident enough in her work to stand her ground, Brooke Duffy gives us an example of Pro Am fashion bloggers who are fighting to work the way they want. In the essay "Amateur, Autonomous, and Collaborative: Myths of Aspiring Female Cultural Producers in Web 2.0," Duffy is skeptical of fashion bloggers who venture too close to their professional counterparts and writer paid reviews for products. The fashion bloggers' response is that so long as they are writing them because they actually like the product, then the payment does not corrupt the quality of their work. What we see with the glossies is a similar situation. The editors have established their as publications as both reflective of zine activism and strong feminist thought and professional magazine's sleek, upbeat feel. In adopting the more conventional look, glossy editors are embracing an approach to thinking that makes it more accessible to a wider variety of people. While it isn't as intense as zine writing, it works to be more intellectual and feminist-oriented than other mainstream magazines.

This is where Janice Radway and her work *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire* gives us an interesting lens through which we can view these publications. As she examines the Book-of-the-Month Club and her own experiences with it, she not only targets and analyzes a specific readership and the industry that feeds it, but also identifies a reader that stands in between highbrow and lowbrow. Radway discusses the ways in which this reader is a little of both while also being neither. They are part educated reader, wanting to be treated as though they are capable of handling more complex information, and they are part leisure reader, simply looking to pass the time. The result of this middle position is a reader who makes intellectual demands, but also makes emotional demands. In doing so, Radway argues that a clear distinction is drawn that indicates the position of the middlebrow reader as unique and important.

The best place to start this analysis is with an explanation of what Radway means by middlebrow *reader*. First off, according to Radway reading in the middlebrow space isn't just an intellectual experience that simply revels in the intellectual context of a text. It also isn't just the emotional experience of reading. Middlebrow reading blends intellectual content with emotive response, thus creating an experience that is reliant upon both intellectual and emotional stimulation. Radway provides a clear example of this as she draws on her own leisure reading experiences. She writes:

There are moments for me now when books become something other than mere objects, when they transport me elsewhere, to a trancelike state I find difficult to describe. On these occasions readings, or what Marcel Proust has called 'that

fruitful miracle of a communication in the midst of solitude,' manages to override my rational, trained approach to books as crafted objects. When this occurs, the books, the text, and even my reading self dissolve in a peculiar act of transubstantiation whereby 'I' become something other than what I have been and inhabit thoughts other than those I have been able conceive before. This tactile, sensuous, profoundly emotional experience of being captured by a book is what those reading memories summoned for me—in the manner of Proust's Madeleine—an experience that for all its ethereality clearly is extraordinarily physical as well. (13)

Despite all of her training to remain an objective observer, during certain kinds of readings she is swept up by the physical and emotional element. She loses a sense of her surroundings, of herself as being the act of reading, and the book as a text. She is consumed by the plot and the ideas, and in being so, is able to connect to more than just the words on the page. She is able to think ideas that wouldn't have come to her otherwise. She is able to process more because at times she is allowing herself to feel the text more than to think it. That is to say, she allows her emotional and physical self to be more important to her reading experience than her rational, thinking self. When describing this feeling, she refers to Reynolds Price's "narrative hypnosis," which is the "deep involvement of the body in the act of reading" (13). As Radway demonstrates with her example, she is able to make intellectual connections she would have otherwise missed had she not had these emotional responses. So while she is easing off of her rational, thinking self, she isn't losing sight of it. She is allowing in her emotional

responses as a way to better understand the fullness and complexity of the ideas presented in the book. This is the middlebrow reading experience.

Of course, this experience is contingent upon the right kind of book. So it makes sense that Radway and the editors at the Book-of-the-Month Club characterize the middlebrow reader through the kinds of books they tend to like to read. Found on the Book-of-the-Month Club's "mid-list," these books are what Radway describes as "books considered neither avant-garde nor merely commercial in their literary pretensions and neither mass market nor narrowly targeted in their distribution aims. A mid-list book was generally construed as a book of sound quality created for a moderately-sized, fairly specific audience of committed readers" (90). The editors labeled those selections as "mid-list" because the books seemed capable of appealing to the "educated generalist." The educated generalist is neither the average reader, nor the academic. And, according to the editors at the Book-of-the-Month Club, these readers, "were neither specialists nor uninformed. Rather, they were intelligent generalists looking for the kind of rewarding book that would inform them at the same time that it would capture their imagination and entertain them" (91). For the editors, the middlebrow reader was a blending of the two types of readers that had already been established. They were smarter and more intellectually-demanding than the average reader, but placed a greater emphasis on the basic entertainment factor in the act of reading than the academic reader. The books they read, then, were more complex than the romance novel, but less work than one written with the academic community in mind.

Joe Savago, an editor at the Book-of-the-Month Club, makes the point more simply, stating that the middlebrow reader is, “A smart person who isn’t a literary person but is a book lover who...can be tempted to stretch beyond just X amount” (93). The middlebrow reader seems to be the amateur reader of literary consumption. This reader is, as Savago so aptly puts it, a “book lover.” And, by being a lover of books and of reading, this person is more likely to try a new kind of book or a new topic if it is suggested. The editors of the club were aware that these readers were “complex, fully realized individuals replete with recognizable intentions and goals,” that it seemed they “knew what they wanted from a book,” and “were fully cognizant of why they read” (102-3). Middlebrow readers are readers who know what they are looking for and have a more discerning mind than the average reader. Regardless of what kind of work the middlebrow readers pursue, what they want when they read is a kind of book that feeds their hunger for knowledge, as well as their emotions. They are the kinds of readers who want to be able to boast about the kinds of books they read, but who also look to reading as a deeply pleasurable and stimulating activity. The editors recognized that these readers wanted “to be hailed both as intelligent and as broad-minded individuals, that is, as lovers of all kinds of books, as aficionados of the universe of print” (104). These individuals want their reading experience to be intellectually and emotional fulfilling. They also see it as a significant aspect of their identity. They want their reading selves to be visible to others because part of why they read the way they do is the pride they find in being able to say they’ve read all kinds of books. Equally as important, they look to all kinds of topics and books as places for this fulfillment.

So what we see the middlebrow as being is a challenge to the high brow-low brow binary. By taking on affects of either group, middlebrow writing, like the middle class, creates something that is different, but familiar. And this is what it seems the Book-of-the-Month Club recognizes in its readership's desires and what the glossies appear to be doing. They aren't trying to be one or the other. They are, like the Pro Am, happy to stay in a space that allows them the advantages of both of the spaces that surround them. In other words, they recognize their desire for both spaces and decide that they don't have to choose. Instead, they create their own concept of literature, of magazine, or of amateur. What comes with high brow is the challenge of learning and the status of being an educated individual. What comes with low brow is the emotional and visceral experience of reading and life. The same kind of breakdown can be seen with the glossies. The editors start the publications off as zines because they like the activism that is a part of that genre, but there's something challenging about taking their ideas to the professional sphere. And the only way to challenge what they don't like about mainstream magazines and media is to retain the zine ethic while embracing a more conventional appearance.

How are *BUST* and *Bitch* attempting to present a work that feeds the middlebrow feminist reader? *BUST* is noticeably middlebrow from the cover through to its contents. It's easy to see how the editors are striving to mimic the look of mainstream fashion magazines. The August/September 2013 issue of *BUST* features Janelle Monáe on the cover in full makeup, pompadour, and a black and white, checkered suit and tie. She stands, flashing red nails and a look of fake shock on her face. The headline linked to

this photo reads: “OMG! Janelle Monáe.” Announced across the top are some of the other topics this issue will cover: Martha Plimpton, Vegan Nail Polish, Key & Peele, and DIY Your Denim. Alongside that, a question asks: “How well do you know Beyoncé?” A little further down, there’s the heading “The Conspiracy Against Plus-Sized Women,” and in the bottom corner it is announced that this is the “Fall Preview: TV, Movies, Music & Fashion You’ll Love.” The April/May Issue of *BUST* features Amy Schumer in a prom dress and prom queen crown. The title for her piece is “Amy Schumer: The *New* Queen of Comedy.” Announced across the top is: “Mayim Bialik’s Vegan Treats, Kellis, Thailand Travel, Bangin’ Bikes.” Instead of a question, there is the title: “Queefing: The Other Vagina Monologue.” Beneath that are three article titles: “the true cost of cheap clothes,” “killer thrift-shopping tips,” and “ultimate braid bible.” Once again, fashion is a prominent component: “Get Trippy: Psychedelic Spring Fashion.”

