Righteous Sounds and Reproductive Justice:
The Influence of Ani DiFranco’s Music for Reproductive Rights Activists

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Abstract (Anticipate)

In this thesis, I explore how the folk-rock music of Ani DiFranco has influenced the activist commitments, sensibilities, and activities of reproductive rights activists. My interest in the relation of popular music to social movements is informed by the work of Simon Frith (1987, 1996a, 1996b), Rob Rosenthal (2001), and Ann Savage (2003). Frith argues that popular music is an important contributor to personal identity and the ways that listeners see the world. Savage (2003) writes that fans develop a unique relationship with feminist/political music, and Rosenthal (2001) argues that popular music can be an important factor in building social movements. I use these arguments to ask what the influence of Ani DiFranco's music has been for reproductive rights activists who are her fans.

I conducted in-depth interviews with ten reproductive rights activists who are fans of Ani DiFranco's music. All ten are women in their twenties and thirties living in Ontario or New York. Each has been listening to DiFranco's music for between two and fifteen years, and has considered herself a reproductive rights activist for between eighteen months and twenty years.

I examine these women's narratives of their relationships with Ani DiFranco's music and their activist experience through the interconnected lenses of identity, consciousness, and practice. Listening to Ani DiFranco's music affects the fluid ways these women understand their identities as women, as feminists, and in solidarity with others. I draw on Freire's (1970) understanding of conscientization to consider the role that Ani's music has played in heightening women's awareness about reproductive rights issues. The feeling of solidarity with other (both real and perceived) activist fans gives them more confidence that they can make a difference in overcoming social injustice. They believe that Ani's music encourages productive anger, which in turn fuels their passion to take action to make change. Women use Ani's music deliberately for energy and encouragement in their continued activism, and find that it continues to resonate with their evolving identities as women, feminists, and activists.

My study builds on those of Rosenthal (2001) and Savage (2003) by focusing on one artist and activists in one social movement. The characteristics of Ani DiFranco, her fan base, and the reproductive rights movement allow new understanding of the ways that female fans who are members of a female-dominated feminist movement interact with the music of a popular independent female artist.
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Chapter 1: Introduction (Welcome To)¹

it’s nice that you listen; it’d be nicer if you joined in

Music has been a feature of social and political movements in North America, dating back to slave worksongs, emancipation, and information songs in the eighteenth century (Eyerman and Jamison 1998: 45). Early 1900s union champion Joe Hill is said to have commented that he used music to promote his cause because people resonate with and remember the words of a song better than the text of a leaflet (Eyerman and Jamison 1998: 59). My objective in this thesis is to better understand how so-called ‘protest music’ has influenced social movements and the individual actors within them. My specific contribution is to focus on one social movement (the reproductive rights movement), and one artist (Ani DiFranco) whose fans seem to be particularly well represented among core groups of activists in that movement. The focus on Ani DiFranco's music allows me to explore the influences that a female artist’s work has on a female-dominated social movement. My research question is, in what ways do reproductive rights activists feel that their activist commitments, activities, and sensibilities have been influenced by their relationship with Ani DiFranco's music?

In order to begin to provide an answer to this question, I interviewed ten women who feel they have been influenced by listening to DiFranco's music and who also consider themselves to be activists in the area of reproductive rights. I demonstrate in this thesis that the influences of DiFranco's music on their activist sensibilities fall into the three interrelated areas of identity, consciousness, and practice, and show that most of my participants were influenced by DiFranco's music in all three areas. Participants said that

¹ Bracketed parts of chapter titles and section subtitles in this thesis have come from song titles in Ani DiFranco's recording career.
Ani's music has helped them to shape their identities, and has led them to be able to articulate their identities more effectively to others. For many, Ani's lyrics brought about a heightened awareness of their roles in creating positive change in the world, and influenced the different activist activities and practices they take up. In each of the areas of identity, consciousness, and practice, participants stressed the importance of the contribution of community and of feeling less alone that came from listening to Ani's music, and the deeply personal connection they felt with the music and lyrics.

Ani DiFranco is a singer and songwriter; she has released twenty albums, all on the Righteous Babe record label, which she created in 1990 in an attempt to maintain her independence from the corporate record industry (Burlingham 2004: 98, 100). I describe DiFranco's music as conscious music, a category that transcends genres and which has been prominent in North American social movements in recent decades. I prefer the term 'conscious music' to the more popular terms of 'protest music' (see Street 1986, Bernstein 2004, R.F. Young 2005) or 'rebel music' (see Fischlin and Heble 2003; Street 1986), because neither of those terms fully encompasses the wide variety of themes and issues addressed in Ani's music, or the range of meanings that her music has for my research participants.

The term conscious music is often used to describe some subgenres of reggae and hip-hop to refer to music with a sense of politics, social critique, and concern for the betterment of people’s situations (see Haupt 2004 and Lipsitz 1999). I use the label conscious music as an extension of my reading of Iris Marion Young (1990) and Simon Frith (1987). I consider conscious music to be music that raises issues of social justice and political awareness. Young (1990) argues that justice is primarily characterized by an
absence of domination and oppression. Domination can be either an individual or group condition, which results in a “lack of participation in determining one’s actions and the conditions of one’s actions” (Young 1990: 258). Oppression, on the other hand, is a group condition that inhibits members of the group from fully developing and exercising their capacities, and from expressing their needs, thoughts, and feelings by one or more of five conditions: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence (Young 1990: 40). Frith (1987) suggests that music can (and perhaps should) be categorized not by its musical characteristics (genre) but according to its ideological effects (147). I propose that the concept of conscious music categorizes music according to its message and ideological commitment to justice, which may have the effect of encouraging justice. Therefore, although DiFranco’s music is not musically or generically similar to reggae music, the implications of her lyrics, the atmosphere of the concert experience, and the way her songs are taken up by her fans make it appropriate to call her music conscious.

Ani DiFranco describes herself as a ‘folk’ singer (see DiFranco 2003[1998]; Rodgers 2000: 158; Quirino 2004: 23, 99; Righteous Babe Records), but her music also includes elements of jazz, hip-hop, and spoken word. She is known for her percussive acoustic guitar techniques, her personal and political lyrics, and her powerful, emotional voice. Even though she is not signed with a major record label, DiFranco has managed to captivate audiences from outside the mainstream media, and has a large and devoted fan base. Her lyrics are not only about experiences with love and romance, but address numerous social concerns, including the environment, heteronormativity, war, consumerism, consumption, racial privilege, white flight, and her own negotiation of the
corporate record industry. Additionally, she is often regarded as a champion for women’s rights, including reproductive rights (see Goetzman 2001; Quirino 2004; Axelrod 2005; NOW – ‘March’; NOW – ‘National Conference 2006’). Her lyrics are adamantly pro-choice, and articulate a commitment to gender equality. In 2006, the National Organization for Women (NOW, of the United States) recognized her important contributions to, and influences on, the women’s movement by presenting her with their Woman of Courage Award.

My research focuses on the experiential and narrative dimension of fan engagement with the music: how it works to inspire people, and how they understand the music to be working to inspire them. The feminist-oriented characteristics of Ani DiFranco’s music and the audience it attracts differentiate this study from most previous studies of popular music, conscious music, and music subculture, which have tended to focus on male musicians and predominantly male audiences (see Denisoff 1983; Denselow 1989; Auslander 1999; Bennett 2000; Connell and Gibson 2003; Sakolsky 2003; Hodkinson 2004; but see McClary 1991, 2000; Bernstein 2004; Thornton 2006).

Reproductive rights have been contested in Canada, the United States, and around the world, since before Margaret Sanger opened the first American women’s birth control centre in 1917 and was arrested for disseminating vulgar materials a few days later (Tone 2001: 117-118). Another, more general, term that is often used is “reproductive freedom” (used by the American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU] and many smaller organizations) which the ACLU defines as “everyone’s right to make informed decisions free from government interference about whether and when to become a parent”
According to the Feminist Majority Foundation, reproductive rights include issues such as access to birth control and emergency contraception, abortion rights, sexually transmitted disease prevention and treatment, pregnancy care, and comprehensive sex education. For many, reproductive freedom is seen as imperative to improving conditions of economic, social, and sexual gender equality. I referred to ‘reproductive rights’ in my letters of invitation for participation in this study, and my participants did in their interviews. It is clear, however, that we were using the term in an inclusive sense, to incorporate what I have described here as reproductive rights, reproductive issues, and reproductive freedom. Given their self-identification as activists, most of my participants would prefer the stronger terms “rights” and “freedom” to “issues”. Ani refers to specific rights in her songs, poems, and publicity – including choice (with respect to abortion rights), sexual assault, and motherhood – but does not seem to prefer either reproductive “rights” or “freedom.”

Many people who take an active role in working towards social justice in their societies are considered, or consider themselves to be, activists. David Meyer (2007) writes that ‘activist’ is a term with a variable definition, depending on who it is applied to, and that activists usually fluctuate in their level of involvement in a movement. Some activities that he says may be considered activism include making telephone calls, signing petitions, participating in or organizing rallies and demonstrations, and lobbying politicians. My participants for the most part consider activism to mean that one is

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2 The Feminist Majority Foundation uses the term ‘reproductive rights;’ as do Ipas, The Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights, and the Hampshire College Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program. NOW refers to ‘reproductive issues;’ the ACLU refers to both ‘reproductive rights’ and ‘reproductive freedom.’
...
actively working for change that leads to social justice (resonating with I.M. Young 1990, above; i.e., not social or political change driven primarily by personal religious or economic reasons), but agreed as well that levels of involvement in activist activities vary over different periods in activists’ lives. Reproductive rights are issues that affect women around the world, and while the movement has had a slightly different history in the US than in Canada, I will argue that the core issues at the heart of the struggle, and the opposing political pressures, are similar enough between the two countries to consider this movement to be one cross-border social movement rather than two different movements deserving different treatment. By the same token, only three of my participants were US citizens; despite DiFranco being based in the United States, her lyrics and politics have strong resonance with her Canadian audience.

