

*Fanzines, Resistance
and Feminism: An
alternative story told
by Portuguese fanzines
meets Alternative
History*

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Fanzines, Resistance and Feminism: An alternative story told by Portuguese fanzines meets Alternative History

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161

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Abstract. The first fanzines, ‘home-made objects’ - produced individually or collectively, and with a limited circulation – against alternative stories, appeared in the 1920s-30s and were associated with science fiction fans; later, during the 1950s-60s, band and music fanzines became increasingly popular. However, the production, distribution and consumption of fanzines gained global relevance with the emergence of the punk phenomenon in the UK and the US during the 1970-80s, assuming itself as an area of freedom of thought and do-it-yourself (DIY) creation, and as an alternative to conventional media. In this article, we address and analyze Portuguese feminist fanzines as invisible storytellers of women in contemporaneity, namely in the denunciation of male and patriarchal dynamics of symbolic domination, i.e, as a form of alternative history. Through that analysis we are able to identify key aspects and moments where this invisibility could have been addressed and the attitude of the status quo regarding these fanzines could have become positive. This identification provides the data for an analytical construction of an Alternative Chronology regarding the Portuguese feminist fanzine path, and through such lenses more insight regarding past and present prejudice against de DIY artistry is achieved.

Keywords: Fanzines; Feminism; Resistance; Portugal; Punk; Alternative History

1. Introduction

Starting with their definition, we must clarify that fanzines are *home-made objects*, produced individually or collectively, and that they have, in general, a limited circulation. The first fanzines appeared in the 1920s-30s and were associated with science fiction fans; later, during the 1950s-60s, band and music fanzines became increasingly popular. [1, 2, 3]. However, the production, distribution and consumption of fanzines gained global relevance with the emergence of the punk phenomenon in the UK and the US during the 1970-80s, assuming itself as an area of freedom of thought and do-it-yourself (DIY) creation, and as an alternative to conventional media [4, 5]. In fact, according to Teal Triggs “the fanzines adopted DIY, the independent approach that punk musicians had embraced. With the rise of newly formed bands one sees the improvised creation of clubs, small independent record labels and record shops (...). Similarly, the fanzines offered fans a ‘free space for the development of ideas and practices’, and a visual space free of formal design rules and visual expectations” [1, 2].

Atton [4] contests the idea that fanzine is essentially a subcultural product; going beyond the specificity of British punk fanzine, this researcher has opened space for the analysis of a whole diversity of alternative media. Even Hebdige’s [6] approach was ultimately that punk fanzines sought to create an alternative space of expression in relation to traditional media which tended to misrepresent or give a negative view of punk [7]. This characteristic is, moreover, common to the fanzines that preceded the punk fanzines. From Atton’s [4] perspective, a fanzine emerges for three main reasons: as a space for expression and discussion for fans of a musical genre (band or artist) who have no space or are forgotten by the traditional music press; it serves to strengthen an underground musical genre (band, artist) whose

reach is very limited; and finally, it allows fans of a niche musical style to maintain their connection and enthusiasm [6]. In all these cases, the goal is to create a community of interest and taste - the fanzine thus assumes itself as a kind of low-tech predecessor of current social networks [8]- and this is not confined to the punk universe.

Not being a fictional narrative, the approach to the Portuguese fanzines that we will undertake here is inescapably linked to feminism. Almeida [24] effectively speaks of “feminists from a country officially without feminism. But what are the reasons for this? To answer this, it is necessary to analyse the genesis of the feminist movement on national territory. Since this is not the place for an in-depth analysis where we point to the first appearance of the feminist ideology in Portugal, we will simply start the analysis with the emergence in 1909 of the Republican League of Portuguese Women. This organisation, as well as the national feminist movement, in the first half of the 20th century, was essentially geared towards fighting for better rights at educational, health and, very importantly, political level, specifically for the right to vote. Gomes [25] even speaks of a golden age of Portuguese feminism during the 1920s, a consequence of the emergence of feminist conferences and the National Council of Portuguese Women [26]. However, with the Revolution of 28 May 1926 and, in 1933, with the entry into force of the Constitution, which institutionalised the Estado Novo (New State), the universe of possibilities of the feminist movement was quickly curtailed. With a traditionalist view of women as guardians of the home, the New State had a very specific and deterministic view, supported by the idea of a feminine nature, on what roles to adopt for women [27], in which “the cult of maternity and anti-feminism, as well as the functionality of sexual discrimination, led to paradoxes” [29].