Both of these covers give the reader smart, female-focused subject matter. There’s the discussion of size in the fashion industry, Martha Plimpton, who is an actress and feminist activist, and Janelle Monáe and Beyoncé, who are both strong women of color in the music industry. But even as they celebrate successful women in the media and confront issues that plague women, the editors playfully pilfer from the look and sound of mainstream magazines. Like so many fashion magazines, the editors at *BUST* choose to feature a fashionable individual on the cover. Both Monáe and Shumer are styled to look the part. However, there’s the element of tongue in cheek with both covers. “OMG! Janelle Monáe” in combination with her look of mock surprise, and Shumer in her prom queen attire next to the heading “The *New* Queen of Comedy” both

seem to be poking fun at the overly dramatic femininity and sexuality so often featured on mainstream magazine covers. What is different, however, is that every person that is on the cover is someone doing notable feminist work. While the editors play off of the “model or movie star in the cover” motif, they subvert that by only featuring individuals who are actively working to challenge problematic standards, stereotypes, and perceptions and their headlines are feminist as well as female-focused.

On the inside, *BUST*'s content provides a mixture of serious topics, fashion tips, recipes, and quirky products. In the August/September 2013 issue, the editor's letter sets the tone for the major theme of the issue: women and visibility. This theme includes the article “Queens for a Day,” a look at YouTube rapper, Awkwafina in the regular installment of Broadcast: news + views. The Broadcast section goes on to include: “Sneak Attack: Reebok Reneges on Rick Ross” and “A Woman, A Plan, A (Vaginal) Canal: Plan B Goes Over-the-Counter.” In “Wicked Garden” they take a look at artist Lauren Fensterstock's Victorian Botanical Garden with a dark twist. Following that, there is a multiple choice quiz on Beyoncé and a review of “The To Do List,” a comedy about one girl's quest to lose her virginity. “Bad girls, Bad Girls, Whatcha Gonna Do?” is a piece about how young, female Disney stars shed their wholesome image by taking on super sexualized roles in what has become a rite of passage and that segues into an article on how to make homemade soft pretzels. “Twist It, Sister” precedes “Law & Order,” which is an informational piece that maps out all of the major legal documents a woman should know about and have.

“One Hot Tamale,” a recipe for tamales is up next and leads into “Talk Show” another informational piece on how to set up your own literary salon. After that, Roseanne Barr is featured in “What would Roseanne Barr Do? as one of *BUST*’s resident advice columnists. The section “Around the World in 80 Girls” takes a look at Barcelona, Spain. This regular element of the magazine gives advice and tips to women who might want to travel to different countries. Next, we are introduced to Suzi Analogue, an audiovisual artist, and her personal sense of style in the section “Looks: Fashion + Beauty.” Further along in this section, there’s a feature on various types of hair clips and bands, and a how-to piece called “She Wears Short Shorts” that teaches readers how to customize denim jean shorts with patches, tie dye, beads, spikes, and distressing materials. After a few pages of new products from Etsy and other small businesses, there are three feature articles that focus on the more serious issues of visibility. “Gimme Some Monáe” speaks with Janelle Monáe and her distinct choice in performance uniform and how she sees it as confronting expectations of female visibility. Next is “The Invisible Woman,” in which a full-figured blogger and a fashion columnist discuss the situation for plus-sized women in the fashion world, and then, “Raising Hopes,” which is an interview with Martha Plimpton centered on her choices of strong female roles and her feminist activism, specifically her feelings on including abortions in television show plots. There are both TV/movie reviews and books reviews, but more noticeable is the eight-page fashion spread. The magazine ends with sex advice from a sexologist, a “one-handed read” that is meant to be sexually stimulating, and a comic called “The Last Laugh,” that is based on a female protagonist.

This all might appear to be a chaotic at first, but upon closer inspection we can see how the editors are working to appeal to a middlebrow reader. Every piece, except for the feature articles, is no longer than two pages and there are plenty of visuals to show the reader what is being discussed. There's a playfulness and a humor in the language of the titles, and an effort to balance out the serious discussions of abortion, sizeism, and the unfair labor practices within the fashion industry with lighter material. Here the editors are once again adopting the look of fashion magazines, but are inserting a different kind of content with a feminist spin in order to appeal to a different kind of reader. It is clear that the editors think their readers want a fun magazine and one that embraces all facets of the female experience. For instance, DIY fashion is always incorporated in the issue, as are some sort of DIY beauty or household product and recipes. Most important, the *BUST* editors don't shy away from sensitive and potentially uncomfortable subject matter.

Where *BUST* leans more towards mainstream fashion magazines in look and content, *Bitch* tends to be the more intellectual of the two. Its articles are more overtly political and embrace a more analytical tone; however, the editors still maintain a middlebrow feel to the magazine by employing the same playful approach as *BUST* does even to the more serious topics that are covered. This is mainly evident in the language of titles and the articles, but it can also be found in sketches and artwork that accompany the articles. The fall 2013 issue of *Bitch* is called "The Gray Issue." Unlike *BUST*, *Bitch* tends to feature artwork on the covers. This issue's artwork is an electronic-looking collage of lines and colors. Across the top, some of the topics for the issue are

announced: “Black Lists, “Gray” Rape, Whitewashing, plus Cyborgs!” In the winter 2014 “food” issue, the headings across the top are: “Edible Art, Books with Bite, Coupon Queens, Plus: Kathleen Hanna!” Once again, we see the mock drama in the headlines that is evidenced most clearly with the exclamation point at the end of each list. This magazine may not mimic the featured model or movie star, but it still seems to be poking fun at the fashion magazine and playing with that model in order to challenge the way the reader consumes this magazine.

The inside is where we can see the middlebrow at work. Each issue starts off with an intro from the editors, a letter and comments section, and then “Love it, Shove it,” which is a section that discusses a topic that is related to the issue’s theme. In the Gray Issue, the section is titled “Identity Heft: A Q+A with author Malinda Lo. Lo writes YA literature that features characters of color and explores sexual identity. Clearly, in this issue this is a “Love it” topic. In the Food Issue, this section is titled “Snap Judgment: When Political Rhetoric Takes Food Off of the Table,” which is commentary on the Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act. This legislation cut funding from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), otherwise known as food stamps. This commentary is clearly a “Shove it” stance as it works to poke holes in the argument and point out what is dangerous about anti-food stamps rhetoric.

From there, the Gray issue includes “Phone Freaks Keep on Creepin’ On,” which talks about people taking inappropriate and nonconsensual pictures of other people with their phones and posting them online; “Outlaw on Stage: Shawna Virago Unplugged,” is a short segment on a female musician; and “Tank Girl: New Swimsuits Send the Wrong

Message,” which discusses a new Christian swimsuit line that was created to be an alternative to bikinis. Bitch In: Code for America,” is a regular feature in each issue of *Bitch* and this one focuses on Code for America, which is described as the “Peace Corps for geeks.” It also pushes for more women to be involved in computing jobs. “Trusting Women,” is a review of the movie *After Tiller*, which is based on the life of Dr. George Tiller who was killed for working at a clinic that provided late-term abortions. “Safe Words: The History of Anti-Abuse Activism in BDSM” discusses how the BDSM community navigates the “gray” area of consent. “A lot to Absorb: The New, Gendered World of Adult-Incontinence Products” is a lengthier article that argues for better awareness and acceptance of adult incontinence. “Laughing it Off: What Happens When Female Comics Tell Rape Jokes?” questions whether women working through their sexual assaults via comedy acts is progress or a sign of a bigger cultural problem. “Helen Thomas, Off the Record: A Few Opinions from the First Lady of the Press” is one of the final interviews with a key figure of women in journalism. “Gray Matters: How Rape in Pop Culture Became a Matter of Opinion,” once again explores the issue of consent and how media representations have contributed to the “grayness” and confusion of what is and isn’t sexual assault. “Roy C. Biz: The Many Colors of Corporate Co-Option,” breaks down the corporate co-option and “Commodity Brokers: The Sweet and Lowdown on the Phenomenon of ‘Sugar Dating’” explores the concept of young women dating for money. The book review section starts off with a feature on Alice Walker and then proceeds to present a mixture of female-focused books: *Mermaid in Chelsea Creek*, a fiction YA work by Michelle Tea; *Becoming Sexual: A Critical Appraisal of the*

Sexualization of Girls, an analysis of the rhetoric around girls and sexuality by R. Danielle Egan; *Code Name Pauline: Memoirs of a World War II Special Agent* by Kathryn J. Atwood; and *Mirror, Mirror Off the Wall: How I learned to Love My Body by Not Looking at It for a Year*, an accounting of one woman's year without any reflective surfaces by Kjerstin Gruys. The movie and music reviews follow, highlighting Hollywood's Black List, which is an annual survey sent out to development executives in Hollywood that asks them to list out 10 of their favorite unproduced scripts. The top picks are produced. The purpose of the list is to help the more "unconventional" scripts get produced in a climate that is making it harder and harder to produce movies that aren't blockbusters. From there, the list presents a collection of diversity-filled, independent films and bands. The magazine closes with the comic section "Adventures in Feministory," which features Donna Haraway, "internationally recognized scholar, primatologist feminist, philosopher of science and technology, cultural theorist, and cyborg!"