The thesis unfolds as follows. In Chapter Two, I situate my work in relation to the current literature on popular music studies, showing how my study makes a particular contribution to understanding women’s experience of music, and the use of music in social movements. I will define ‘subculture’ and evaluate the appropriateness of that concept for DiFranco’s fan population, in relation to the importance of feelings of community to fans’ appreciation of an artist’s music. I examine literature on the use of music in social movements, including that of Eyerman and Jamison (1998) who suggest that some music has particular nuances because of its origins in mass movements, as well as studies by Fischlin and Heble (2003), Pratt (1990), Sakolsky and Ho (1995), and Denisoff and Peterson (1972), who examine the social structures of movements for reception of music, and focus primarily on the lyrics. I show how my own research, which follows the approaches of Rosenthal (2001) and Savage (2003), contributes to this
literature by focusing on the experiences of listeners. My research applies some of Rosenthal’s (2001) understanding of the influence music can have on social movements to Ani DiFranco's fans. I also use Savage’s (2003) concepts of feminist identity and feminist activism to understand how listeners feel Ani DiFranco's music influences them as reproductive rights activists.

Chapter Three offers background information on women in popular music, the history of the North American reproductive rights movement, and Ani DiFranco. I explain how Ani DiFranco's music career and involvement with women’s organizations, especially as a champion of reproductive rights, has been received by women’s rights organizations. I then argue that Ani DiFranco’s oeuvre can be considered a part of a tradition of conscious music and as having strong roots in the women’s music tradition. I illustrate how she is perceived differently by the media, and by her fans, than other female artists who emerged around the same time as she became popular.

Chapter Four explains my methodological choices and constraints in conducting this qualitative research project. I outline the process of developing the study out of my own experience with Ani DiFranco’s music and as a reproductive rights activist. I introduce my ten participants, and describe the interview and analysis processes, before proceeding with the analysis of the interviews in Chapters Five through Seven.

My analysis unfolds over three chapters. I have organized them in relation to three interrelated categories: the influence of participants’ relationship to Ani DiFranco's music on their identities, on their consciousness, and on their activist practice. These themes allow me to talk about what people say, think, feel, and do, and allow me to explore the relationships between the three categories of influence. There is an important relationship
between activist consciousness and practice, as articulated by Paulo Freire (1970), who writes that increased awareness of social injustice may lead people to change their actions. There are also significant interactions between the ways that people are personally involved with Ani's lyrics, and the ways that they take up social interactions in relation to Ani's music. It is complicated to try to separate these mutually dependent aspects, but it is necessary for the purposes of in-depth analysis.

The analysis of these three interrelated themes will unfold in this order (first identity, then consciousness, and finally practice), because this seems to be the order in which Ani's music has come to influence most participants' ideas and activities, although there is obviously some significant overlap. A couple of participants do not quite fit this model, and these discrepancies are examined as they arise in the analysis. Throughout the interviews and analysis, it is apparent that there is an overarching theme among my interviewees that listening to Ani's music made them feel less alone in some way. I speculate in each of my analytical themes that this idea of feeling less alone has something to do with subcultural identity and community. I argue throughout this thesis that this feeling of commonality with others is an important part of social action and social change, and that it demonstrates the value of conscious music for helping people to achieve feelings of solidarity.

I will begin my analysis of participants' understanding of DiFranco's influence on their identities in Chapter Five by describing how popular music literature understands popular music to be related to identity. Simon Frith (1996a, 1996b) and Andy Bennett (2000) suggest that popular music can have important influences on one's identity. For my participants, their identities as women and as feminists were particularly impacted by
their exposure to DiFranco's music. My participants' experiences highlight the fact that identity is fluid and changes in place and time, and undergoes an important phase of development during adolescence.

Chapter Six will focus on consciousness. While identity can be most simply understood as the conception of self, consciousness is more general awareness of one's surroundings and one's relation to the world at large. Freire (1970) wrote that a particularly crucial aspect of awareness is that of gaining critical consciousness, or, "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (translator's note, 1970: 19). I use his term conscientization to describe this learning process. DiFranco's music contributed to this process in my participants, making them increasingly aware of events and social issues. Her music encouraged them to think about issues, readdress issues they had been aware of but had not considered in depth for a long time, to think more broadly beyond their own spheres of social interaction, and to do further research surrounding these issues.

Ani has been particularly important in making participants pay attention, because she is perceived as being honest, trustworthy, and authentic. The importance of impressions of performer authenticity will be explored more fully in the discussion of consciousness in Chapter Six. As part of perceiving Ani to be authentic, fans admire her willingness and ability to stand up for what she believes in, and use her as a role model for the way they want to think critically about the world and act on their beliefs.

The main focus of Chapter Seven, "Practice," will be an examination of what participants do that they consider to be activism, and how listening to Ani DiFranco's music influences those activities. I will also consider personal and societal constraints on
what people can do, and how they deal with those constraints. Women’s identities and values shape the ways they understand the world around them, and affect the ways in which they take up activism (and that they become activists at all). Elizabeth Spelman (1989) and Marilyn Frye (1983) write that it is natural for conscious individuals to be angry about subordination, and that, in fact, they have some degree of obligation to be angry about oppression. Many of the women I interviewed said that they became angry at the oppression of women and other subordinate groups as they learned of these oppressions from Ani or other sources. Ani’s music reminded them of the importance of using that anger productively to do something positive about the issues they were thinking about, and to create change. Activism can take many forms, including music. My participants understand DiFranco’s music to be a form of activism in itself, and at least three of them are musicians themselves and consider their own music to be part of their activist work. All of the women I spoke with use DiFranco’s music for motivation and inspiration in their activism, and find her to be a positive activist role model.

In my concluding chapter, I explore the importance of affect and emphasize the integration of music’s influence on my participants’ identities, consciousnesses, and practices. I show how my research reaffirms the articulations of many authors, and contributes to the literature by studying Ani DiFranco and reproductive rights activists specifically.
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Chapter 2: Literature Review (School Night)

My specific interest in Ani DiFranco's influence on reproductive rights activists is part of a more general inquiry into how music can influence actors in social movements. I have observed that some music influences particular activists in the ways that they think about social causes, the ways that they take up activism, and their personal and shared identities as part of social movements. This chapter explores the academic literature on the intersection between music, social movements, and activists. I first briefly summarize arguments that popular music has little or no political impact on individuals or groups. Following this, I show that some authors see a relationship between music and social movements, but primarily examine the music as a cultural artefact that is shaped by social movements. My discussion shows that little of the existing literature on the intersection of music and social movements addresses the relationship in which I am interested: that is, the effects of music for actors in social movements. I consider work of authors who examine the impact of music on activists, including Rosenthal (2001) and Fischlin (2003). I point out that they stress the importance of considering listeners' own experiences with music, and I highlight their reminder that music does not influence people in isolation from other social factors.

My study considers how popular music affinities relate to listeners' identities as activists, both individually and as members of a larger community. My understanding of those relationships is informed by a body of literature that includes work by Simon Frith (1987, 1988, 1996a, 1996b) and Tia DeNora (2006). These authors, among others (including Middleton 1990; Bennett 2000; and Whiteley 2000), suggest that one of the most important reasons why popular music is important to us, or that we like particular
music, is that it resonates with our identities. I show how music that seems authentic has stronger resonance with listeners, and that the perception of authenticity is particularly important for conscious music. Finally, I consider authenticity as one aspect of the aura of community or ‘subculture’ that surrounds some music, and may make it more attractive by giving listeners a sense that they are not alone.

In their work on popular culture, theorists from the Frankfurt School, including Adorno (1976, 2002), and Adorno and Horkheimer (1972), developed theory dependent on the idea that popular music does not lead to political action. Adorno made enormous contributions to the emergence of a sociology of music and concentrated, in particular, on the power of music in the twentieth century. He argued, with Max Horkheimer, that popular music is negotiated by an industry of mass culture that is corporately maneuvered, and therefore popular music cannot be used for consciousness-raising that is independent of the organizational structure of that mass culture industry (Adorno 1976; 2001[1984]; 2002; Adorno and Horkheimer 1972; DeNora 2003). While Adorno’s work is regarded by music sociologists as being particularly influential in the development of sociological ideas surrounding the use of popular music, he has been criticized for ignoring the creative sensibilities of artists within the popular music industry, the creativity inspired by corporate competition, and, most importantly for my purposes, the agency of popular music listeners (see Middleton 1990, DeNora 2003).

Similarly, Serge Denisoff (1983), while not stating explicitly that popular music is imposed on an inert public, says that there is little (if any) evidence “that songs do in fact have an independent impact upon [listeners’] attitudes in the political arena” (149). Frith and Street (1992) also do not explicitly deny that music has important effects for social
movements (and do suggest that popular music interacts with some listeners’ sense of personal politics in important ways). In their study of two particular political music movements, however, they suggest that key features of rock and pop may prevent them from having significant impacts on social movements. They concluded from their study of Rock Against Racism and Red Wedge, two systematic attempts to use “mass music” to encourage “mass movements” in Britain, that by nature popular music is fleeting and has diminishing affect; “shock effects” and unique performances do not produce the same reactions a second time, and spectacular concert series seem to grow less inspiring with each show (see Frith and Street 1992: 79; see also Widgery 1986). Combined with the constantly changing tastes of audiences, they argue, these obstacles are insurmountable in using music for the purpose of creating and maintaining social movements.

Other literature suggests a stronger connection between music and social movements. Eyerman and Jamison (1998) focus on the popular music that has come out of social movements, particularly the North American civil rights movement, and the ways that such movements influence emerging music. They stress that the foundations of recent protest music are in the civil rights movement, and come equally from its development of personalized politics and intercultural respect (Eyerman and Jamison 1998: 2). Eyerman and Jamison see music (and other forms of popular culture) as a product of social movements, and say that popular culture is “made and remade” within social movements (Eyerman and Jamison 1998: 1-2). After movements fade, the music is carried on “as a memory and as a potential way to inspire new waves of mobilization” (1-2). While I agree with Eyerman and Jamison that music may live on in collective memory and popular culture after a social movement fades, I think their study overlooks the extent
to which music not only evolves out of particular social movements, but influences those movements as well. I demonstrate in my analysis the ways that audience members react to and interact with the conscious music that they listen to, and show some of the ways in which they understand their relationships with the music to influence their activist sensibilities, sensitivities, and activities. Like Ruth Finnegansler (1989), I understand music choices to influence listeners’ social interactions, rather than being purely a product of listeners’ social positioning.