Feminism thus became, like communism, a target to be shot down in the policy of destruction that the dictatorial regime applied until 25 April 1974.

As such, our main concern is to analyse female participation in Portuguese fanzines, to study their concerns, the main themes addressed, their discourse, amongst others. Furthermore, we intend to identify the key aspects and moments where a different attitude regarding these fanzines could have emerged from their historical, social and cultural context. We must not forget that Simon Firth [16] called fanzines “ideological magazines” which were extremely effective spaces for establishing ‘musical ideological communities’. We cross-reference this analysis with a brief exploration on how some of the factual female participation could have changed social aspects for women if the status quo had integrated these fanzines in mainstream. This analytical probing will be done resourcing to the concept of an Alternative History divergence.

The article is organized in the following sections: Introduction, where we provide a primary presentation of context of research and objectives; Background, which explores the essential for understanding the research, subdivided in **Fanzines, other stories, and other visions**, and **Feminism and hidden stories**; the main focus of the work, subdivided in **Women, silences, and fights, Fanzines and women voices: Exploring alternative story in Alternative History**; Present Continuous of Being a Woman in a Patriarchal Society and Future Perspectives, that relates the analysis in previous sections with the status quo; Conclusion; and Invited Lecture f2f Session Insight.

2. Background

2.1. Fanzines, other stories, and other visions

Albeit its ‘outsider’ nature, the fanzines and their production associated with punk have made an

indelible contribution to the expansion of music scenes, to their documentation, to their visibility and to the loyalty of belonging to the music scene [9]. And more than that: the association of fanzine with punk has brought about the visibility of fanzine as a means of communication [10]. With Dannus, we can conclude that “by regularly narrating the punk scene and encouraging their readers to ‘be part of it’, the fanzines have contributed entirely to the development and dynamics of the movement” [11]. The “explosion” of punk fanzines was, moreover, one of the main reasons for the increase in alternative media: the local written press, free radios, ‘pirate’ televisions [12]. In fact, from an early age, the fanzines assumed themselves as a very important part of the construction of punk scenes - alongside bands, records, concerts - actively contributing to the creation and consolidation of a certain sense of community [1, 2, 3] and existence of symbols of belonging [13]. This concept of community is rooted in the importance of the meaning of music in everyday life, through its role as a symbolic anchor for the feeling of belonging to a group and a matrix for representing the common sense of community experience [14, 15, 16].

It is important to note here the relative delay of Portugal in the edition of fanzines. In fact, the first Portuguese comic strip fanzines appeared only in the early 1970s, more precisely in 1972, the year in which the pioneering Argon fanzine was published; later, in 1974, Orion was published [47]. The emergence of these first fanzines dedicated to comic books was essentially due to the small and very conservative nature of the Portuguese publishing market, which focused essentially on publishing classics, thus offering many opportunities for young national authors to publish their works; at the same time, the fanzines allowed easier access to some international novels, in a context in which the purchase of comic

books and magazines on the import market was extremely expensive [47].

As Pine [17] says, fanzines are material forms of symbolic representation, and this is how we will understand the Portuguese punk fanzine object of our attention in this article (see an example of a Fanzine by Ondina Pires in Figure 1). They are objects built in a voluntary way that allow individuals who participate in the process (of editing and distribution) to affirm their social existence, to integrate (sub)cultures, tribes¹ or musical scenes and participate culturally; simultaneously, the fanzines materialize in a local movement markedly youthful of dynamization of an underground scene, facilitating the dissemination of records, bands, concerts and stories. They are a fundamental element in the realisation of tastes, affinities, social, political, ideological, cultural, lifestyle and musical belongings [10]. In this sense, it will be appropriate to perspective the fanzine within the collaborative model of Becker's art world (1984), since these artifacts develop within a relational framework of the realisation of tastes, affinities, knowledge, social, political, ideological, cultural, lifestyle and musical belongings. In particular, as we are addressing specifically feminism, Portuguese women and punk fanzines, we will focus the displayed imagery from these fanzines on the work of Ondina Pires, the first Portuguese woman to play drums in indie bands as case study, as her path illustrates many

of the relevant features to be analyzed.