As with *BUST*, *Bitch* puts together a spattering of articles that are loosely connected by a theme and that explore various levels of this theme. For the Gray Issue, this means a movie that talks about a slain abortion doctor, how TV shows and reinforces notions of sexual assault, safety and consent in a community that plays with boundaries of physical pleasure, and how women navigate and communicate sexual consent on the dance floor. The end result is a magazine that gives its readers smart, challenging topics like issues of abortion and sexual assault, but also lighter topics like adult-incontinence products and music and book reviews. At one point in "Gray Matters:

How Rape in Pop Culture Became a Matter of Opinion,” author Kate Harding states that the intention of her article isn’t to tell people to not see certain movies, but rather to get people to think about why they are written in the first place. What Harding suggests here seems to be a good statement about the overall intention of both *BUST* and *Bitch*. The purpose isn’t to lecture and badger people over their choices of entertainment, it’s to offer them different options for entertainment and to encourage them to think about questionable elements in their TV shows, movies, books, and music. This is where I see both magazines drawing the line between themselves and fashion magazines.

What we see here is evidence of a middlebrow magazine, but also one that is not the same kind of middlebrow as the other mainstream fashion magazines. The middlebrow reader, who is looking to connect with magazines like *BUST* and *Bitch*, is similar to the middlebrow reader that Radway and Savago describe. These readers are looking for a slightly quirkier and more intellectually-stimulating magazine than *Cosmopolitan*, but they are also still looking to be entertained. This is still expected to be light reading—only smarter light reading than other magazines provide. What these editors seem to be developing in their magazines is a feminist middlebrow or a middlebrow feminism aimed at the different kind of feminist reader, much the same way the editors at the Book-of-the-Month Club geared their book selections toward the developing middlebrow reader. This is where that uncertainty that Woolf expresses seems to manifest itself. How can feminism be light and entertaining? How can a magazine that spends as much time on beauty products and other “silly,” “girly” topics

ever fully analyze the complexity of real feminist issues? Once again, Radway gives us a way of breaking this down.

Like most zines, and even the glossies, Radway starts off her examination of the Book-of-the-Month Club through an anecdote from her life, which gives us a good idea of why this concept is important to consider. She talks about how she both fell in love with reading and how she initially got involved with the club. Radway's discussion of her transition from a casual reader to an academic one reveals a struggle with herself. She focuses on how she internalizes a perception of the "good academic" and how that, in turn, impacts her acceptance of her less-than-academic desires for reading. She comes to view recreational reading as shameful, and as such, hides it away from her academic community. She writes:

I tried hard to keep my voracious taste for bestsellers, mysteries, cookbooks, and popular nature books a secret—a secret from everyone, including the more cultured and educated self I was trying to become. I told myself I only read the stuff because one of my fields of specialization was American popular culture and I needed to be familiar with the most widely read books of the time. With grim determination I restricted this reading to late at night just before bed and devoted long daylight hours to the business of learning to describe the aesthetic complexities of true literature. What I thought I was doing was acquiring the language and repertoire of analytical techniques called for implicitly by the inherent features of self-evidently great works of literary art. But I was troubled by my clumsiness. This was not a language I felt very comfortable with or

wielded naturally with any sort of grace or independence. Even more artificial than the second language of French I had mastered somewhat successfully as an undergraduate, the language of aesthetics and taste seemed a lifeless, abstract set of rules to memorize rather than a supple collection of expressive tools for elaborating my responses to good books. Although I inferred from seminar discussions that I ought to prefer Henry James to Anne Tyler, Faulkner to John Le Carre, Pound to Carlos Castaneda, and *Gravity's Rainbow* to *The Thorn Birds*, I could not always discipline my preferences as I thought I should. I still liked the books I read at night a lot more than the books I read for my classes. (2-3)

As an aspiring academic, Radway recognizes the kinds of works she is supposed to want to read and find valuable. These are the works she privileges with day-time study. She finds herself having to justify those other books that she enjoys reading as part of her research. Reading them is only acceptable in so far as it is related to her graduate work. Still, she relegates these books to nighttime reading, which allows her to hide her guilty pleasure from her fellow graduate students. The awkwardness she expresses about learning how to use academic language seems normal for a new graduate student. What is notable here is that despite her attempts otherwise, Radway cannot fully deny her love for middlebrow books. The shame she feels for preferring them over the works she reads for her classes is significant, though, because it demonstrates not just that there are separate categories of reading, but that these two categories are at odds with one another—as she is at odds with herself.

As Radway continues to explore this phenomenon, she reinforces the perceived oppositional nature of the works, but she also starts to articulate an interesting feeling that is the base for her viewing these works as different. She frequently speaks about the way these non-academic books make her feel. The defining characteristic is the way in which she can get lost in the reading and how the reading, like the music Booth listens to, evokes physical responses that are due to the complete submission of the reader to the act reading. She feels comfortable feeling the works and fully engaging with them in a way that she doesn't with her academic reading. She writes:

As a consequence, my new tastes somehow failed to duplicate precisely the passion of my response to those other, suspect, supposedly transparent, popular books. Those books prompted physical sensations, a forgetting of the self and complete absorption in another world. The books that came to me as high literature never seemed to prompt the particular shudder, the frisson I associated with the books of my childhood, because they carried with them not mere promise alone but also a threat, the threat that somehow I might fail to understand, might fail to recognize their reputed meaning and inherent worth. (3-4)

The moment Radway is having here is one of internal conflict. On the one hand, she loves reading for the simple pleasure of being caught up in the fictionalized world a book presents. She recalls how exciting the whole process of reading was before she entered graduate school. For her, it was the excitement of the act that kept her going and kept continuing to pull her back to into those worlds. As she works through this struggle,

it's hard not to hear Booth's argument about the love of an act derived from submitting oneself wholly to that act. Radway's love of reading began as just that: the love of getting lost in another's written world. She may comply with the readings assigned within her academic program, but she cannot submit to them in the way she does to her leisure readings. Consequently, she fails to connect with the assigned readings as much, and so, doesn't gain as much insight as she feels she needs.

While it is easy to say connection isn't necessary for good analysis, what Radway seems to be developing throughout her book is the question that perhaps it is. Perhaps connecting to the work on an emotional and personal level can open up one's ability to critique better. So while her book is aimed at analyzing the institution of the Book-of-the-Month Club and how it fits into the realms of reading and the publication world, it also suggests that there's a need to think about the reader's relationship to writing differently. What Radway also seems to want to show us is what a middlebrow reading experience feels like. She demonstrates to us through her struggle to accept her different reading selves that one can be a middlebrow reader and enjoy middlebrow reading while occupying other reading spaces. What is interesting about this is that it seems to place a greater emphasis on the moment than on the person and it creates a separation from the middle class connection. What Radway seems to be arguing is that while the middlebrow has a history in class association, the middlebrow reading experience might be something that at this point isn't so class-related. The middlebrow reading experience is being able to really connect with a piece of writing both intellectually and emotionally. While the content might still be class-based, the real

importance is that the content is neither highbrow nor lowbrow. It must be accessible enough, but also present a comfortable level of challenge for the reader.

Radway's personal struggle to accept this side of her reading self shows the conflict that is so often associated with the middlebrow and starts to explain the tension that surrounds *BUST* and *Bitch*. The ambivalence she feels towards her leisure reading causes her to hide it away because it's not real literature. She can only justify reading it if it is considered to be part of her research. These books might be good for an analytical project, but could never stand on their own as source of valuable information. The biggest reason she indicates for feeling this way is the emotional connection she feels to these books. What seems to be Radway's greatest struggle is accepting that she can enjoy less-intellectual reading and that that doesn't take anything away from her reading experience, the book itself, or her professional life. As well, she can learn as much from that as she would from her academic reading, even though the lessons might be less analytical. And finally, that she can within herself have multiple reading selves with different reading needs.