My interest in music’s influence on social movements, and specifically on individual actors in social movements, more closely follows the work of Fischlin and Heble (2003), Sakolsky (2003) and Rosenthal (2001). In their examinations of the relationship between music and social movements, they argue that music can have specific impacts on movements as a whole, and on activists particularly. They suggest that music is an important factor for scholars and activists to consider when trying to understand how social movements are formed and maintained, and they outline some of the ways that activists become involved and understand the cause to be a part of their lives.

Fischlin (2003) writes that music is created not only from one’s experience and from social and cultural positioning, but is also produced in spite of and to contest the status quo. He writes that, “we generate sound and ideas about sound as extensions (reflections) of our political cultures, but also as critiques thereof” (11). Furthermore, he says that resistance is a key factor in evaluating and judging “rebel musics”: “socially relevant music measures itself in relation to how far it goes in affronting orthodoxies” (14). Musicians and audiences involved in “socially relevant music” actually strive to
push the envelope, and to shock the mainstream public. Fans and musicians of conscious music are more likely to use shock value primarily to attract attention to their social movements’ causes, rather than to themselves.

Fischlin follows Tricia Rose (1994), who writes that music, along with dance and language, often serves “as a cultural glue that fosters communal resistance” by “produce[ing] communal bases of knowledge about social conditions [and] communal interpretations of them” (Rose 1994: 99-100; see also Fischlin 2003: 16-17). Further, Fischlin calls music a type of resistance in itself, one which “refuses to be ignored” (15) – because it pushes its way into daily and festive events, traverses cultural chasms, and preserves cultural memory. He cautions that while music can be important as a “glue” for bringing and keeping resistant individuals together, it must always be considered in conjunction with other social, political, and cultural forces that it interacts with, rather than creating social change on its own (10).

Along with Fischlin (2003), Rosenthal (2001) articulates some of the ways that music influences, or functions within, social movements. Rosenthal (2001) states that the first function of music for social movements is that it “serves the committed” (12). In this, he includes the contribution of music to the maintenance of activist spirit (through uplifting music) and the ability of popular music to attract resources, in the form of money, donations in kind, and volunteers. Fischlin makes similar observations about the capability of music to bring in financial and volunteer contributions, and also observes the power that music has for building and maintaining a feeling of solidarity in groups (Fischlin 2003: 11; Rosenthal 2001: 12).
Beyond the sense that music serves those already committed to a movement, Rosenthal and Fischlin, along with Sakolsky (2003), argue that it plays a role in educating and recruiting those outside the movement (Rosenthal 2001: 12-13; Fischlin 2003: 11; Sakolsky 2003). First, music educates people through its lyrics. Political singer-songwriters believe that their music influences their fans (Rosenthal 2001: 12-13), and Rosenthal suggests that popular music may be a particularly effective way to educate people: “songs can link together ideas or events that the listener may not have grouped together” (Rosenthal 2001: 13). Indeed, he thinks that music may do that more effectively than other forms of art or discourse. Such links made through song may be important for sharing information, and especially in the development of critical consciousness (Fischlin 2003: 11).

Developing critical consciousness means seeing that social change is necessary, and understanding that human agency is the root of possible social change. As such, critical consciousness involves an individual or group believing they have the capacity to make a difference (Freire 1970; Taylor 1993: 52). In addition to developing this consciousness in some listeners, Rosenthal writes that music is useful for recruitment to social movements, that is, “to actually induce (or help induce) people to move beyond intellectual awareness or emotional sympathy to joining a movement organization or otherwise crossing the line into an identity (and self-identity) as a movement supporter...” (Rosenthal 2003: 13). There is often a difference between a “supporter” of a movement (that is, one who is sympathetic to the aims of the movement) and an “activist” within the movement (that is, one who is actively working towards the goals of the movement). Rosenthal makes this distinction by stating that popular music can be
...
useful to recruit supporters and to mobilize for action. This use of music as mobilization applies both to helping persuade inactive movement supporters to engage more directly in movement activity, and to maintaining the motivation of those already involved to do their work or take it further (Rosenthal 2001: 14).

While Rosenthal stresses the influences that music can have on social movements, he also observes that music may be counterproductive for social movements if it is taken up as activity towards the particular goals of the movement, rather than having its energy used for more direct action. Rosenthal suggests that this might be most likely to happen if audience members believe that by singing or listening to such music, they are contributing to making a significant difference (2001: 14).

Another important point that Rosenthal emphasizes is that the impact of music on social movements cannot be determined by what an artist intends, or even what an artist produces; the interpretation of the music is likely to be very different than the artist’s intended message. In order to understand how music impacts social movements, we need to understand how music and musicians are interpreted by particular audiences (Rosenthal 2001: 15). Rosenthal reminds researchers that since the most effective research methods for investigating this issue are participant observation and audience interviews, there will be significant subjectivity and variability in the evidence. It is important, therefore, to remember that different people are affected by different musics in varying ways, and to look at who is affected, how, and why (15).

In Rosenthal’s own study investigating the functions of music for social movements, he found that his respondents “overwhelmingly believe music affected their political experiences and development” (Rosenthal 2001: 16), but that they found it hard
to say how or when the impact occurred, and to separate the effects of music from those of other influences (16). Music seems to be particularly powerful to these people for maintaining their spirit and in feeling connected to other people through the music. Many feel that the political music they listen to validates their own, usually new or evolving, political identities, and helps them to

[crystallize] ideas that are floating around but have not yet coalesced into a coherent ideology for the individual, or that need an outside voice of authority to bring them to consciousness and self-acceptance ... listeners weave what they feel the artists are saying into a web that ties their own personal lives to greater social ideals and collectivities. (Rosenthal 2001: 18)

In cases where all of these effects of music may be rather weak, Rosenthal suggests that the music may still be useful in building social movements by paving the way for a future change in people’s politicization through creating tolerance and empathy in society. This, he implies, can make recruitment easier because the surrounding people are not actively in opposition to the goals of the movement (Rosenthal 2001: 20). My study extends his understanding of music’s influence on social movements by focusing on the specific music of Ani DiFranco and examining the influence that it has had on activists in a particular social movement (for reproductive rights). Like Rosenthal, I focus on the fan experience and the personal connection that people make with the music, but constructing my analysis through the three intersecting axes of identity, consciousness, and practice allows me to go deeper than Rosenthal in understanding the relationships my participants have experienced with Ani DiFranco’s music.

In his essay reflecting on his experience listening to and writing about conscious music, Sakolsky (2003) writes that music has been important in building solidarity and working for social justice. He writes that “politically engaged music has often been the
soundtrack that has aided and abetted the process of breaking free from the chains of oppression and emerging from the shadows of alienation” (Sakolsky 2003: 44). His examination of his own experience with rebel musics shows the personal nature of music’s effects: “rebel musics … have been my constant companion. They have nurtured my critical consciousness, sparked fresh intellectual insights, uplifted my spirits, reinforced my anger at injustice, and fuelled my utopian dreams of a better world” (Sakolsky 2003: 44). As I illustrate later, my evidence suggests that these personal effects, which can come from music as well as other sources, are key to motivating individuals to take action for social justice causes, and that those individuals and their energy shape the nature of the social movement(s) they take part in.

For his part, Kellner (1987) examines “emancipatory popular culture,” and says that “‘emancipatory’ signifies emancipation from something that is restrictive or repressive, and for something that is conducive to an increase of freedom and well-being” (489). An application of Kellner’s understanding of emancipatory culture to music creates a definition that is similar to my earlier description of conscious music as music that urges the alleviation of domination and oppression, following Young’s (1990) understanding of justice. Pratt (1990) works from Kellner’s definition of emancipatory popular culture to examine the possible uses of popular music for challenging dominant institutions (Pratt 1990: 14). He argues that political music can lead to emancipation (as defined above) for the community surrounding the music, primarily through its power to “affectively [empower] emotional changes” (14), and he explores a variety of genres in which he sees politics in the music as being particularly important. His analysis, however, primarily examines singers and their songs, and suggests ways that audiences may
respond, rather than actually providing empirical evidence to show how the music is used by individuals or groups of listeners in their politicization. Importantly (and similarly to Rosenthal [2001], Sakolsky [2003] and Fishlin and Heble [2003]), Pratt (1990) acknowledges that while music is an important factor to consider in trying to understand politicization, it does not work alone, but rather in tandem with multiple other influences.

In a similar vein to Kellner, Robin Balliger (1995) attempts to develop an “understanding of music and noise as social forces” (13), and argues that “oppositional music practices not only act as a form of resistance against domination, but generate social relationships and experience which can form the basis of a new cultural sensibility” (14). Like Kellner, Balliger does this through analyses of text, lyrics, and production techniques, without talking to listeners about those social relationships and experiences. Denisoff and Peterson (1972) also suggest that music can have important societal implications by maintaining social ideals and social order, and in other instances by challenging the status quo. Balliger (1995) investigates some of the ways in which “oppositional music practices” (those that counter the hegemonic corporately-dominated music industry’s norms) are something of a form of political resistance in themselves. She identifies four ways that popular music “becomes a site of resistance” (14). First, she says, popular music is resistant through its lyrics. She says that lyrics are “multivalent, employing discursive strategies which form a poetics of resistance” (14), and emphasizes that the surface meaning of lyrics is often just the beginning of lyrics’ full received meaning (15). Second, Balliger writes that cheaper production costs of music have made production and consumption more viable for marginalized populations. In particular, opportunities for independent production “[challenge] the hegemony of mass cultural
products and ideologies” (17). Third, Balliger argues that popular music is resistant through its performance, which allows flexible social organization and cultural empowerment. Music influences listeners’ and performers’ “awareness, individual subjectivity, and social formations … through its ability to mediate the social … temporally, spatially, and bodily” (19-20). Last, Balliger writes that music, more than other cultural forms, can be resistant through “sonic squatting” (23). Music draws attention to itself as sound, which is “unhinged from the visual or the knowable and symbolically acts on the imagination, infiltrating and destabilizing power” (23). As such, music impacts a listener’s whole state of being, and impacts them in very different ways from other art forms.