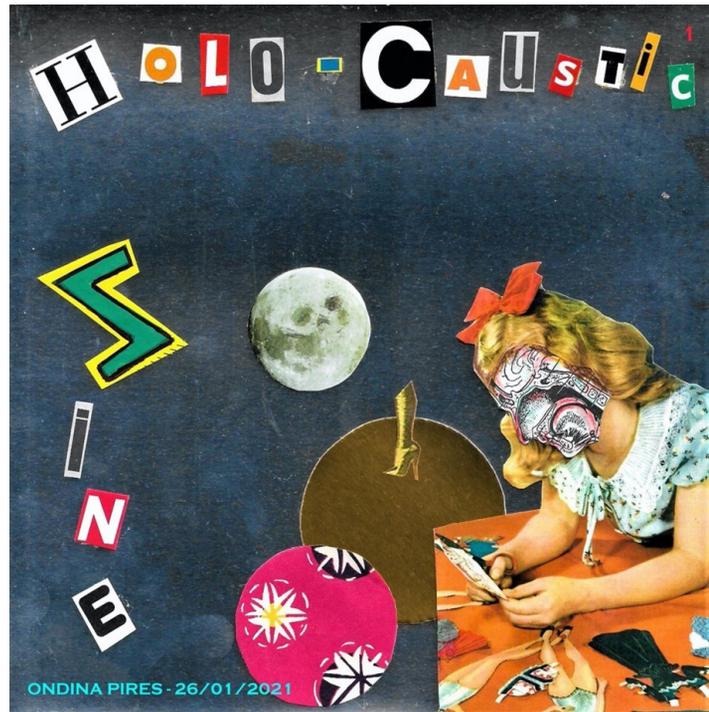


Figure 1: Holo-Caustic Zine by Ondina Pires, 2021

Source: Ondina Pires.

Like other dimensions of the punk movement, the graphic component of fanzines plays a role as important as written texts, or even more so. In fact, the written and visual components of the fanzines are very often so deeply mixed that it is practically impossible to analyse each of these two elements separately. In analogy with record covers and punk demo tapes, or even the bands' own visual aesthetics, we find in many fanzines a clearly DIY graphic orientation², based on a mix of cut-and-paste techniques, cropping, drawing/illustration, handwritten and typed texts, photo

1 Going back to Maffesoli [48], post-subcultural studies advocate the belonging of social actors to a plurality of tribes marked by a simultaneous variety of musical genres and subgenres [49] in a context of increasing complexity - particularly in an increasingly interconnected world, where ideas, people, music rotate on a scale and speed without precedent - that moves away from the "mainstream monolithic" dichotomy - "resistant subcultures" [48, 49].

2 Take the already classic example of the first number of the Sideburn fanzine, in 1977, which integrated a three-chord guitar scheme announcing: "This is a chord. This is another. This is a third. Now it forms a band" [53].

manipulation, etc. Fanzines such as *Panache* [19], *Sniffin' Glue* [20] and *Ripped & Tom* [21], pioneers at the time when the punk movement was emerging in England (second half of the 1970s), contributed decisively to creating a real 'canon' - both in terms of graphics and editorial content - which has become globalised and is still present in many of the punk fanzines produced today [22].

As Duncombe [23] has shown, thoughts and personal ethics occupy a central place in this type of self-edited independent publications. The pages of the fanzines often mirror the ideology of their authors, which is evident in their political-social positioning or in their support for certain causes. We also see manifestations of a certain taste or aesthetics, visible for example in interviews with certain bands or in critical reviews of records and demo tapes, concerts, films, books or even other fanzines. In some fanzines, we find articles with very personal contents, sometimes with an introspective and even intimate nature. The fanzines are, in short, very rich communication supports, in which we find extensive information that allows us to understand a little better, in each historical moment and in each specific socio-cultural and territorial context, how the punk movement has been developing: how it has emerged, which are the protagonists and places of reference (bands, publishers, squatters, social centres, bars and concert halls, record and clothing shops), international networks, etc. As Dannus warns, the fanzines evolve with time and with the very sedimentation and configuration of particular punk scenes: "their number began to increase in 1977 and, although punk rock slowly mixed with mainstream culture, the fanzines increasingly tried to define and reflect about the future of punk culture"³ [11].