What seems to plague *BUST* and *Bitch* is the idea that occupying this middlebrow space is watering down the potency of their message and ultimately selling out. These magazines are too pretty, too glossy, and too girly. Their playful approach to serious and non-serious topics alike is similar to the emotional connection that Radway finds unnerving. *BUST* and *Bitch* are constructed to be leisure reading. They are meant to be enjoyable. Their look and sound undermine their ability to be taken seriously.

BUST and *Bitch* are first and foremost feminist publications, so what both have

in common is the desire to put a different face to feminism than is commonly found in mainstream media and present that to an ever-growing readership via a language that is smart, funny and playful. While *BUST* wants to redeem the feminine as empowering aspects of being a woman and feminist, *Bitch* wants to examine feminism in all avenues of media and confront and challenge misinformation and misperceptions. In short, they both want to use the common techniques of successful mainstream magazines to subvert the content that those magazines normally present.

BUST, the more mainstream looking of the two, receives the most critique for being questionable, that is, for mimicking conventional magazines too much. The playful, pro-feminine, pro-girlie tone the magazine takes is the main target for criticism. The biggest complaint about the publications within the zine community is the way in which it handles feminism. As Duncombe argues, zines are constructed to be a gateway for their readers and others to enter into a conversation full of the complexities and contradictions of contemporary issues. Like Gaither's ecumenical dialogue, these publications encourage active engagement between writers and readers and are the venues that make koinonia happen. The criticism of *BUST*, in particular, is that the physical space isn't inviting the reader to actively engage. Like most mainstream magazines, there are only a couple of places in the publications where readers are directly invited to speak: the letters to the editor and columnist section.

Elizabeth Groeneveld writes about this criticism and a specific fashion issue of *BUST* in her essay "'Be a feminist or just dress like one': *BUST*, fashion, and feminism as lifestyle." She opens her essay with the statement "In recent years, a body of critical

scholarship has emerged that interrogates the discourses of ‘new’, ‘sexy’, and ‘girlie’ feminisms. *BUST* magazine (1993–) has become emblematic of ‘girlie’ feminism, a form of ‘third-wave’ feminist engagement that revalues activities and interests traditionally associated with femininity, such as knitting, fashion, and make-up” (179). She points out that the magazine is about knitting and finances, soap making and pregnancy, sex, traveling and fashion—pleasurable aspects of life, the more serious ones and the seemingly taboo topics that are only handled in one way in mainstream magazines. Coming off the more serious heels of the second wave feminist movement, these kinds of publications can seem questionable in terms of “real” feminist work. After all, how can a column about makeup have any sort of significant feminist impact?

Groeneveld agrees that there’s a certain amount of carelessness in the presentation of some of the content, in this case the feminist fashion spread. For starters, she argues that there are mistakes in the presentation of certain feminist’s choice of clothing. As well, the lack of depth in the spread leaves a number of significant feminist women out of the picture. Ultimately, Groeneveld argues that the issue “is an ambivalent text that offers, on the one hand, a homage to feminism’s ‘past’ and, on the other hand, a rather simplistic view of that history. [...] *BUST*’s fashion issue casts feminism in a positive light, as fashionable and desirable, a position clearly contrary to most mainstream media representations of feminist movements. However, the publication also risks inscribing feminism solely in terms of personal style” (179). In this particular, *BUST* achieves the playfulness that the editors feel contemporary feminism needs. It takes a look at different, potentially untapped ways we can connect with previous

feminists and feminist thought, and it potentially plants the seed of interest in its readership. However, it seems to fail to open the door for its readers to a more in-depth look at feminism's past, thus running the risk of making feminism seem like a sound bite.

Brenda M. Helmbrecht and Meredith A. Love echo Groeneveld's concerns in their essay "The *BUST*in and *BITCH*in *Ethe* of Third-Wave Zines." They write, "On first glance, *BUST* does not appear wildly different from mainstream women's fashion magazines. Each issue features a celebrity such as Parker Posey, Amy Sedaris, or Gloria Steinem. *BUST* also incorporates familiar elements such as fashion and beauty tips and advice columns" (156). What is recognizable is the way in which *BUST* has mimicked mainstream magazines. By taking on the shape and look of these other publications, *BUST* isn't at first glance clearly a feminist-oriented work and it doesn't echo the seriousness that has become associated with feminist writing and work. As well, even once the reader has entered the text of the magazine, there's a question of its effectiveness as a feminist work. Helmbrecht and Love write, "In some circles, these zines might be dismissed as inaccurate or distorted purveyors of feminist ideology because of their marked 'hipness,' their efforts to attract a non-academic audience, and their stated mission to critique popular culture" (151). In this statement, their concern about the depth of analysis and presentation in the spreads can be heard. Taking feminism out of an academic context and placing it into a media-oriented, consumer publication has had its impact on the way these ideas are presented, and as Helmbrecht

and Love point out, there are valid concerns about how fully and articulately the feminist message gets conveyed.

At the same time, all of these writers find valuable work being done in both *BUST* and *Bitch*. Despite their flaws, there are good reasons to support the work and consider what they are doing as valuable for feminist study. Groeneveld sums it up, saying:

Both the inclusion of a quotation from each of the represented women and the use of labeled, archival photographs on the opening page of the spread suggest that BUST's fashion spread functions not only to present fashion but to also document feminist history. That is, the spread works to introduce readers to particular iconic figures within American feminism and suggests that fashion and feminism need not be viewed as antithetical to each other. In this sense, the spread may effectively work as an entry point into feminism, for readers who may not otherwise be acquainted with the history of the American movement.

(183)

There's a question about the depth of the coverage of the feminist movement in this spread, but there's the way it brings two ideas together that have been seen as oppositional. She finds something redeemable about this juxtapositioning of seemingly antithetical ideas. On one end, there's feminism and the active work to better the lives of women. At the other end, there's fashion, something that can be argued isn't feminist at all. In fact, it could be viewed as something that works against feminism by promoting the very values that feminist work is trying to confront and change. Yet in this spread,

we see how fashion makes political statements and how the history of it can be valuable information for feminist thought. Fashion is also a moment of common ground for a lot of women. That is, it is something that can connect feminist and non-feminist women alike, and it is something that can be used to subvert messages about women.

Bitch offers us another example for analysis in the Food Issue³⁷. “Out of the Frying Pan: Did Women’s Lib really kill the homemade meal?” by Sarah-Jane Stratford presents an informative piece about the onset and marketing of processed foods. “Feast Your Eyes: Nine Artists Inspired by Food” is a collection of artists who use foods in their work or the concept of certain types of foods, like slow-cooking, to inform their process. One artist, Judith Klausner, “complicates traditional ‘women’s work’ by combining Victorian handicrafts with today’s processed foods.” In one example, Klausner carves cameos out of oreo cookies and makes “Yellow wallpaper” out of mustard, jam, and barbecue sauce. Her intention is to show that “the romanticized, retro past was only possible because of the labor of women.” “Clip Artists: Women, Work, and Extreme Couponing” is a piece found later in the issue and focuses on how couponing offers women consumer muscle in a male-dominated economy. While this isn’t the same as the “Dress like a feminist” fashion spread, it does combine rather different and potentially questionable concepts in one space. The essay on the advent and success of process foods is good, but is focused entirely on confronting Michael Pollan’s book

³⁷ As well, what we see in the Food Issue especially is how many of these topics covered are most meaningful to the middle-class woman. In fact, looking back to the topics covered in *BUST* and in *Bitch*’s Gray Issue, there’s a similar conclusion. Many of these topics are aimed at a middle-class woman how has the time and the resources to be seeking out fashion magazines in general, but also the kind of magazine these two glossies seek to provide.

Cooked. Consequently, it leaves out the impact of the marketing of processed foods on working class families. As well, it mentions that the intended audience for such marketing was white and middle-class, but doesn't then go on to discuss how people of color are and were impacted by this marketing scheme. While Klausner's art is certainly interesting, it ends with her stating that is it art because she calls it that. There's potential for what she's doing and her work does present the question of who made these older products for which we so ardently pine; however, it doesn't get into who these women are. Finally, in "Clip Artists," Adrienne Rose Johnson makes an interesting argument about how couponing has finally made housework into "labor equivalent to market work" and goes on to point out that the current market makes it easier for a woman to stay at home and coupon than go to work. She cites a lack of decent job opportunities as a contributing factor. Once again, it's an interesting topic, but it fails to fully discuss issues of race, sexuality, and if and how this applies to single women.