In his examination of fans’ descriptions of rock and roll, Grossberg (1984; 1991) argues that one of the key elements that makes popular culture popular is a feeling of empowerment that it produces, and he concentrates on the elements of rock and roll music that contribute to building fans’ feeling of empowerment within a music scene. He also suggests that the high spirits of the crowd (whether in person or as a scattered fan community) can invigorate the musicians and music (1984). Grossberg (1984) suggests that one of the key factors determining the level and type of music’s empowerment for fans is their generation, and argues that the post-World War II generations in North America and Britain are particularly influenced by the empowering affect of rock and roll music. Robin Denselow (1990) writes that some pop musicians since World War II have chosen to support particular political causes, and says that:

Pop musicians have learned that they have the power to use both their music and their position, to comment, to travel, to raise vast sums of money, and to try to reflect and even to alter the course of history, just like the earlier troubadours of the world’s folk movements. (282)
He says that "how that power is used is up to them" (282). I agree with Denselow that many pop musicians have been able to use their music and their positions in such ways, but Denselow’s suggestion that the music will be understood or used in the way that musicians intend overlooks the agency of listeners, and suggests that the musicians have control over the meaning and effects of their music. Following a shift in recent cultural theory to recognising audiences as active participants in the production and application of cultural significance rather than unreflective recipients (see Andy Bennett 2000: 54-56), I start from the position that some music resonates more strongly with particular listeners, and that it is that music to which they react most strongly. I do not suggest, however, that they react uniformly, or that they necessarily hear the music and respond in ways musicians may have intended while composing or performing.

While Eyerman and Jamison (1998) concentrate on the inverse relationship to the one I am interested in (music on social movements), Fischlin and Heble (2003), Sakolsky (2003), and Rosenthal (2001) examine the connection between music and social movements from an angle that is similar to my own. They counter cautions from Adorno (1976, 2001 [1984], 2002), Denisoff (1983), and Frith and Street (1992) that it is unlikely that music has a significant influence on social movements. My own particular interest in the influence of music on social movements centres on the activists within the movements, and the relationship with music that individual fans have that may lead them to take up particular commitments, passions, and activities within a social movement. My research adds to the growing literature that engages “directly with those who consume, listen to, and use popular music as part of their everyday lives” (Williams 2001: 223). This study provides more evidence for the arguments of Rosenthal (2001), Fischlin
(2003) and Balliger (1995), which suggest that music can influence actors in social movements, by giving specific examples of ways that Ani DiFranco's music has influenced participants' activist activities. Further, my investigation expands the relevance of these authors' arguments, by applying their ideas to a new context. In trying to understand the influence of music on activism, and my specific research question (how reproductive rights activists feel that their activist commitments, activities, and sensibilities have been influenced by their relationship with Ani DiFranco's music), I need to go further than these writers do in understanding how music appeals to and resonates with listeners.

Frith (1987, 1996b) says that popular music's success is typically explained in terms of marketing strategies; he argues that these explanations leave out accounts of the appeal of the music itself, and are "not adequate for an understanding of why one rock record or one disco track is better than another" (1987: 135; see also Frith 1996b: 15-16). He also says that "some records and performers work for us, others do not – we know this without being able to explain it" (1987: 139).

Popular music literature suggests that one of the reasons that some music appeals to listeners is that it resonates strongly with our identities. In "Towards An Aesthetic of Popular Music" (1987) and Performing Rites (1996), Simon Frith argues that popular music "has been an important way in which we have learned to understand ourselves as historical, ethnic, class-bound, gendered subjects" (1987: 149). He says that the music that one listens to is not only determined by one's identity, but in fact helps to form that identity (1987: 149). In his exploration of how listeners make musical value judgements, and how those judgements describe their listening experiences, Frith articulates specific
ways that music matters to its listeners, and the importance of resonance with listeners' personal identities and experiences. He writes that “music is an individualizing form,” and that “we absorb songs into our own lives” (1987: 139). According to Frith, “other cultural forms – painting, literature, design – can articulate and show off shared values and pride, but only music can make you feel them” (1987: 140; Frith’s emphasis).

In response to explanations that leave aside value judgements and the difficulty we have describing why we like certain music, Frith suggests four important ways that pop is used, including an elaboration on the influence of popular music on identity, and says that we can judge that some music is better than others by answering how well (if at all) songs or performances achieve these functions for us. I want to present these four ways because they help to show how popular music influences people in general, and I suggest that when that music is conscious music, these influences of the music may be more likely to lead listeners to take up activist activities.

First, Frith says, popular music is useful in “answering questions of identity” (1987: 140). We identify with performers, with others who like the music, and create or define a particular place in society for ourselves, giving us pleasure. By identifying ourselves with certain artists, groups, or places, we simultaneously construct ourselves as not identifying with others (140). “Identifying with” an artist does not, for most fans, suggest that they wish to be the artist. Frith writes that fans “get their kicks from being a necessary part of the overall process” (1987: 140); Ani DiFranco’s fans admire her, they feel they have shared experiences and that she stands up for her beliefs, but they do not want to be her – they want to listen to her. In Chapter Five, I will explore the ways that
Ani's music influenced my participants' ways of thinking about themselves and relating to others.

Second, we use popular music to help us publicly articulate emotions that are usually considered inappropriate to describe except in private. Frith focuses on the use of popular music to express love, saying that:

People need [love songs] to give shape and voice to emotions that otherwise cannot be expressed without embarrassment or incoherence. Love songs are a way of giving emotional intensity to the sorts of intimate things we say to each other (and to ourselves) in words that are, in themselves, quite flat. (1987: 141)

It follows that other emotions that are considered private, or discussion of experiences that give rise to those emotions, can be included in this use of popular music. Survivors of assault, illness, family death, divorce, or social injustice (many of which are not considered suitable to go on about at length in public), may find that popular music resonates particularly strongly with their experiences. My analysis chapters will show that participants spoke at length in their interviews about the ways that Ani's music drew out their emotions, spoke what they were feeling, and made them feel their gut feelings were justified.

Third, Frith writes, popular music can be used to shape popular memory, both of the present and of the past, especially with respect to music people hear/d during adolescence (142). Frith says that:

one measure of good music ... is ... its 'presence,' its ability to stop time, to make us feel we are living within a moment, with no memory or anxiety about what has come before, [or] what will come after. (142)

Music, he says, helps to shape emotion and our memory of emotion, which he says is typically most turbulent in adolescence, in relation to identity and social place (143). This suggests that music may be most influential in adolescence, and that the music that brings
back the most powerful memories for adults may be that which they associate with their
teenaged years. The women I interviewed for this study seem to have been particularly
impacted by Ani's music in their adolescence, but even for those who were older when
they first started listening to Ani's music, listening to their early “favourite” songs takes
them back to an earlier time in their lives and in their activist careers.

Frith’s fourth use of popular music is as a possession (1987: 143). Frith notes that
fans take ownership of music, and that “in ‘possessing’ music, we make it part of our
own identity and build it into our sense of ourselves” (1987: 143). Frith recognizes this as
being most popularized by the Hollywood line “they’re playing our song” (1987: 143)
but argues that this ownership goes further than that cliché suggests: “we feel that we also
possess the song itself, the particular performance, and its performer” (Frith 1987: 143).
To praise a musician is to praise her fans, and when the star is criticized, fans react as
argues that voice is particularly important for people’s connection to and perceived
ownership of popular music. He says,

It is through the singing voice that people are most able to make a connection
with their records, to feel that performances are theirs in certain ways ... the tone
of voice is more important in this context than the actual articulation of particular
lyrics ... it is the voice – not the lyrics – to which we immediately respond.
(1987:145)

I argue in Chapters Seven and Eight that music such as Ani’s that moves people in these
ways is a powerful force for influencing listeners’ actions.

Tia DeNora (2006) divides her understanding of the interaction between music
preference and identity differently, but the themes are similar to Frith’s (1987). In her
examination of the interactions between music, emotion, and identity, she focuses on two
fronts of identity presentation: first, presentation of self-identity to others, and second, presentation of self-identity to oneself. She describes the latter as "the ability to mobilize and hold on to a coherent image of 'who one knows one is'" (DeNora 2006: 141). She says that this requires remembering "past experiences, for the cultivation of self-accountable imageries of self" (141), and maintains that in remembering, music can be used both for constructing an artefactual memory (remembering who one is) and as a device for generation of future identity (who one would like to be) (141). Middleton (1990) and Frith (1990) state similarly that popular music can be a "key to our remembrance of things past" (Frith 1990; cited in Middleton 1990: 142).

DeNora (2006) understands feeling and identity to be strongly linked, and understands feeling as being one of the ways that music is tied to listeners' identities. She says:

Music may be understood as providing a container for feeling and, in this sense, its specific properties contribute to the shape and quality of feeling to the extent that feeling - to be sustained, and made known to oneself and others - must be established on a public or intersubjective plane. Music is a material that actors use to elaborate, to fill out and fill in, to themselves and to others, modes of aesthetic agency and, with it, subjective stances and identities. (147)

DeNora says that participants in her study used music in two principal ways: first, to remember key people in their lives, and second, to remember past identities. DeNora's respondents said that music was especially useful for remembering people with whom they had had romantic relationships or intimate friendships, and frequently linked particular music to reliving an event or crucial time in their lives (142). They also used music to remember intimate relationships with people in their lives who had died (141). Beyond this, DeNora says that music has a particular ability to "invoke past feelings and

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3 Which Frith (1987) considers in his first "use" of popular music.
ways of being" (143), giving listeners a medium in which to remember past identities. She says that music associated with listeners’ identities can “[put] actors in touch with capacities, reminding them of their accomplished identities, which in turn fuels the ongoing projection of identity from past into future” (143).

To emphasize another element of music’s influence on listeners’ identities, Grossberg (1991) writes that the key to rock is that it appeals to fans’ identities, “by offering the fan places where he or she can locate some sense of his or her own identity and power, where he or she can invest his or her self in specific ways” (61). He says performers assume the identity of the fan in relating their message, and impact the fan’s identity with their own values:

by making certain things or practices matter, the fan ‘authorizes’ them [musicians] to speak for him or her, not only as a spokesperson but also as surrogate voices … the fan gives authority to that which he or she invests in, letting the object of such investments speak for and as him or her self. (59)

My understanding of people’s interactions with music is not only that fans are influenced by music in significant ways, but also that they have some constrained agency in determining that influence. As such, I felt it was imperative to value the narratives of listeners/activists in examining the relationship that reproductive rights activists have with both their activist activities and Ani’s music, rather than only analysing lyrics and music as texts. In doing this, I follow the increasing tendency of writers in the fields of popular music and sociology to see, “meaning not as something intrinsic to a text but rather realized and performed by an audience. Meaning is constantly negotiated and highly dependent on context of consumption and identity of consumer” (Lowe 2003: 123). Middleton suggests that this allows people to “enjoy and valorize identities they yearned for or believed themselves to possess” (1990: 249). Frith (1996b) writes that
"music matters not just because it is ... a powerful force for taking one out of oneself, but also because it can take one deep inside” (73). The interviews I conducted allowed me, as a researcher, to better understand what women saw, heard, thought, and felt in their experiences of listening to Ani's music.