2.2. Feminism and *hidden stories*

The problem until 1974 in Portugal was the dilution of feminism in the anti-fascist struggle. In other words, there were several problems to be fought for, and invariably women's demands tended to be seconded, if not simply forgotten. More than this, Gorjão [29] notes that in opposition to the regime in the 1950s and 1960s, the participation of women is low, and there is almost an invisibility of these in the main opposition movements, such as the Movement for Democratic Unity (MUD). But this struggle, when it existed, was part of the general framework of the anti-fascist struggle, with women's struggles being understood as just one part of the anti-regime struggle and class struggle and rejecting a specific struggle for women's rights. Even in the academic struggles of the 1960s, there is a clear participation of women, but always in secondary positions of power, which rarely come across, speak out, etc [26]. Gorjão [29] highlights the irony that the traditionalist view of the New State has come to inscribe itself in the opposition movements themselves, where female subalternity persists⁴.

With the 25th of April 1974, one might think that the scope for feminism would increase. However, this did not happen [24, 25]. Although there were undeniable advantages, what was noted was a continuation of the subordination of the specific nature of feminist struggles to the detriment of other struggles: the proletariat, farmers, the class struggle, etc. As in the pre-revolutionary period, the invisibility of women in positions of power, such as in parties, social movements, trade un-

3 The English language excerpts were translated by the authors of this article.

4 Regardless of this stage of lesser brightness, the formation, still in the 1950s, of GRAAL - International Movement of Christian Women, and, in 1968, of the Democratic Movement of Women (MDM) should be highlighted.

ions, etc., was maintained. A paradigmatic example of feminist struggles during the revolutionary period was the call by the Women's Liberation Movement (MLM) for a demonstration to celebrate the International Year of Women. After media reports that a striptease of protest was being prepared, the result was that the demonstrators found themselves surrounded "by a sea of men determined to put an end to the lust of those women" [24]. A clear demonstration of the machismo that existed in the country in a revolutionary period and which demonstrates the reduced margin of freedom for clearly feminist actions. Despite everything, this phase was at the genesis of new national feminist movements, such as UMAR, the MAPA association, the Porto Women's Group (GMP), the Women's Network, promoted by Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, among other associations [26, 27, 28]. In the 1980s and 1990s, in a very brief way, the main struggles revolved around contraception, the voluntary termination of pregnancy, domestic violence, trafficking of women, labour equality, among other demands and struggles [26].

3. Women, silences, and fights

To this approach of the feminist movement in Portugal, we must add the silence that has also affected subcultural studies, namely the study of girls and women. McRobbie & Garber [30, 31, 32] point out that when they appear, it usually occurs in subordinate roles (girlfriend, sex object, etc.) which only reinforce the stereotyped image of women. And although there have been women since the beginning of the punk movement, attracted by the supposed acceptance of gender equality, what has happened is that these women were denied leadership roles in the subculture and when they reached them they were victims of physical and psychological violence [33]. Thus, in

sub-cultural movements such as punk, the female participants, despite the myth of gender equality in this movement, were still in subordinate positions. Even more so when they exposed their visible internal contradictions between discourse and practice [34].

So, the question is how to explain this invisibility? Are girls absent from subcultures? One explanation for this can be found in the composition of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, which was dominated by men. Their studies, in many cases, fall into a kind of heroic celebration of these groups and an identification "by the powerless intellectuals with the deviant who appear to be most successful in controlling events" [30, 31, 32]. The media themselves had their part to play in this devaluation⁵: looking at the punk subculture, Helen Reddington [35] observes that several journalists referred to young punks involved in bands through the term *punkette*, i.e. giving the impression of someone entering exclusively male territory, and thus devaluing female involvement, characterising it as something different, and subordinate, to what was done by boys and men. So, we wonder what it would have been like if punk movements had been embraced by the media, just as pop movements were for example. We also questioned if this had happened, maybe it wouldn't have been necessary to have a movement like riot grrrl, calling for Freedom and equality for women at the heart of punk scenes and subcultures. Taking still this myriad of possibilities, we cannot focus only on the negative aspects, because if the media had not been so condemnatory towards the punk subculture, women like Poly Styrene, Siouxsie Sioux or Kathleen Hanna, would not have obtained the prominence they have today, not only in the aca-