In being critical of these pieces, I don't mean to take away from their potential impact or to suggest that they are doing good, critical work. What I want to point out is that critics of these glossies can find gaps in the representation and analysis and that this can make these works seem uncertain. It can make them look like they are only interested in the appearance of feminist thought, not actually rolling up their sleeves and delving into the real, complicated, dirty work of feminist analysis. However, if we consider that these publications are middlebrow works, and as such, aren't looking to present in-depth, highbrow writing, it might be easier to see the potential of what these editors are trying to do. They may not be breaking the mold entirely, in terms of

magazine work, but they are trying to offer up a smarter option. All of the above mentioned essays do present thoughtful works that are identifying valid feminist issues. So, they might be more playful and more girly than serious feminists and feminist zine writers would like, but as Helmbrecht, Love, and Groeneveld point out there's potential in these magazines if only because they can serve as introductions to feminist thought.

Likewise, what zine writers find to be problematic beyond the actual coverage of issues is the disconnection between writers and readers. As we saw in the previous chapters is that this is a huge element of what makes zine writing so special. It is what helps create the feeling of internal rewards for the zine writer. However, glossy magazines like *BUST* and *Bitch* actively work to broaden their audience in order to draw in a wider variety of readers and buyers. This equates to content with a greater range of topics with perhaps less depth than a one topic-focused zine might achieve. So what can seem like a watered down version of feminism for the zine writers and a loss of connection may actually be a way to hook more individuals on the basic concept of feminism and encourage more readers to get active. As well, in being challenging without being too academic, but also accessible without being too simple, *BUST* and *Bitch* draw in the equivalent of Radway's middlebrow reader.

The content of *BUST* and *Bitch* demonstrates not only how these publications are situated within a middlebrow space, but also how the editors are looking to address a middlebrow reader. As we can see, it also garners criticism by the zine community for what seems to be the uncertainty that gets attributed to middlebrow culture and writing. The playfulness in the writing, reliance on quips, and the juxtapositioning of serious

articles with beauty product reviews threatens to undermine the gravity of the articles and the depth that some would like to see these works give to subjects like rape and racial inequity. The content, however, isn't the only element of these publications that gets contested. As Humble, Woolf, and Harker all point out, part of the issue people had with middlebrow culture and middlebrow writing was the connection to consumerism. Glossies like *BUST* and *Bitch* come under a similar line of fire.

Aside from the difference of readership size and personal relationship with readers, zines differentiate themselves from mainstream magazines and the glossies with their anti-consumerist DIY ethic. As Sheila Liming explains in her essay "Of Anarchy and Amateurism," zine writers do not expect to make money off of their zines. She writes: "Though former zines like VICE, Punk Planet, and BUST have grown in popularity, having long ago relinquished the zine moniker now that budgets and circulation numbers make them full-fledged magazines, zines were, as zine contributor Jeffrey Brown explains, generally 'expected to lose money. There's no economic imperative at work, so you get purity to the art that rarely happens in 'normal' publishing'" (Liming 122). This attitude seems to embrace the concept that money contaminates. Art, particularly zine work, is done for the ideas it engenders and the thoughtfulness it inspires. It is, then, purely about the statement. When money comes into the picture, it bears the potential to change the art, to modify it towards being more consumer-friendly, or, as is the case with magazines, sponsor-friendly.

More importantly, for zine writers, it is better to be a producer than a consumer and their goal is to inspire action in their readers: "Zines, like pamphlets and blogs,

demonstrate a desire to translate the role of the consumer/reader into a productive entity, one capable of participating not just in the public sphere but, perhaps, in the field of literary production itself” (Liming 123). While they certainly want their readership to read the zines, they want them to respond and to act on the ideas in the zines. Creating producers out of their readership accomplishes Gaither’s necessary step in achieving *koinonia*. The readers respond to the writer, adding their own voices, ideas and experiences to the community. Once again, they are building community and producing thoughtfulness. In the eyes of the zine writers, consumerism gets in the way of the purity of this community. With magazines that promote consumerism, readers are encouraged to buy products, rather than make them. So if consumerism is a key element in determining how zine-like or not zine-like something is, and we want to better understand how *Bust* and *Bitch* are positioned between zines and conventional magazines, an examination of what consumerism means in the middlebrow space as well as in the zine world is necessary.

In her analysis of the Book-of-the-Month Club, Radway spends a lot of time speaking with and discussing the intentions of the club editors. What she finds is that the editors didn’t feel comfortable with the idea of selling books just to make profit. Radway writes that “Bookselling was a necessary precondition to reading. However, a desire to profit from a book’s sale should not be the only reason for a book’s existence” (82). For as much as they understood their job was contingent upon actually selling books, their success in selling the books was contingent upon knowing their readership, knowing what those readers wanted in a book, and getting those kinds of books to their readers.

They understood that if they included books that weren't going to be as profitable, but would be of higher quality, there would be a better chance of capturing the attention and loyalty of their members. As such, there would be a better chance of selling more books. The editors realized that if they met the needs of the readers first, they would have a better chance of meeting the needs of management. More than that, though, was the need to live up to a personal standard. They didn't do their jobs to make money, they did it because they loved reading and they loved books. They saw these jobs as the opportunity to share that love and actually make an impact on a person. And when they recommended a book, they felt they were putting their name on that recommendation. Making money was important to keeping their jobs, but recommending quality books was necessary for maintaining their reputations and their sense of personal responsibility to their members.

As Savago points out, the struggle within the Book-of-the-Month Club was that “The literary, apparently, could not simply be subordinated to the commercial, just as the commercial could not finally be subordinated to the literary” (60). In other words, middlebrow literature being what it is—“both and not,” does not allow for itself to be fully enveloped by the literary or by the commercial. It is both literary and commercial, so there will always be a battle between a quality of content and monetary value. The glossy magazines struggle with much the same problem.

When one flips through the pages of either of these glossies, but primarily with *BUST*, there's a sense that something is being sold—ideas, products, traveling, etc, and not in the way that a zinester would sell an idea. There's a need to focus in on this issue

a little farther and to consider it in a more nuanced way. Yes, there are advertisements and products being sold, but what kinds of advertisements are we talking about and does that make a difference in how consumerism is perceived by the informed reader? Both *BUST* and *Bitch* employ a technique similar to that of *Ms. Magazine*. When *Ms.* struggled financially in the 70s, the solution was to bring in bigger name advertisements. In essence, corporate America was incorporated into the magazine. After battling with the pressure to present material that was friendly to these advertisement companies, *Ms.* made the bold move to refuse mainstream ads. In fact, they went ad-free.

BUST and *Bitch Magazine* embrace a similar philosophy. While they certainly admit to relying upon advertisements to a certain degree, the bulk of their budget comes from subscriptions and donations and their advertisements are limited to small businesses and alternative ones. So through Duncombe's lens *BUST* and *Bitch* are selling out, but if we compare the financial choices of the Book-of-the-Month Club editors to the advertisement choices of these two glossies we might come to a different conclusion. By including alternative advertisers and supporters, *BUST* and *Bitch* are recognizing the need for financial support, but they are also cognizant of how they want their magazine to be viewed. Corporate sponsors wouldn't be in keeping with the rest of the magazine. In some ways, they also seem to see advertisements as yet another way to promote the ideas espoused in the articles.

For example, in the August/September 2013 issue, *BUST* starts with Fluevog shoes, an open source and independent footwear company. Next is Buy Olympia, a Portland, OR-based company that promotes and distributes items for small businesses.

There's also an ad for Frey Vineyards, "America's First Organic Winery" and Synergy organic clothing, an eco-friendly, sustainable fair trade and organic clothing company for women. Dear Kate is a female-run, alternative underwear and yoga clothing business aimed at eliminating the use of throw-away products like liners and pads. This underwear is lined for leaks, but designed to appear and feel like normal underwear. As well, there is Fashion Can, an independent fashion site that designs and manages online stores for emerging fashion designers and Hurraw! Lip balm, which is an all-natural, vegan lip balm made from raw, organic and fair trade ingredients.

From there, *BUST* features its long-time supporter, Babeland, a sex toy shop and Loose Id, a publisher of erotic romance literature with a variety of subgenres like BDSM and Capture fantasy alongside more traditional and contemporary works. And throughout the issue, the editors feature new independent music albums and items, accessories and clothing from independent/small businesses and sites like Etsy.com. It closes out the issue with The BUST shop, which is a one page spread of small advertisements featuring businesses ranging from clothing, jewelry, and lingerie to surfing. The back page is a full page advertisement for Sock Dreams, a sustainably made sock company.