Popular music literature discusses two other significant factors that contribute to the ways in which popular music impacts listeners on a personal level, and the degree to which listeners use something in the music as elements in understanding their identities. First is the perceived authenticity of the music and the artist — the more believable and 'real' the music is, the more likely it is that audience members will take it seriously. Second, the sense of shared interest that surrounds the music (often described as a 'subculture'), which may also serve to make the music seem more authentic, influences people through the spirit of the culture, as well as the desire to be 'involved' (by being a fan) in the first place.

The perceived authenticity of Ani DiFranco is important to my study for two reasons. First, a lot of the impact of music on people relies on a sense of music as authentic, suggesting that the perception of authenticity is one way that some music influences people more than other music. Second, in our interviews, my participants continuously signalled that they were talking about authenticity, using terms like 'honest' and 'real' to describe both Ani and their interpretations of her music. I argue that this sense of realness makes Ani particularly influential to listeners, and makes her music more likely to have a strong impact on a listener's consciousness.

Music that is perceived as authentic is probably more effective in influencing listeners. Armstrong (2004) defines authenticity as the perceived realness of a song,
performance, or artist. He notes that authenticity is never internal to a performance, but is conferred by an audience (Armstrong 2004: 338). Frith (1996b) comments that authenticity, along with skill and production, is important for listeners judging music, who tend to appreciate music that they find believable, sincere, and true to their experience (Frith 1996b: 52). Listeners also take into account their previous knowledge of an artist when evaluating the sincerity of their music or persona (Frith 1996b: 71).

Listeners take (perceived) authentic music more seriously, and are more likely to make a strong personal connection with it. Kibby (2006) writes that a performer’s perceived authority is dependent on making a connection with fans (296). Negus (1992) agrees that there is an important connection for the audience between the artist and the image presented (66). Dawson (1976) writes that authentic songs are “always accessible and they’re always personal … ultimately they speak about you and me” (as cited in Kibby 2006: 296). Such songs resonate with audience members’ memories and emotions. In this way, authenticity is subjective and fluid; it is evaluated differently by different audience members and may be perceived more strongly in one performance than another. Grossberg (1991) suggests that the perception of authenticity is a key factor in building and maintaining a fanbase.

In discussing the idea of authenticity, it cannot be ignored that production and marketing processes contribute to the difficulty in judging the authenticity of performers, not least by deliberately contributing to the production of authenticity and constantly casting it into suspicion (Frith 1987; Negus 1999). Furthermore, the characteristics and importance of ‘authenticity’ vary with types of production and music genre (Frith 1996b: 71). Grazian (2004) writes that
As authenticity … can truly exist only in the eye of the beholder, the search for authenticity is rarely a quest for some actual material thing, but rather for what consumers in a particular social milieu imagine the symbols of authenticity to be.

Some symbols of authenticity are interpreted similarly across the western popular music industry, but most are debated among audiences, even within one music genre (Grazian 2004: 45). In particular, different genres of popular music view authenticity differently, and consider it to be of varying importance (Armstrong 2004: 336). Generally in the genre of folk-rock music, where DiFranco’s music is frequently classified, a performer’s authenticity is considered by audiences to be quite important, as it is identified as a natural, grassroots genre (Connell and Gibson 2003: 29). For conscious music, the perception of authenticity seems to be particularly important, as it lends credibility to the lyrics, the performance, and the experience. Frith (1996b) argues that a musician’s perceived authenticity also lends credibility to the genre as a whole: “authenticity is necessarily a critical value – one listens to music for clues to something else, to what makes the genre at issue valuable as a genre in the first place” (Frith 1996b: 89).

Fans look for music that is sincere, spontaneous, real, direct, and “genuine” in assessing its authenticity (Negus 1992: 70). Some literature suggests that music on the margins, either figuratively (of mainstream popularity), or geographically (on the edge of town), tends to be seen as more ‘authentic’, and in fact relies more on authenticity for its appeal (Grazian 2004). Artists who write and play their own material are usually considered to be more authentic than cover artists, but even established singer-songwriters will play occasional covers (Shuker 2001: 112). For artists still working to establish themselves, however, more originality in their music leads more directly to
upward movement in their popularity (at least in most genres), as audiences are attracted to musicians whom they interpret as ‘authentic’ (Shuker 2001: 112). This may be an important factor in explaining DiFranco’s early success (which will be discussed in the following chapter), as well as the intensely personal connection that fans feel they have with her.

Listeners look for sincerity and genuineness in music, and people who take music seriously are often looking for something concrete that they can believe in. Concreteness comes primarily from performers and performances that can be understood as authentic. In most cases, Negus (1992) says, there does have to be something real that an artist’s persona is based upon in order for it to be credible – and audience members know this. Authenticity is not usually a series of myths that cover up what is ‘real’ – at some point, there is a human-to-human connection between the artist and the individual fan, built on shared meanings (Negus 1992: 73-76). Negus says that “fans are quite capable of acknowledging the hype, the myths, the games and marketing ploys they participate in whilst still finding pleasure in the products” (74). As I will show in Chapter Six, this postulation seems to apply well to my participants, who recognize that the image of Ani DiFranco they see is something of a production, but still take both enjoyment and meaning from it.

As I have tried to suggest, authenticity is a subjective, fluid, and contentious characteristic. Simon Frith calls authenticity the “most misleading term in cultural theory” (1987: 137). The dilemma in considering musicians’ authenticity is that the presentation of self for a musician is always a performance. The experience of a live performance requires the participation of both the artist and the audience, but the concert
plays a very different role for each. For most fans, the concert is a significant event, a rare opportunity to see a specific performer. For the artist, however, one concert tends to blur into the next when touring, and it is a challenge to keep some unique energy for each show (Shuker 2001: 108).

In looking for an ‘authentic’ performance, fans look for many characteristics, including spontaneity, uncertainty, and ensemble coordination (Auslander 2006: 88). Often, the closer the fan and the artist are to one another, the more authentic the experience is perceived to be: live performances are hierarchically arranged as being more authentic than pseudo-live shows (television, video, or live-recorded albums), which are still considered to be more ‘real’ than studio-recorded albums (Shuker 2001: 106). According to Shuker, the level of intimacy achieved between audience and performer at a live show creates a much more satisfying musical experience for fans (106). At a live concert, the artist is still performing a constructed persona, but without studio gimmicks; it is a “true test of musicianship undisguised by studio trickery” (Shuker 2001: 106; see also Auslander 2006: 89). It is thus understood as proof of real technical ability and talent, as well as a chance to experience the persona of the artist.

A musician’s perceived authenticity may combine with the community surrounding her music to create a package that, to a new fan, seems both believable and welcoming: a culture where what she believes in helps her to belong. For many of my participants, this feeling of being a part of a wider community, larger than just their own affinity for Ani's music and her ideas (which they shared), was a key appeal of listening to Ani’s music. For much of the last half century, this relationship has been described in terms of “subculture” by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.
(CCCS), developed in the 1970s (Bennett 2006: 106). The CCCS understood subcultures to be a product of class struggle in post-WWII Britain. They argued that subcultures included “a series of collective reactions to structural changes taking place in ... society” (Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004: 5). Recent sociological analysis of youth cultures is moving away from the CCCS understanding, with one of the most significant critiques of the CCCS explanation of youth culture being that it does not apply to numerous later youth cultures that were not class-based (Bennett 2006: 107, see also Frith 1996b; Bennett 2000; Muggleton 2000). Furthermore, youth cultures, in contrast to the CCCS understanding of subcultures, are frequently transitory in place and in membership (Bennett 2006: 108). Reflecting this, youth cultures and individuals’ cultural identity are increasingly understood by theorists as fluid (Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004: 12; see also Bennett 2000, Bennett 2006), and Hodkinson (2004) suggests that the term ‘subculture’ over-simplifies the complex nature of contemporary lifestyles.

More recently, theorists studying youth culture and music communities have used the terms ‘scene’, ‘tribe’, ‘neo-tribe’, and ‘lifestyle’ (see Peterson and Bennett 2004; Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004; Frith 1996b; Muggleton 2000). Andy Bennett says that ‘subculture’ has now “become little more than a convenient ‘catch-all’ term for any aspect of social life in which young people, style, and music intersect” (Bennett 2006: 106). In each understanding of youth culture (subculture, scene, tribe, neotribe, lifestyle), a key feature is identification with other fans, other members of the subculture. In Hodkinson’s (2004) study, he found that “shared identity transcended the boundaries of place, with numerous respondents emphasizing a close sense of commonality with Goths they didn’t know in faraway towns and countries” (144). Despite not sharing the same
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spaces or having any contact with one another, these fans felt that the culture surrounding
the music they liked gave them something significant in common.

Vrooman (2004) and Frith (1996b) make similar arguments. Vrooman argues that
the involvement of older Kate Bush fans in fan culture is significant, despite their low
participation in club and concert scenes. She has found that the internet has created a
“virtual scene” made up of fans from a variety of backgrounds and geographical
locations, and challenges the assumptions that fandom cannot carry into adult life, and
that physical proximity is important in building and maintaining fan communities.
Rather, the participants in her study felt connected to other Kate Bush fans while
listening to her music (even by themselves) and by posting on, or even just reading, fan
websites. Even without mentioning the Internet, Frith (1996b) writes that there is
something of a virtual community that springs up surrounding a popular artist: “through
its generic organization that music offers people, even so-called passive at-home
listeners, access to a social world, a part in some sort of social narrative” (90). I argue
that the group identification that people feel from listening to music - either with other
fans they know or meet, or simply by supposing that there are others out there – gives
listeners a stronger connection to the music, and is a factor in the development of a strong
identification with an artist.