5

For an analysis of the journalistic representations of Portuguese feminism, see Peça [37].

democratic world, but also outside it. Another question, what if the media had accepted the punk movements? If that had happened, maybe subcultural studies as we know them wouldn't exist. Maybe DIY wouldn't be considered as an ethos and as a praxis, that is, as a means of resistance and survival. Maybe all aesthetics would have been different and maybe bands like the Sex Pistols wouldn't have carved the imaginary of an era. Nothing would have been the same because subcultures wouldn't be subcultures, they wouldn't be alternative or underground. This media issue cannot be dissociated from the influence of the CCCS beyond the walls of the academy. It is possible to analyse its influence on the journalistic and artistic milieu [36]. There was, therefore, a goal of elaborating a social critique, often motivated by the revolutionary desires of many of the then left-wing British intellectuals.

Returning to the issues highlighted by McRobbie and Garber [30], another concern is the economic area. That is, in the post-war period there was an increase in disposable incomes for individuals, but this increase was unevenly distributed, especially at the gender level, with women benefiting less from all these increases. On the other hand, consumption patterns themselves are structurally different: girls focused much more than boys on household and marriage issues [31]. Thus, the issue is not so much the presence of girls in male-dominated subcultures as how girls related to each other in their own subcultures. One example is the teenybopper subculture, very centred on magazines, radio, and television, and which revolved around pop stars. All this also served to drive away academic interest: it was seen as a culture with less creative qualities, less associated with the working class, and essentially a completely manufactured form of culture [32].

However, what we see is a relationship between subcultures and the dominant ideologies

of masculinity, where girls or women are voted into subordinate positions. McRobbie and Garber [30] analyse this female exclusion on two levels: first, the male domination of subcultural spaces and practices; second, the male bias present in the choices made by researchers for subcultures, such as mods or rockers that offer few attractions for a female public. In fact, Brill [38], in an analysis of the Gothic subculture, shows that even in a subculture that emphasises femininity over masculinity (see Figure 2), in practice the reality is different: while a masculine androgyny is valued and brings with it a high subcultural capital; a feminine androgyny is devalued as an excessively feminine style. On the other hand, the absence of a feminine style by women is highly inadvisable. In other words, while male androgyny is perceived as a position against dominant notions of masculinity and therefore associated with a sociopolitical value, female androgyny is only perceived as an unattractive bad option.



Figure 2. Holo-Caustic Zine by Ondina Pires, 2021

Source: Ondina Pires.

And even in a fully manufactured culture like the teenybopper it is possible to find processes of negotiation and resistance. There are also some explanatory factors for the adoption of the teenybopper subculture by these girls: first, as a consequence of a double standard, where the freedom given to boys was much greater than that given to girls, participation in this culture did not require spending one's free time away from home; moreover, it did not require much money and did not entail many personal risks. On the other hand, this subculture allowed girls to be active, since it 'offered girls an opportunity to define themselves as different, both from their youngest and oldest acquaintances' [31, 32].

This subcultural invisibility is only one part of a true invisibility on a musical level. There is a real forgetting of women by the musical world. But what is the reason for the disappearance of women who participated in this movement? For Strong [39], it is a common feature throughout history the disappearance of women when the past becomes history. Bridging with what we said before about the role of the media, we can certainly question to what extent the media would not have a key role in combating the invisibility of women within the punk music scene. What seems to us is that if there had been a media investment in the dissemination of punk artists - as the ones we mentioned before - maybe there wouldn't have been the need to, nowadays, invest in the production of memoirs, biographies or autobiographies, with the intuit of making known the reality lived by women in the punk movements because, probably, these same difficulties wouldn't have existed, or at least not in the same way. For some authors, one of the reasons is that women are not involved in the preservation process [40] and, on the other hand, an inability to control the language and symbols used to reproduce power structures. Thus, a question arises: What if it had been

women who were considered the canons and the symbolic references in societies instead of men? Thinking about these issues of preservationism, alternative media and the music industry, would the paths have been the same? Maybe the formats were different and maybe men didn't feel the same difficulties as women. In an alternative universe, if women were responsible for the preservation, production and creation processes, maybe there would be no women or men forgotten by history. However, in the example analysed by Strong the grunge, this disappearance did not occur after the death of the women, but during their lives, which makes the case more complex. Similarly, access to these records is easy, as easy as access to the music of male musicians. So, for the author the question is to be a woman per se which leads to a higher probability of forgetting [39].