Bitch features fewer advertisements from businesses than *BUST*. In "The Food Issue," published in the winter of 2014, the magazine features Buy Olympia, the four-person operated online distributor, as well as Lunapads, an online store for sustainable feminine products, Gladrags, a women-owned feminine products online business, and Smitten Kitten, a feminist sex toy store. From there, its advertisement space is dedicated

to spots for Goddard College, *Herizons*, a Canadian feminist magazine, *Ms. Magazine*, and the Gaia Host Collective, which is a work-owned cooperative webhost for domain registration, web and email hosting and more. The Bullish Conference, a seminar for networking and for helping women negotiate career design is featured towards the end.

The difference between *Bitch* and *BUST* is the amount of advertisements and the approach to those they have. *BUST* features advertisements in the same way as conventional magazines. They are found throughout the spreads and as product placement. The difference is in the kinds of businesses and products promoted. *Bitch* tends to feature fewer businesses and keeps those ads either at the beginning or towards the end of the magazine. Mid-way through the issue, there is a five page spread with a list of every person who has donated to the magazine that year. The point of the list is to visibly recognize and thank each donor for keeping the magazine going. They also start the advertisement section in the back of the magazine with “Thanks to our sponsors for their generous support.” Each person or business who buys an advertisement spot in the magazine or who donates is treated much the same way—as a supporter of the publication.

In fact, *Bitch* was on the verge of shuttering its doors for financial reasons several years ago. Donations and extra subscriptions sold saved the publication and donation campaigns happen several times a year now. While it would be much easier to simply sell advertisement space to bigger businesses, the zine ethic that started this venture continues to inform their process. It is better to ask for donations and to entice new readers into buying subscriptions than it is to compromise their business ethic.

The main element of *BUST* and *Bitch*'s advertising choice is reminiscent of their zine roots, and it is an element that is woven through the fabric of both publications. DIY, Do-it-Yourself, is a hallmark of the zine ethic. Indeed, it is the very basis of the whole concept. Get out there, get involved and do for yourself over buying someone else's product, ideas and value system. Part of the choice *BUST* and *Bitch* make in advertisements is directly connected to this promotion for DIY. The products being advertised are from small business owners, who make their own product by hand or on a small business level i.e. in house. The advertisement space is relegated to small and alternative businesses. It is there to bring visibility to those out there who are fully embracing DIY. And it is there to connect an audience who wants to support this kind of commerce to more DIY-type businesses. It also serves as a gateway for those readers who may not be familiar with the concept. The advertisement space, while still promoting consumption, is promoting a very specific kind of consumption. DIY is a good example of that.

The *BUST* editors took a particular interest in DIY in their personal lives as well as in the magazine. The DIY section was part of their campaign to reclaim the domestic space and domestic activities. As Henzel and Stoller point out, when they started incorporating DIY information and features into *BUST* the domestic space was still viewed as either inconsequential or anti-feminist. After all, this was the space so many women from which had worked so hard to break away. Embracing it in such a public way and promoting it as something that could be potentially desirable to young women was controversial. Henzel and Stoller write:

Then, in 1997, we introduced a new crafting column, *She's Crafty*, in which we planned to start publishing all kinds of DIY ideas. At that time, no one could imagine a magazine aimed at young women that would encourage such old-fashioned activities as soap-making, knitting your own clothes, or learning to make dinner from scratch. And in particular, what would a magazine that considered itself a feminist be doing publishing such things? Cooking? Crocheting? These were exactly the types of things our feminist mothers had tried so hard to free us from; why would we voluntarily decide to go back? (Henzel and Stoller 8).

I think it is important to note both the feminist intentions of *BUST* and that they mention the time period in which this is being started. It is easy to look around us today and see a wealth of magazines dedicated to DIY ventures, whether or not they ascribe to that philosophy or are even aware of it. So today, perhaps crafting isn't the most earth-shattering notion, though apart from cooking, DIY still doesn't really occupy a huge presence in more conventional magazines. In fact, fashion magazines like *Vogue* are entirely consumption-driven. When considering what *BUST* did in light of the mainstream magazines they saw themselves in conversation with, both now and in particular then, the concept takes on a greater sense of significance. It is both embracing a feminist past that may remain part of the every female experience in many ways, but is frequently confronted with antagonism within the feminist community, and promoting the get involved, be your own producer concept of DIY. As Henzel and Stoller point out,

it was an idea that they really connected with and that they felt their audience needed in a number of different versions. They write:

Eventually, our interest in DIY grew so much that it required its own section in the magazine. Before we knew it, the do-it-yourself ethos infiltrated other areas of BUST as well, including our beauty and fashion coverage. While our style sensibility had always strayed away from mainstream fashion trends and instead leaned toward vintage looks and independent designers, soon we were including stories on how to dye your own hair and sew your own skirt, how to recycle your baggy jeans into cute, fitted shorts and convert your moth-eaten sweater into a nice scarf how to craft your own ring and string your own necklace. (10)

While the topics chosen are decidedly feminine, this reflects the conversation Henzel and Stoller felt they were having with mainstream magazines. As they write, it was about clothing and looking “cute,” but it was also about being thoughtful about one’s style and playing an active role in creating a self via their clothes. The techniques introduced may have been based on something relevant to the current style trends, but the twist was how to recycle, reuse, and infuse an individuality into a conversation that was already in place. The twist is making consumer culture more of a participatory culture. It is bridging the gap between the general reality for most individuals, which is one that includes consumption, and the ideal nature of the DIY ethic, which is one where the individual functions almost entirely upon their own efforts.

When we add Radway’s idea of a middlebrow position and the perspectives of the Book-of-the-Month Club editors, we have to consider whether or not consumerism is

the root of all evil. We have to consider that in order to live in a capitalist society that consumption on some level might be a necessity. It seems, then, that we as consumers can consume but only in so far as it supports our ability to be our own agents of creation. In other words, we could embrace consumerism enough to develop and support an alternative market that has its eye toward local economy and toward dismantling that which we don't like about mainstream industries. As the *Bitch* editors state on their website, we can create and by creating, can change what we don't like. In that sense, the DIY consumer is one who recognizes consumption as being a necessary part of a functioning community. As Henzel and Stoller point out, it isn't about entirely rejecting something, it's about reclaiming and reshaping it. They write:

Rather than rejecting all those things that our feminist foremothers had considered oppressive, we chose to re-examine them, and sometimes reclaim them, making them our own. Was sewing really such a suffocating and unsatisfying task, or did it just seem oppressive because women had been limited to performing this task and held back from performing others? And was this sense of oppression multiplied by the fact that the tasks themselves weren't given much value? [...] We found ourselves thinking, as feminists, that instead of shutting the door on these skills, perhaps we should be celebrating them. Couldn't there be both pleasure and pride in creating something with our own hands or cooking a nice meal from scratch? (Henzel and Stoller 9).

What is key in this passage is the concept of reclaiming aspects of a shared female past, but also the concept of infusing value into the act. It isn't the act that is problematic, it's

the way we think about it and the kind of value we place upon it. It is also requiring that everyone adhere to a certain standard in some kind of one-size fits all approach. And this is where this passage offers up a foothold into better understanding this middle ground between zines and zine ethic and mainstream glossies. In recognizing that consumption happens for many reasons, but creating an active conversation about how and why we consume, *BUST* and *Bitch* are reclaiming and reshaping the act. They are asking individuals to think about the value they place on consumption and the impact of that value on the overall community. Certain types of consumption can be positive if they are done to directly support citizens of the community or a small business within that community. They can also find their own inlet for creating their own version of a product.

There are, as Henzel and Stoller point out, options and these options don't have to be defined by conventional notions of consumption. As they write, "But DIY is not just about making things—it's also about making a life. Aside from learning how to knit a scarf, we wanted our readers to learn how to create a life on their own terms: to find work that is satisfying; to be brave enough to travel the world on their own; to manage their own finances; and especially, to make sure that certain traditions and milestones in their lives—such as getting married or giving birth—were as personal and individualized as they deserved to be" (10-11). There's an emphasis on celebrating that which is important and valuable to the individual. There's an emphasis on pleasurable aspects of life—crafting, making clothes, etc-- but there's also a push to help women with the more function-oriented parts of life such as finances, how to travel safely and how to navigate

motherhood as a feminist woman. The key here is viewing the DIY philosophy as a lifestyle, and as such, something that can redefine consumption.