This chapter situates my research project within recent academic literature on the
intersection of music and social activism, and shows that my project relates closely to the
work of Fischlin (2003), Rosenthal (2001) and Balliger (1995), who argue that music
works together with other forces to influence the shape and direction of social
movements and the actors within them. My study is particularly concerned with the
nuanced ways that activists interpret and use music in creating, shifting, and maintaining their activist sensibilities and motivations. I consider conscious music, like other popular music, to be particularly effective in tapping into listeners’ identities, and music that does so, as Frith (1987, 1996b) says, is music that people say that they ‘like.’ As we have seen, it is frequently argued that fans identify more strongly with artists they find believable and ‘real,’ and they are more often and more strongly influenced by music with which they can personally identify. Listeners are also attracted to the sense of community that surrounds a genre or a particular artist’s music, and just listening to the music may make some people feel part of something bigger. As we will see in the following chapters, the sense of cohesive community surrounding DiFranco’s music suggests to some listeners not only that they are part of something musical that is bigger than themselves, but are also part of a politically charged movement. I use the following chapter to provide background information on Ani DiFranco’s career and the reproductive rights movement in order to contextualize the analysis of my empirical research that follows.
Chapter 3: Background (The Story)

The previous chapter examined literature on music and social movements, as well as literature that helps to explain how popular music can be particularly meaningful to listeners. The intention of this chapter is to provide the necessary specific background information to understand my participants’ descriptions of their activist interests and their relationships with Ani DiFranco's music. In order to understand more generally the influence of conscious music on activism, my main research question is “in what ways do reproductive rights activists feel that their activist commitments, activities, and sensibilities have been influenced by their relationship with Ani DiFranco's music?”

This chapter unfolds as follows. First, I examine some of the academic writing on women in popular music, and its perspective on the treatment of female musicians by the popular media. I take a brief look at scholarship that considers the particular nature of musician-fan relationships between female musicians and female fans, and highlight some of the key steps women have made towards reaching parity with men in the music industry. The second section of this chapter provides some background on the movement for reproductive rights. To examine the significance of Ani DiFranco's music for fans who are reproductive rights activists, it is important to understand some of the issues that reproductive rights include, the historical struggles to obtain and maintain those rights, and the consequences that women and society in general face without them. Many of my participants referred frequently to remembering the gains that have been made for reproductive rights in order to work to maintain and augment those rights. For this reason as well as for context, I outline some of the key twentieth century events involving contraception and abortion, the positions of significant large lobby organizations, and
landmark achievements. Finally, I give a more thorough introduction to Ani DiFranco, and following a brief overview of her career and politics, I demonstrate some of the many ways that a consciousness of reproductive rights both explicitly and less conspicuously influences her lyrics, performances, and activism. I situate her career within the larger traditions of women’s music and history of female musicians. Drawing from excerpts of her lyrics, I argue that her music is deeply personal and political at the same time. I outline some of the key ways that Ani has been involved in reproductive rights activism outside of her music, and the public recognition she has received for promoting women’s reproductive freedom. Ani is a more recent artist following the tradition of “women’s music,” so it is also important to consider her similarities to other popular musicians and women’s music artists, while recognizing the characteristics of her music, persona, and people’s reactions to her that have led people to consider her as a spokesperson and role model for reproductive rights activism.

**Women in Music (Jukebox)**

Ani DiFranco is one of numerous female artists who have created strong connections with female listeners. This close relationship between artist and fans may be related to the music industry’s historical tendency to portray women passively, or not at all. Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber (1991[1975]) argue that this is not unique to the music industry, but that accounts of all types of cultural experiences often do not include the experience of women. This is corroborated by Susan McClary (1991), who writes that until recently, there was little or no published feminist music criticism and even music history textbooks rarely contained content on women before the 1990s (McClary 1991: 5; 2000: 272). McClary (1991) comments that the increasing (but still small) number of
feminist music critics have been able to use concepts developed in other art genres (such as literature and film studies) with respect to feminism to examine music, but cautions that “music has its own constraints and capabilities that have to be identified and queried” (7), and needs to be considered as its own unique art form. McClary (1991) is particularly concerned with the ways that females in music negotiate the largely institutional masculine and sexually charged modes of production and reception. She says that women “have been assumed to be incapable of sustained creative activity” (18) and that women’s music is either “condemned as pretty yet trivial or – in the event that it does not conform to standards of feminine propriety – as aggressive and unbefitting a woman” (18-19).

O’Brien (2002) writes that while there was an increasing interest in women in music by scholars through the 1990s, female musicians have remained on the sidelines of mainstream media attention (1-2). McClary (2000) explains that “despite the increasing prominence of women in contemporary popular music, periodicals such as Rolling Stone still tend to write about them in ‘gee whiz!’ articles that marvel at the sheer existence of such creatures (272). Furthermore, among political musicians, male musicians still receive significantly more critical and media attention (O’Brien 2002: 382; Savage 2003: 15).

Women’s music is frequently categorized without consideration for the fluidity of musical style, genre, and taste. Cooper (1999) writes that studies or commentaries of the representation of women in music tend to portray women as falling into dichotomies, and she attempts to provide readers with a discography that will emphasize the range of subtlety in songs by and about women. Linda Lister (2001) identifies three categories of what she calls the ‘new’ (1990s) brand of divas (female singers). These include, first,
“Prima Divas,” a category that includes musicians who are recognized primarily for their vocal talent (Lister 2001: 2). Second is a category that Lister terms “Late Twentieth Century Innovators,” whom she describes as artists who have introduced new aspects of pop music to the industry (Lister 2001: 2). Lister’s third category of new divas is labelled “Singer/Songwriter/Artist.” She describes this category of artist in relation to the all-female folk festival Lilith Fair, and suggests that artists in this category may be the most positive prospects for women in music (Lister 2001: 2). They are revered for their songwriting, introspection, and imagination. While Lister does not mention Ani DiFranco, it is apparent that Ani would fit squarely into this third category.

Literature that does refer to women in music and politically-oriented female musicians suggests that Ani has been an important artist in these areas over the past two decades. In interviews with fifteen participants about their favourite political female artists, Ann Savage (2003) found that of the 140 artists the women named, Ani DiFranco’s name came up repeatedly when participants were referring to issues of reproductive choice (50). Furthermore, Savage claims that of the female ‘political’ artists whose music she describes, Ani is “the most demonstrative in terms of being politically conscious” (7).

As McClary (1991, 2000) notes, women’s participation in music has received limited attention in music scholarship, history, and media. It is often commented that

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4 Lister names Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey, and Celine Dion as examples of 1990s artists who fit into this category of Prima Divas.
5 In this category of Late 20th Century Innovators, Lister includes Madonna, Courtney Love, Alanis Morissette, Shania Twain, Lauryn Hill, and Tori Amos as examples.
6 Lister includes Sheryl Crow, Sarah McLachlan, and Jewel as examples of singer/songwriter/artists.
7 Bayton (2006) argues (as does Frith 1991) that degrees of opportunity, restriction, and constraint in leisure, including music, vary among social groups, and that “constraints are crucial to the explanation of women’s absence from rock” (347). They operate on girls and women to varying degrees that Bayton argues have some correlation with social class, but she notes that “girls and young women in all social
while women's participation and acceptance in popular music has been limited, its presence was always important, and that the position of women in music today can be related back to historical roles of women in the music industry (see McClary 1991, 2000; O’Brien 1995, 2002; Whiteley 2000; Savage 2003). Ann Savage (2003) views the development of rock and roll in the 1950s as having been a way for men to “remasculinate themselves,” often victimizing women in the process (3; see also Rodnitsky 2006: 21). Women presented in the lyrics were often represented in “disparaging terms” (3). Furthermore, they were rarely taken seriously as professional musicians or seen as being worthy of receiving training in music production. As such, they tended to take on the role of “fan” as their primary involvement in popular music. The fan role “was and is frequently viewed as inconsequential” (Savage 2003: 3) — and when an artist’s main fan base was female, he lost credibility (3). In the 1960s, ‘girl groups’ produced some of the first popular music to have women as protagonists rather than simply being objectified in popular music lyrics (Savage 2003: 4). They became extraordinarily popular with girls and young women, who could see themselves in songs for the first time. The emergence and popularity of girl groups is sometimes credited as “precipitating the 1970s women’s movement” (Savage 2003: 4).

Whiteley (2000) writes that the “growing emphasis on individualism and self-expression” (75) in the 1960s and 1970s was very influential for women singer-songwriters. ‘Women’s music’ developed particularly in the 1970s with the appearance of independent, women-controlled labels (Lont 1992: 242). The (female) artists in women’s music “rebelled against what Frith and McRobbie (1990[1978]) called gender-
assigned roles of males as active participants and females as passive consumers” (Savage 2003: 6). The goals of women’s music were to create music by women, about women, for women, and produced and financially controlled by women (Lont 1992: 242-243; see also Savage 2003: 4). Women’s music has often been associated with feminist/lesbian politics, and feminists and lesbians made up a large proportion of women’s music audiences (Lont 1992: 242). McClary (2000) writes that one of the features that helped women’s music to thrive in the 1970s was its “aggressive simplicity” (273) and its emphasis on its lyrics, which were outspoken, easy to sing along with, and often about everyday experiences (McClary 2000: 273). As I demonstrate later in this chapter, DiFranco’s music shares many of these attributes.

In the 1980s, some women’s music artists made an effort to cross over to mainstream audiences. Lont (1992) attributes this largely to the success of women’s music among musicians; there were an increasing number of women’s music artists and recordings, but the population of dedicated women’s music listeners was not growing (247). Madonna’s status in management and marketing was considered a breakthrough for female artists on major labels in the 1980s, but it was still not common for females to be in positions of power in the major record labels (Savage 2003: 6). At the end of the 1980s, female artists such as Sinead O’Connor and Tracy Chapman were socially conscious artists who signed with major labels and received substantial attention in the industry, creating the new category of “women in rock” (Whiteley 2000: 171).