And partly because of the subordinate position women occupy in popular music: their contributions are characterised as pop, i.e. not real, quality music, like that produced by male bands. This is made even worse when we are talking about musical genres understood as masculine or, similarly, when these women have to deal with a musical press permeated by masculine discourse. Another pertinent issue is the constant novelty of female bands. That is, every successful new women's band is always perceived as the first, which makes Davies [41] talk about perpetual novelty at the level of women's bands.

For example, the representations between grunge and riot grrrl. Progressively there is now clearly a greater distinction or search for distinction at the level of musical media: based on NME⁶ articles, Strong [39] was able to highlight a search to establish two phases of female bands, which

6 The acronym stands for New Musical Express and it is a British music, film and culture website and brand

also serves to highlight the perpetual novelty of female bands mentioned above, but, more relevant to the case analysed, are generally articles that seek to reduce women to their gender. All this has therefore led to a demarcation between grunge and riot grrrl. This last label ended up, according to the author, being a convenient label to apply to all and any female bands of this era [39].

4. Fanzines and women voices

Ideological magazines in which the language conveys a message of *resistance*, since these fanzines were, above all, places of opposition to both the cultural and political mainstream, and therefore places where there were cultural and political actions of opposition. In this essence, as ‘political forums’ disseminating the views of individuals, and equally of the punk collectivity in a given time and space [6] fanzines are ‘developed, maintained and refined by people who bring a variety of histories and interests’ [42].

And female fanzines have contributed to what Garrison [43] refers to as ‘oppositional technologies’, i.e. the use of DIY techniques, something that the riot grrrl movement will use in abundance, from music production, zines, costume jewellery, etc. Piano [44] stresses the importance of the production and distribution of zines as a fundamental aspect of a subcultural feminist production, and these zines differed from the rest given that they were directioned towards a female audience, i.e. a place “both for an identity construction and, at the same time, a ‘safe place’ for women to reflect on their experiences (...) focusing on issues such as sexual assault, eating disorders and punk sexism” [44]. But what if the fanzines had never appeared? How would it be possible for women to actively participate in subcultural productions? Taking one of the first questions we addressed for these alternative history scenarios, perhaps it was necessary that women were accepted or had to open

their paths to enter mainstream media. Perhaps if that had been the route taken, rather than one focused on creating alternative channels of communication, there would not be fanzines like *Your Mouth Is a Guillotine*, *!Mulibu!*, or *Cuntroll*, but also there would not be - in opposition - the female invisibility that exists and has existed. The alternative or underground communication channels could have remained, in a logic of participation in a scene like punk or just for fun, however, if this had not been the focus of attention by the women who created and fomented the riot movements, the path of the artistic and cultural industry spoken of here would have been completely different.

These were the political forums in which it was possible to challenge the dominant representations of women which allowed them, besides building new concepts of femininity [45], also “to explore issues of sexuality, gender, identity, race, sexual orientation and class’, especially through ‘manifests, visual representations (...) drawings and photographs as quotes from thinkers and intellectuals” [44].

The importance of utilizing fanzines as tools of intervention and their consequent importance for young women did not lie primarily in their impact on possible social change, but rather in their ability to “construct these narratives in sub-cultural spaces may not only be important for participants in terms of providing a means of self-representation, but more importantly, they can work pedagogically on their capacities to teach and learn about differences” [44].

5. Present Continuous of Being a Woman in a Patriarchal Society and Future Perspectives

A characteristic of feminist fanzines is the exposure of criticism of society understood as retrograde, misogynistic and macho, as well as the daily experiences of being a woman in a society

with these characteristics, in certain cases with rather intimate descriptions of all the difficulties they go through.

I am 20 years old and I'm a woman. I am constantly harassed while walking in the street. My mind and body are violated by comments, actions...of strangers. Every day I am bombarded with images in advertisements, magazines, television, of how I must be what is expected of me, my roles as a woman. (...) My life has been deeply affected by this. I cannot/want to ignore this sexist oppression that affects and has always affected my life. I have to talk about this, I have to release anger, frustration, even if you don't understand...Respect!...Respect is about looking at someone (human & non-human) as someone and not as part of a body. It is about communication and understanding (Global Riot, 1996, N.º 2).