Stoller demonstrates how something as simple as discussing knitting in the magazine lead to a shift in her own life as well as eventually leading to change in the community around her. She writes:

Not coincidentally, shortly after we published our first crafting column, I got into knitting big-time, wrote about it in *BUST*, and started a small group at a NYC café to teach knitting to anyone who was interested. From that tiny *Stitch 'n Bitch* group grew both a bestselling book series and a community, with over 1,000 groups worldwide today. The need to create and to learn how to be self-sufficient has also been taken up as a cause. Many people are looking for ways to opt out of a global corporate culture that encourages them to buy, buy, buy, with little regard for a product's impact on the environment or on the people who work in factories and modern-day sweatshops to make it. For these people, DIY is both the answer and the antidote. (11)

Her small, local knitting group turns into a book about knitting, promoting knitting culture and from there, knitting groups begin to form worldwide. As Stoller writes, DIY asks people to think about the impact of their buying and the ways in which they are taught and pushed to be buyers. Combining DIY with ad space for small businesses might be a way of finding a middle ground and a way to think about consumerism in publications like *BUST* and *Bitch*.

This discussion of consumerism seems to speak back to the issue many have with the Pro Am. There is the sense that because this is still technically amateur work that individuals have to abide by the classic definition of amateurism. It carries with it the antiquated notion that money is always a corrupting factor and that money doesn't play a huge role in our everyday lives. What the glossies do best, beyond finding a way to challenge some restrictive notions of how feminist writing should look, is challenge the notion that smart, thought provoking writing can't exist in the same space as advertisements. Or perhaps it is that it challenges both the notion that zines cannot expand to become Pro Am publications and that a successful magazine has to generate a lot of revenue. By choosing to support certain businesses over others, these glossy magazines are embracing the reality that, as with amateurism, capitalism can play a healthy role. They reinforce the idea that monetary external rewards function as a form of validation. They also seem to argue that much like the Pro Am, they can exist in their space without wanting to be less of what they are or more of something else. That is, they can stand in this space and enjoy the activism of zines and the validation of glossy status. Selling magazines only means that their message reaches more people and that sometimes feminism doesn't have to be so serious.

For the editors of glossies like *BUST* and *Bitch*, the concept of middlebrow literature, the middlebrow reader, and the marketing of middlebrow works opens up potential for what they are trying to achieve. What can be easily dismissed as just another magazine or a glossy that is glossing feminism in all sorts of problematic ways, as well as telling people they can buy their way to cool, feminist status, perhaps is

actually the recognition of a medium and an approach that could be effective in attracting people to feminist thought. It perhaps also points out some of the flaws of other feminist publications that make them inaccessible and also cause them to overlook significant feminist issues because they are packaged as seemingly mundane, everyday objects. As Radway points out in her analysis of the Book-of-the-Month Club, part of what the editors saw themselves as doing is raising the taste of their readers through the book selections offered. This might be the most significant act that glossies like *BUST* and *Bitch* accomplish: possibly raising the taste and the expectation level of fashion magazines and their readers.

What I think these two publications do, with the help of Radway's work, that is particularly useful to my previous chapters and my analysis of the amateur is that they support the idea that there can be more than one version of amateur work. In the case of Radway and the glossies, within in us lies multiple readers of maybe multiple skill levels, but that all of these readers have the potential to be impactful on our lives. Booth himself exemplifies this. His work is about being an amateur musician, but he also held a doctoral degree and worked as a professor on the college level. While he experienced professional success, it never displaced his need for his amateur work. When Radway pines for her leisure reading and bemoans having to hide it away, she is recognizing the need for that reading self because it gives her something her other work and reading cannot. *BUST* and *Bitch* may never be as thorough and serious as more academic journals are, but they occupy a space that is equally as important.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION:

PRO AM WORK, GLOSSIES AND THE FUTURE OF AMATEURISM

The Smith's song "How Soon Is Now?" asks "when you say it's going to happen 'now,' what exactly do you mean?" Aimed at a lover who is being vague about her feelings for the singer, the song reads as a plea for response. It begs the individual in question to confirm that she does have intentions to connect with the singer at some point. What the listener hears is the desperation that comes from not knowing and not having a feeling of connection. So, what the singer seems to be asking is: you say we are going to connect, but do you actually mean it?

In *How Soon is Now?: Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time*, Carolyn Dinshaw opens up with an analysis of this song in order to establish the uncertainty of "now" as a temporal concept. She writes that the singer understands "now" differently than the subject to which he is singing does, and so there is confusion as well as tension. She argues that what that reveals to us is that "now" is not a universal feeling. If this is true, then she believes life can be lived in different temporalities. She writes:

The sound of desire in 'How Soon Is Now?' is restless, but through this impatience even bigger questions press forth: is there any other way to understand time, or a *life-time*, beyond this vacant sequence of isolated, and isolating, present moments? Is there another way to value waiting, other than as

exasperating and without promise? Is there any way to participate in a public, communal present, something shared, something together, *now*? (Dinshaw 3)

What Dinshaw is trying to establish as she poses this series of questions is: there are different ways of valuing lived moments and life in general. More importantly, the effects of a normal, everyday life that is driven by work and money beg, like the singer, for a different kind of “now.” While she is certainly not calling for people to leave their jobs and reject all of the ways that employment structures our lives, she seems to be questioning whether we have allowed that element to dictate too much of our lives. When she poses the question: “Is there another way to value waiting, other than as exasperating and without promise?” she is taking aim at the way we embrace, or dismiss, the time in between constructive work hours. She is asking if there is a way to enjoy that time rather than see it as unnecessary and draining. When she poses the question: “Is there any way to participate in a public, communal present, something shared, something together, *now*?” She is wondering if there is the potential to use this non-work-related time in a way that can bring us together and fight the “vacant isolation” the work world creates.

What I like about Dinshaw’s approach isn’t necessarily that it embraces the most detailed and complex definitions of amateurs and professionals, but that she firmly connects the internal rewards of work to our lived experiences. Ultimately, what she is interested in is how amateur work can challenge the ordinary pace of life. She takes a particular look at the work space, but I would argue that what she is pushing for is a reevaluation of all lived spaces. When we think about what are pressing issues within the

amateur community, this idea offers us much to consider. As we saw in my introduction, one of the current issues surrounding amateur work right now is that the term and figure are commonly subjected to a very simplified definition. And this definition is fitted into an amateur/professional binary that states amateurs do work “for the love of it” and professional do work for money. What we know is that there are different kinds of amateurs born of different reasons for entering into this kind of work. Some of them are more connected to the professional sphere because they are either looking to enter into professional work or they have left it and wish to stay involved part-time. Some of the amateur work that is done is strictly out of personal interest. Financial compensation is neither desired nor expected. We have the example of the Pro Am (professional amateur) who straddles the line between amateur and professional. And what this figure challenges is the idea that work can only ever be either paid or unpaid, and that money is a corrupting factor.

Dinshaw notes the inevitable connection of money and compensation to the look and feel of work. Just as the NCAA committees insist that in order to preserve the integrity of the college athlete, monetary compensation cannot be a part of the equation, Dinshaw argues that the amateur accomplishes the work of creating new kinds of lived spaces because they are free of the restrictions of the standard work environment. She writes that “Professionals are paid for their work, and their expert time can be seen to share characteristics with money: it is abstract, objective, and countable. Professional work time is clock-bound and calendrical, regulated abstractly and independently of individuals, and the lives of professionals conform to this temporality” (Dinshaw

21). The key factor to this is money. Because professional work is paid, one's time can be controlled by it, and because professional work is meant to generate revenue, one should feel compelled to comply with the constraints of the work day time clock.

The arguments against the mixing of money and amateur work seem valid. If we want amateur work to perform the function we argue it does, it stands to reason that we need to insist upon the best conditions for that to happen. If money is a corrupting force, even if it's only interrupting the free flow of the amateur thought process and time schedule, then perhaps we should fight against allowing it to be a factor. However, given what Stebbins and Haley establish with the range of amateur work, I would argue that it isn't about all amateur work looking and performing the same way and in a money-free environment. The issue is being aware of what kind of work is being done, as well as what influences are impacting the work.

So the Pro Am occupies a very specific place within Stebbins P-A-P structure (professional-amateur-public). These individuals are not pre-professional, and so, looking to move out of the space. They are, in fact, happy with what the space affords them. They can both make money for their work and enjoy the flexibility that is afforded the amateur. This is what makes this figure such an interesting amateur to examine. When considering how the amateur offers us another lived pace or time, the Pro Am seems to be the one who has the greatest ability to influence it. If we bring this to the here and now, we can see Pro Am work all around the internet and on television regardless if it is being articulated in these terms. The internet and the idea that ordinary

lives make for good, semi-scripted entertainment reveals a new lived space. And this space is that of the Pro Am.