O’Connor and Chapman were on the front wave of a new trend, and by the early 1990s Ani DiFranco was one of relatively few new artists entering the women’s music

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8 For example, female artists often sang of men (e.g., the Shangri-Las’ “Leader of the Pack”), and had male producers and writers.
'genre' and staying on independent women's music labels, rather than opting to aim for a contract with a major label. Many of these new female artists had been strongly influenced themselves by women's music in their youth and musical development. Lont (1992) suggests that their efforts to appeal to mainstream pop were partially because young lesbians in the audiences and new young lesbian performers were having reservations about the politics at the heart of women's music. Rather than being part of a separate branch of culture, they wanted their lesbian lifestyles to be reflected and included in mainstream culture, so they created music that would appeal to a blended audience (251). This strategy worked, as the 1990s did see unprecedented acceptance and commercial success of female musicians in mainstream popular music (Savage 2003: 1).

Unfortunately, in terms of the early goals of women's music, few inroads had been made in the two decades preceding the early 1990s. Lont (1992) writes that in the early 1990s there were few women's music artists who were well known (252). Furthermore, there had been only small increases in the number of women in the production side of popular music, and most well-known women on major labels still tended to have male producers, managers, and financial backers (252).

Additionally, by the end of the 1990s, many female artists appeared to be countering feminist and women's music efforts. McClary (2000) notes that most prominent popular female artists of the 1990s, even those whose lyrics sounded like feminist messages, cringed at being labelled 'feminist' (273). Whiteley (2000) suggests that music by female pop musicians in the 1990s tended to fall into one of two categories. The first, she says, was singer-songwriting in the folk tradition, characterized by authenticity and an emphasis on 'truthfulness' to personal experience and community
...
(which is arguably a more acceptably feminine genre). On the other side, Whiteley sees manufactured performance with commercial success as its primary goal (196).

One of the major events for female musicians and fans in the 1990s was Lilith Fair. Singer-songwriter Sarah McLachlan organized the all-day concert festival in 1997 in defiance of "the industrywide [sic] contention that two female acts couldn’t successfully share the same stage" (Savage 2003: 2, 8). In spite of doubts, fans flocked to the festival, which was an overwhelming success and continued to tour over the following two summers (Savage 2003: 8). Lilith Fair was criticized for not being diverse; its musicians, especially in the first year, were primarily singer-songwriters who were young, thin, white, heterosexual, able-bodied, and ‘attractive’ by media ideals (Savage 2003: 2, 8). McClary (2000) comments that "the unexpected success of the Lilith Fair concerts, featuring exclusively female artists, confirmed not only the artistry of the participating musicians but also the willingness of a mass audience to support their efforts" (275). Savage (2003) suggests that, unfortunately, the mainstream acceptance of women’s music peaked with the Lilith Fair festivals, and the number of women involved in the most well-known music, its production, and its finances has actually declined from the late 1990s to 2003 (Savage 2003: 2, 11-12). Ani DiFranco appeared at several Lilith Fair dates, and like some other artists on the festival tour, is understood as having come out of the women’s music tradition. By keeping her music on her own record label and speaking (and singing) frankly about her politics, she has been one of the artists who has kept that dwindling tradition going.
...
The following section outlines the basic aims and achievements of the reproductive rights movement, which Ani strongly supports, and the final section of this chapter describes Ani's career, her music, and her involvement in reproductive rights.

Reproductive Rights Activism (Willing to Fight)
My participants frequently referenced events and milestones that are well known within the movement, such as American references to Roe v. Wade, the retirement of Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in 2005, the 2004 March for Women’s Lives, and the difficulty women have in accessing emergency contraception. The frequency with which women raised these landmarks and the ways they related their politicization and passion to them suggest to me that they see their own activist work as stemming from these milestones, and that they understand there to be a sense of urgency in activism and education so that the past achievements of the reproductive rights movement are not lost.

The movement for reproductive freedom is one integral part of the ‘women’s movement’ or ‘feminist movement’. ‘Reproductive rights’ includes the general right to control one’s fertility, and is considered most often to apply to women. As stated in Chapter One, the Feminist Majority Foundation considers this to include access to birth control and emergency contraception; safe, legal, and affordable access to abortion; sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention and treatment; pre-natal and post-partum care; and comprehensive sex education to allow women to make informed decisions about sex and pregnancy (Feminist Majority Foundation).

Contraception has been a highly controversial issue in North America over the past two centuries. It has been a struggle for women to obtain safe, reliable contraception,
and in its absence, about 85% of sexually active (pre-menopausal) women will be pregnant within one year ("In the Know"; see also Hatcher et al. 2004; Tone 2001: 76; Fu et al., 1999). It is widely acknowledged that the only completely reliable method of birth control is complete abstinence, which women cannot always control, and which they may not desire (Tone 2001: 72). Birth control is thus a crucial ingredient in allowing women control over their bodies.

It was not until 1960 that a contraceptive pill was approved by the FDA in the US. In Canada, distribution of information about or prescriptions for artificial birth control was illegal until 1969 (Pierson 1993: 98). When they became available, IUDs and contraceptive pills were scrutinized and criticized by women as the health risks associated with their use became apparent (Pierson 1993: 98). Abortion was criminalized in Canada until the late 1970s, except in accredited hospitals, and in exceptional cases that were evaluated by a three-physician hospital board at a time when almost all physicians were white men. Hospitals that did not have such a committee and accreditation did not perform any abortions at all (Pierson 1993: 99). Despite its illicit status, women sought abortions in large numbers. Because abortion was illegal and needed to be secret, many were performed by doctors or other practitioners in unsterilized conditions that were extremely dangerous for women. It is estimated that there were one hundred thousand illegal abortions performed in Canada in 1975, twenty thousand of which caused complications requiring the woman to be hospitalized (Van Wart 1975, reprinted in Pierson 1993: 127). These are the types of statistics and dangerous situations that my participants seem to be afraid might return if reproductive rights advocates let down their guard, or if choice becomes taken for granted.
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Throughout these years, there was a push for safe, legal access to abortion for women who wanted it, building up to the 1970 Canadian ‘Abortion Caravan’ from Vancouver to Toronto, which demanded the decriminalization of abortion (Pierson 1993: 99). In the end, abortion was decriminalized first in the United States in 1973, with the *Roe v. Wade* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. In Canada, Dr. Henry Morgentaler started an (illegal) abortion clinic in Montreal, offering safe abortions to women (Pierson 1993: 100). He was arrested, found guilty, and imprisoned, but was released in 1976 when the Attorney General of Quebec “declared safe, medical abortions in free-standing clinics legal in that province” (Pierson 1993: 100). Other Canadian provinces followed Quebec’s lead. Hospital abortions were still subject to committee approval (Van Wart 1975, reprinted in Pierson 1993: 127-128), but women now had another legal option.

In the late 1990s, a contraceptive pill that is effective even after intercourse (referred to as ‘emergency contraception’ – E.C. – or Plan B) became widely available (see USFDA). It was first available to women only with a prescription, which created problems because it is most effective if taken quickly after intercourse, and because some doctors and pharmacists refused to fill the prescriptions, especially in the United States (see Gee 2006). Plan B is now available in Canada directly from pharmacists, without a prescription, and in the US to women eighteen and older (CBC News 2006). There are still pharmacists who refuse to fill the prescriptions, and pharmacies, including entire corporate chains, that refuse to stock Plan B (Wind 2005). It is these types of difficulties presented to women trying to access their rights that emphasize the ongoing need for education and activism. Many of my participants referenced this example, and others

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9 One of the most well known of these was Wal-Mart, which began to stock Plan B only by court order in 2006 (see Featherstone 2005; Payne 2006; Gee 2006).
gave similar ones, in their explanations of why they are passionate about reproductive rights.

The reproductive rights movement has had several important policy and event victories in recent decades, including the legalization of contraceptives, abortion, and emergency contraception. However, in addition to these continued difficulties, abortion access is still costly and difficult (or inaccessible) for many women in North America. There is a constant threat of violence at many clinics by anti-choice demonstrators, especially in the United States (Feminist Majority Foundation 2007), and many medical schools do not teach students to perform abortions (Koyama and Williams 2005: 157). Across Canada, there are long wait times for hospital abortions (which, unlike private clinic abortions, are covered by provincial health plans), and the situation is even more difficult in some provinces (see “Choice Update,” 2006). For example, only two hospitals (and no clinics) perform abortions in the province of New Brunswick (see “Women of New Brunswick” 2006), there are no providers in Prince Edward Island, and it is difficult for women who can afford to travel to other provinces for services to negotiate the process of reimbursement for fees paid outside of their home province to terminate a pregnancy (see “Choice Update”, 2006).

Many activists for reproductive rights are affiliated with large lobbying organizations, while others work with small local organizations or independently. Some of the key organizations for reproductive rights in the US include the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the National Organization for Women (NOW), which organized the 2004 March for Women’s Lives in Washington D.C.. With over 1.1 million women and men in attendance, it was one of the largest political demonstrations in
American history (L.Bennett 2004). In Canada, Canadians for Choice and the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League/Association Canadienne pour le droit à l’avortement (CARAL/ACDA) have been vocal advocates for women’s choice over the past decades (Pierson 1993). Planned Parenthood is a long-time advocacy group that provides sex education, STD testing, birth control, counselling, and abortions to women in both countries, and Ipas is an American-based organization that works to secure reproductive rights for women around the world (Ipas; Planned Parenthood). Most of my participants are involved with some kind of organization, and many are involved with one or more of these large umbrella organizations.

Having first considered the context of the reproductive rights movement, I now turn to focus on Ani DiFranco’s career, her links to the women’s music tradition as described earlier, and her connection to reproductive rights activism.

Ani DiFranco (“I’m No Heroine”)  
Ani DiFranco describes herself as a folksinger (see DiFranco 2003[1998]; Rodgers 2000: 158; Quirino 2004: 23, 99; Righteous Babe Records). She is a singer-songwriter whose music centres around her voice and powerful guitar playing. At age nineteen, she released her first album on her own record label, Righteous Babe Records (RBR). Since 1990, she has recorded more than twenty solo albums, and several collaborative songs and albums (Malkin 2005: 5).