Often situations happen to which we have to be peremptory in our response: NO! But often situations happen in which the simple saying no does not take dramatic proportions. (...) It also happens that different circumstances, sometimes beyond our control, interpose themselves and almost force us to take sides against them. Women very often, and for social and cultural reasons, do not take on a particularly active and secure role when 'saying no'. I think it is important to point out that saying no to sex (...) is even more painful for many women to face the denial of an act which, for their partners, can be particularly seen as a refusal in relation to both of them and the whole relationship (Zuvía, "Dizer não – porque não?" [Say no - why not], !Mulibu!, n.º 2).

I DON'T SHAVE BECAUSE...I DON'T WANT TO! I reject any kind of pressure from where it comes to make me change and follow the stereotype [sic] of 'acceptable' women, created by the media and producers of beauty creams, waxes and depilatory creams, slimming products, bust enhancement prod-

ucts, etc, etc, etc. (...) Personally I still feel bad when I notice, in friends and acquaintances, that look of amazement and displeasure. But my conviction, that I am all right, is stronger than the insecurity and unease that will pass (NNÁKU, EU NÃO FAÇO DEPILAÇÃO PORQUE...[I DON'T SHAVE BECAUSE], !Mulibu!, n.º 2).

A significant part of the criticism is levelled at what can be called *false allies*, that is to say, members of music scenes, such as hardcore and straight edge, who nominally declare themselves feminists and oppose to any kind of discrimination, but whose practice fall short of the discourse. Similarly, there is a secondary, if not simply invisible, form of female participation in sub-cultural environments [30, 31, 32].

Nowadays the straight edge is still connected to punk and hardcore, as we can see by the X in the hands of some who are in the concerts of bands that play this kind of music. Do they want to be good or are they proud of having made that personal choice? I don't know and nobody knows. And what is the story of those girls who go to concerts and stay quiet all the time? Are they just there to show that they also know how to go to concerts with their boyfriends or do they just enjoy it but don't like to show it? I don't know either. I'm coming to the conclusion that I don't understand any of this after all. (Cris, Moda X, Sisterly, N.º 2).

(...) What? 'The Riot' are there in their corner fighting for women's rights! Me? I'm here by the stage, with my favourite band singing 'vegan is my choice!' or 'sXe proud!'. 'Feminism is girls'. It's because of all this shit that I wonder to what extent people are really what they say they stand for! It seems that many boys think they are the top of the world because they have a txirt [sic] saying 'Meat just don't eat' or

*‘Straight Edge X Posion Free’ but then when you talk about Riot Girl, they don’t even know what to say anymore and they walk away thinking that only girls should take part in this fight (...) People like this who assume themselves as sXe, who are there in front of [sic] shouting the choruses of the bands all happy but at the same time, giving the girl with long hair a grop (!), and at the same time wink and give the idea of ‘wanting to go outside and talk?’; etc...this to me, sucks (Inês, *Feminismo + mulheres + homens = feminismo?* [*Feminism + women + men = feminism?*], *Sisterly*, N.º 2).*

However, not all ways of asserting gender equality are considered acceptable. For example, referring to the case of the possibility of women volunteering to serve in the armed forces, the fanzine !Mulibu! in the article ‘Tropa no feminino’ [*Troop in the feminin*] considers that such a possibility is counterproductive, since women would only claim to be equal to men, “if they act like men, they expose themselves to the loss of the mandatory attributes of ‘femininity’ and call into question the natural right of men to positions of power; if they act like women, they seem incapable and unsuited to the situation” [46]. It is the situation of the double bind spoken to us by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.