A prime example of Pro Am work is Essena O’Neill, whose job is posting pictures of herself on Instagram. What O’Neill, Instagram modeling in general, and reality television show us is the bigger impact of Web 2.0 and how it has played an integral role in developing the space for Pro Am work. These individuals are not just speaking their truths on their blogs and social media websites, and they aren’t simply going on game shows to win prizes. What we see these average people doing is taking the opportunities of Web 2.0, and its guiding philosophy, to make a living as professional amateurs. They are making money for being themselves. They are on television shows not because they are skilled actors, but because they are characters and because they are considered normal, everyday people—even if they achieve a level of celebrity status. The difference between these individuals and regular celebrities and professionals is that they are more accessible. They are amateurs, and so in some ways, just like us.

What they are doing is something that many of us could also do. As Dinshaw emphasizes, the benefit of the amateur and amateur work is primarily how it gives us a different way to interact with our work that is more personal. It is a way to combat the isolation created by ordinary work. As Robert A. Stebbins, William Haley, and Richard Edwards argue, amateur work is important because it is the necessary counterbalance to professional work. It is unrestricted, and thus, can draw on all sorts of sources for inspiration. While this work may not be as structured and polished as professional work,

it has been proven that amateur work provides much needed creativity and innovation in the professional realm. As well, it holds the potential to challenge misconceptions or outdated assumptions. As Lucia Vodanovic argues, the distance created between amateur space and professional space is necessary for each to think and create in their own ways, but there must be engagement across that distance. That is, both parties must interact with one another to challenge and enhance the work being done.

The Pro Am is the closest to the borders between the two groups, which means that it is in some ways better suited to challenge the conventions of the professional sphere because it is the most familiar with the skills and atmosphere of that work space. On the other hand, having the least amount of distance from the professional makes it a contested figure and act. The concern about the impact of money on the purity of amateurism seems heightened when looking at this kind of work. As Vodanovic warns, these figures are sometimes seen as too close to be able to maintain enough of an amateur perspective. I would argue that we need to embrace the work and understand it before making any decisions about its impact.

When O'Neill reveals that she wants to be more transparent about her work and asks that her followers pay her for her modeling, it is not well-received. People who were under the assumption that she was an amateur, by the basic definition, found her request to be selfish and out of line. However, Arthur Chu argues that it is honest to the kind of work she is doing. In other words, the issue isn't that she is working for money, it's that people aren't aware that amateur work can, and in some cases be, paid.

As well Edwards also points out that there are standards to what and who can be considered Pro Am. This is not a figure that stands in for all amateur work. And this is important to note because it's easy to view all activity within the scope of Web 2.0 as amateur, or more importantly Pro Am. The reality is not all of us are Pro Am level. Amateur work that is better left unpaid will be. Those who don't want money to impact the way they do their work don't have to embrace it. By embracing a more complex definition of amateur work, we aren't eradicating the classic amateur. We are simply acknowledging the reality of the culture within which we live. And I think in some ways, this is asking us to consider whether the amateur wasn't already this complex, and we have simplified it for our own reasons.

And this is where I see zine work, in particular its relationship to and feelings about glossies, being incredibly significant. I started off this project with a sweeping glance at amateur work in general. What I found was that there are many individuals out there who want to consider this figure and this work. They want to be able to identify, classify, and label because it makes it easier to determine which work is valuable and which is only semi-valuable. They want to know who deserves money and whose work would be corrupted by it. And while many of them will factor in the concept of doing something "for the love of it," most of them are more concerned with who does it for the money and how much of it.

A handful of these individuals were quite concerned with preserving the amateur both as a figure and a kind of work. They recognize that the amateur is the foil to the professional and that amateurs have historically worked alongside professionals in a

paralleled way—each one checking in with the other, each learning and gaining from their counterpart. What these writers focus on is the creativity, the innovation, and the passion that amateurs bring to their field of study. And, they recognize that this doesn't come at the expense of the professionals' creativity, innovation, and passion. Rather, both groups retain the same qualities, but work, as Dinshaw argues, in different ways and at different paces.

There is any number of subjects that I could have chosen to analyze when it comes to amateur work, but what zines bring to this conversation that is most interesting is that as writers, they articulate this process more readily than other groups. What we have to infer and ascertain from examples and actions in other fields is written out plainly for us within the pages of the zine. As well, these zine writers are grappling with the tension that exists between amateur spaces and professional ones. In an act of preserving their own space, zines writers are adamant about distancing themselves from not only professional magazines, but feminist glossies as well. The P-A-P system is clear here. Amateur zine work is the professional counterpart. It is in charge of challenging and questioning the work being done, as well as contributing to new ways of approaching magazine work. With the addition of feminist glossies like *BUST* and *Bitch* comes the issue of the Pro Am, a figure and positioning that calls attention to the ways that zine writers conceptualize amateur work.

First and foremost, I believe that zines show us something about the need for transparency, for visibility, and for complexity in the way we define amateur work. Even without the issue of money, this amateur work shows us that we have a limited view of

what external rewards can be; therefore, we have a limited view of what motivates any work—amateur or professional. The seemingly insignificant process of conceptualizing and creating a zine becomes a lot more important with the addition of Levi-Strauss' theory of the bricoleur because it raises the artistic standards and expectations of the process.

It becomes even more essential when brought into the larger conversation about amateur work today. What we see these zine writers doing is articulating their work and their status to themselves and their readers. I argue that this is them expressing a sense of transparency of process, but also establishing visibility for their work as amateurs. What is evident from an analysis of this process is that the better they understand themselves as amateurs and their zines as amateur work, the more they are capable of feeling internal rewards. As well, the analysis reveals that community is an vital aspect to zine writers and their feeling of internal rewards. Moreover, it demonstrates that the creation of community is a way in which zine writers actively pursue non-monetary external rewards.

However, when the analysis shifts to feminist glossies, what becomes apparent is that the zine community has a very limited definition of amateur work and that this community wants to keep a considerable distance from the professional sphere. I would argue that while zine writers want to challenge what they see, they aren't necessarily acting in such a way as to directly change these magazines. I think their focus on the local keeps them at a greater distance than would be useful in really interacting with mainstream magazines. The feminist glossies seem to have stepped in to fill that need.

They are closer to conventional magazines, while also having an ear to the zine ethic. By occupying what I argue is a Pro Am space, they are positioning themselves in such a way as to directly confront the issues that exist in professional magazines. They also challenge preconceived notions of amateur work and money that seem to exist within the zine community. By examining how these glossies seem to not only reinforce, but expand upon the concept of middlebrow magazine work, I show that there are other spaces being occupied in the magazine community. These publications function much the way Dinshaw argues amateur work does. They challenge our two recognized forms of lived work spaces within the writing world. There is the professional space and then there is the classic amateur space that gets represented here by zines. What glossies seem to do is declare that those two ways of functioning are not the only ways writing work can, or has to, be done. By using the concept of middlebrow writing and literature, I try to conceptualize what a Pro Am magazine might look like and how it might function within the overall magazine community. While *BUST* and *Bitch* might not call themselves Pro Am, in some major ways they seem to occupy a space that is very similar. I argue that this might be what Pro Am looks like in magazine publication form.

Ultimately, what I hope to accomplish with this analysis of zine work is to demonstrate that transparency, visibility, and distance are key terms for understanding the current issues of amateur work. I hope to show how zine work is working to address this issue, but also how it replicates the same concerns about boundaries and money as other amateur groups have. Just as the NCAA is struggling to negotiate the realities of contemporary amateur athletics, zine writers are being confronted with the reality of

magazine work. The Pro Am athlete has valid reasons for wanting greater compensation for his/her performances. The feminist glossies seem to make the same argument which is: money is part of not only the work, but in how we value work.

I believe that this is the argument that we will see more frequently as Pro Am work grows. Therefore, I would argue that this is an issue that will continue to be relevant, and one that will become necessary to understand and navigate. Pro Am work is going to appear in more places, if it hasn't done so already. If I were to take this analysis a step further, I would examine more Pro Am work that has sprouted out of social media, as well as blog work. And I would consider how this is impacting smaller presses, as well as larger ones. That being said, I think that the zine and glossies relationship shows a great deal about what kind of impact Pro Am work can have on the publishing world and what kinds of struggles it will encounter.

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