(...) The army do nothing to reduce sexism, as women tend to become authoritarian. In fact, one of the reasons why some of the girls enlist is to try to overcome the feeling of inferiority caused by society and education in general, based on arguments of the “I’m going to join the army to be able to rule men” style. (...) If compulsory military service disgusts me, I think that the volunteer frightens me even more, because people are mentalized to go into the army for money, prospects for the future, facilities and

*social benefits; becoming capitalist monsters, with fascist and racist tendencies, ‘bourgeois’ without attitude, who can see nothing but their well being (Patricia, “Tropa no feminino” [*Troops in the feminine*], !Mulibu!, n.º 2).*

Since not all ways of approaching gender inequality in tuality are taken as acceptable, being - for our case - a research that already counts with an experience of more than ten years, we are left to question what could have been done differently, that is, to question and interrogate the existence of alternative scenarios, such as ‘what if...’ women had assumed positions of responsibility in the management, organisation, production and dissemination of alternative media like fanzines? What if women had been considered as the canons and as the gatekeepers of this subculture? What would have been the place of men? Which themes would have been emphasized and which would have been left out? Or even, ‘what if...’ women would not have focused on alternative media to assert themselves within a subculture like punk? What if the path had been through mainstream media? What would then have happened to a subculture ruled by gender inequality, by the invisibility of women? Maybe cultural studies didn’t talk about underground subcultures, but only about cultures and maybe authors like Angela McRobbie wouldn’t have existed. Not even we would have existed, nor our works.

6. Conclusions

Extensively reviewing the story of Portuguese alternative fanzines, and their synergy with the role of women in indie artistic sphere, we reached several conclusions. Within alternative cultures, women faced a mantel of invisibility regarding their achievements as well, which was due to both male perception regarding their role (both within

and out of the indie milieu) and due to the silence that the media bestowed their accomplishments. Thorough analysis of this state of the art compilation allowed the identification of the specificities and nuances sustaining this alternative story of the female role in the Portuguese DIY scene. As such, the key aspects that might have altered such a *per facto* path for so many indie female artist, such as Ondina Pires, are the lack of embracement of the punk movement by the media, unlike what happened with the pop movements, for example; the lack of female presence in positions of responsibility in the management, organization, production and dissemination of alternative media like fanzines, and even more the lack of female presence in the mainstream media that sympathized with punk movements and DIY; and the absence of women involved in the preservation, production and creation processes.

From these key aspects we propose that alternative historical and sociological scenarios can be developed and address, from a novel perspective, the effect female invisibility provoked in the (sub) cultures and their role as means of resistance and survival. Such an Alternative History scenario could probe how the condemnatory effect in punk (and underground scenes) (sub)culture actually might have foster artistic brilliance in known female artists, such as Siouxsie Sioux or Kim Gordon, as well as the aesthetics of bands such as the Sex Pistols. And ultimately answer the question: can the invisibility provide an oasis (of freedom) for creativity in (sub)cultures?

7. Invited Lecture f2f Session Insight

The use of an Alternative History and the creation of hypothetical scenarios about the past, starting from the present, allowed us - during the debate session, which was part of the 2nd International Meeting of ‘What if?...’ World History, in Porto,

Portugal, taking place between the 23rd and 26th November 2021 - to realise that there are many other paths that have not yet been explored, paths related to the path and the role that women play in subcultures and in the punk movements, but also in the alternative media.

The questions raised revolved around the invisibility of women, an aspect that now leads us to believe that we need to go further in the discourses. In this way, one way of looking into the future from these hypothetical questions, lies in the perception of the women themselves (who participated and participate in these (sub)cultures and in these forms of communication, as is the case of Ondina Pires) and try to understand, in their understanding, what alternative scenarios they imagine or see. Having this as an assumption it would then be possible to encourage new and different investigations within the scope of cultural studies, making other aspects of women’s experiences known which, for lack of imagination of alternative scenarios, have not been explored.

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Glossary

Punk - punk, besides being a musical genre, can also be understood as a subculture and is closely associated with the ethos and praxis of do-it-yourself, a specific aesthetic that was based on the transmission of a political and ideological message, but also on resistance.

Teenybopper - is a term used to describe young teenage girls who followed music, fashion and culture trends. It is also a term that later became associated with a subculture, but also with rock'n'roll.

Pop - is short for popular music, a genre that emerged in the 1950s in the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Within pop music there are various musical subgenres.

Hardcore - is a term often used to classify subgenres of rock'n'roll and punk, such as hardcore punk. Hardcore as a musical style emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when some punk bands began to produce faster and "heavier" rhythms of music.

Straight Edge - can be a term used to refer to a subculture or sub-genre of hardcore punk. Within punk culture, the straight edge refers to a set of moral values and ethics of conduct such as abstinence from alcohol, tobacco or psychoactive substances and is also a term used to characterise in this scene the advocates of veganism, vegetarianism and ecological movements.