Early in her career, DiFranco drove herself across the United States on tour and sold her tapes out of the back of her car. With the growth of her popularity, she has been able to base RBR in her home town of Buffalo, New York, and maintain an office there with several staff (DiFranco 2003[1998]: 27;  

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10 She has recorded and performed individual songs with numerous artists, including Utah Phillips, Bob Dylan and the Indigo Girls.
Malkin 2005: 5-6). She has been successful despite her refusal to sign with a major record label and participate in the corporatization of art and American culture, and has instead maintained her independence from the mainstream recording industry (Burlingham 2004: 98, 100). Several songs on her earlier albums describe the frustrations she had trying to negotiate with mainstream record industry producers at the beginning of her career, including “Napoleon,” “Blood In the Boardroom,” “The Next Big Thing,” and “The Million You Never Made.”

DiFranco's music is well known for its percussive guitar technique and her wide variety of alternate guitar tunings (see Rodgers 2000, Quirino 2004, Malkin 2005). Her albums have varied in genre and instrumentation. Her early albums were simple, with DiFranco alone on guitar and singing. Puddle Dive (1993) was her first album that incorporated the use of drums, and she began to tour with a drummer and a bassist. The instrumentation was denser, but DiFranco's guitar and voice were still unequivocally the focus. For her 1998 release Little Plastic Castle, DiFranco added keyboards and a horn section to her backup band for several tracks and continued to record and tour with a full band for several years. Since 2004, DiFranco has recorded and toured with only an upright bassist, stripping the instrumentation back down to a more basic guitar-bass-voice format.

Ani may be best known for lyrics that articulate strong opinions about women’s rights and patriarchy, such as “I'm No Heroine” (1992), and ones that contemplate her own sexuality, like “In or Out” (1992). However, many, and perhaps even most, of her

11 A transcription of the lyrics for each song I refer to in the thesis is provided in Appendix One. Songs are listed in alphabetical order, according to title.
12 DiFranco has also played a few other instruments herself on a few recordings, and added a drummer to tours and recordings in the latter half of 2007.
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songs focus primarily on other issues. Themes that emerge include a wariness of corporatization (e.g., “Not So Soft,” [1991]), recognition of continued racial tensions (e.g., “‘Tis of Thee,” [1999]), promotion of peace and non-violence (e.g., “To the Teeth,” [1999]), and the personal conflict of how to react to others’ poverty (e.g., “Subdivision,” [2001]). Ani’s lyrics are also notable for her recognition that standing up for one’s beliefs can be challenging, but that action is imperative for social change (e.g., “Face Up and Sing,” [1994], and “Willing to Fight,” [1993]).

All of these topics have recurred throughout Ani’s albums, but what the topics have most in common is that they are presented as Ani reflects on her position in relation to these issues, works through current situations in her own life that require addressing them, or lives with poignant memories of confronting them in the past. As such, her discography is understood to tell a deeply personal story about her life. I suggest in my analysis (Chapters Five through Seven) that her fans make a particularly strong personal connection with her personal narrative, and that it is that connection that gives her music an unusually powerful impact. This connection to the lyrics has been especially important with respect to my participants’ sense of identity. I will explore this in Chapter Five with reference to others’ writing (see Frith 1987, 1996; see also Dawson 1976; Rosenthal 2001; Savage 2003; DeNora 2006).

The personal connection Ani’s fans feel with her seems to be more deeply personal, and perhaps stronger, than the connection fans experience with most artists. Social activists in general, and women’s rights activists in particular, have told me that they identify passionately with Ani's music and lyrics. In my own work in the reproductive rights movement, as well as in my interactions with individual activists, I
have noticed a particular affinity among many activists for Ani DiFranco. When I started to discuss my interest in writing about Ani's influence on her activist listeners, my friends who were reproductive rights activists were some of the most enthusiastic about the idea, and had many ideas and stories to share with me. When explaining their most influential song lyrics or experiences, their focus on reproductive rights helped me to choose that focus among Ani's many issues. It seemed to be a direct influence, though not all-consuming, whereas some other issues, like anti-consumerism, race relations, white flight, environmentalism, etc., seemed to be areas where people were more likely to appreciate Ani's lyrics in those areas because they already were inspired and active working for justice in those areas.

In addition to her obvious lyrical preoccupation with reproductive rights, Ani has also been an important part of the reproductive rights movement through her activism (outside of her music). While she makes it apparent in her performances that she considers her political lyrics to be a form of activism (and her main contribution), throughout her career she has been involved with the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL), the National Organization for Women (NOW), and is a vocal supporter of women's rights and reproductive rights groups and actions. She demonstrates her non-musical reproductive rights activism primarily through the ‘Action!’ section on the RBR website, her presence at marches and events organized by grassroots and national organizations, and her creation of the Righteous Babe Foundation, which supports smaller grassroots organizations.

The ‘Action!’ section of the RBR website declares one of its goals to be “to propose ways you can find and work with like-minded individuals and organizations
around the planet and in your own neighbourhood” (Righteous Babe Records, “Action!”). It connects websurfers to four categories of activist information: ‘Media’, ‘Peace and Justice’, ‘Choice’, and ‘Vote Dammit!’, suggesting that RBR (and by extension, Ani DiFranco) is most passionate about spreading the word on these four categories of issues.

The links from the ‘Choice’ page include several national and international organizations that DiFranco vocally supports. One of those organizations is the National Organization for Women. In 2004, Ani joined many of those organizations in marching in the NOW-organized March for Women’s Lives in Washington, D.C. The march’s goals were to promote choice, justice, and health, through access to abortion and global family planning in the wake of several US government policies that threatened to further undermine women’s reproductive rights (NOW – ‘March’; RBR – ‘Action! –Choice’).

Ani marched with other celebrities, and delivered a performance to the crowd of over one million (L.Bennett 2004). In addition to Ani’s very public support of large national reproductive rights organizations, her Righteous Babe Foundation supports numerous small grassroots groups, many of which address issues relating to reproductive rights (Axelrod 2005; see also Goetzman 2001).

In 2006 the National Organization for Women (NOW) presented Ani with their Woman of Courage Award for her unrelenting efforts to speak up for women’s rights in her music and as an activist, and her encouragement to others to become active (NOW – ‘National Conference 2006’). The award is presented annually to women NOW deems to have exhibited exceptional contributions to the American feminist movement. DiFranco was a popular recipient for the loud raucous crowd at the annual national NOW conference and Young Feminist Summit where she accepted the award.
It is evident from my participants’ interviews that they have seen Ani as a role model (some more in the past than currently) for reproductive rights activism and for living and acting in ways that work to improve the world. I argue in Chapter Five that a significant part of my interviewees’ current affinity for Ani and her music is related to the connection that they feel or have felt with her music at different times in their lives.

In her recent study of women’s experiences listening to political and/or feminist music Savage (2003) found that women who listen to such music feel deeply connected to both the music and the artist. Savage suggests that this connection was built through the common world view that fans shared with their favourite artists and the personal narratives that resonated with fans’ lives, as well as artists’ abilities to articulate feelings that fans were experiencing themselves. Additionally, women commented that they listened more often and more carefully to music that they could sing along with, showing particular appreciation for singers who sang in their vocal range.

The analysis of my own interviews with fans of Ani DiFranco shows that the fans I spoke with feel similarly. My analysis makes a further connection than Savage’s (2003) research does, by linking listeners’ appreciation for and relationship with a particular artist’s music and their reproductive rights activism. For the women I interviewed, reproductive rights are as important an issue today as they ever have been, and as activists they work to overcome barriers to women’s access to safe and effective birth control, sex education, emergency contraception, abortion, and alternative birthing techniques. Ani DiFranco raises many of these issues in her lyrics, and also sings about the importance of speaking out for reproductive (and all) justice. She is known for her outspoken performances and participation in national marches. In her music and in many
of her activist activities, she follows a tradition of female performers who performed before her, and while gaining more mainstream recognition than many others, has maintained the independence and family feeling of her record label. Like other political female artists today, she is admired for these characteristics by her fans, and is recognized by reproductive rights activists and women's organizations as a strong and effective proponent of reproductive freedom (see Goetzman 2001; Quirino 2004; Axelrod 2005; NOW – ‘National Conference 2006’).

**Conclusion (Back Around)**

This chapter has situated Ani DiFranco and her fans within the tradition of women's music, arguing that Ani was one of few prominent female musicians in the 1990s to refuse to sign with a major record label and to continue to promote her own messages. I suggested that the close relationship that Ani's fans feel they have with her and her music is also reminiscent of women's music culture of the 1970s and 1980s. I outlined some important points about the reproductive rights movement in the past century both to situate Ani DiFranco's music and activism, and to provide the context in which my participants take up activism and spoke to me about it. I also detailed some of the relevant highlights of Ani's career and her activist work, which are important for understanding my participants' comments and appreciation for her passion, and help to explain the connection that I and many listeners (including all of my participants) make between Ani and reproductive rights. The following chapter will outline the methodology I used for this study, explaining how I recruited participants and what the interview process consisted of. I also introduce my participants, giving a brief overview of their demographic backgrounds, experience as reproductive rights activists, and the period of
time in which they have listened to Ani's music. Following a brief explanation of my analytic scheme, I present an outline of the three analysis chapters.
Chapter 4: Methodology (What How When Where Why Who)

This study developed from my interest in conscious music and its role in social change. My attention focused particularly on how individuals respond to conscious music. I was especially interested in how Ani DiFranco's music influenced activists who listened to it. When I considered her lyrics, I felt that Ani covered too many issues to consider her music’s effect on activists in general, but I observed a strong, clear link to reproductive rights throughout her career, and narrowed my research question to ask more specifically how activists for reproductive rights have been affected by listening to Ani’s music. From my own involvement in this movement and the relationship I have with other people who listen to Ani's music, I was confident that I would be able to recruit appropriate candidates for interviews.

In this chapter, I explain the research methods I used in conducting the study. First, I explore some of the advantages of qualitative methods for my study, and then I show the importance of qualitative interviews for developing answers to my research question, which asks how reproductive rights activists feel that their activist commitments, activities, and sensibilities have been influenced by their relationship with Ani DiFranco's music. I outline my sampling techniques and the information I provided to participants before the interviews, and give a brief overview of the characteristics of my sample (also see Table 1). I describe the interview process, which was similar for all ten participants, and summarize the coding and analysis processes I went through following the interviews. Finally, I introduce the analytical scheme that structures the interpretations of my interview data in Chapters Five through Eight.
My research is strongly grounded in qualitative methods. Qualitative research is useful for researchers to gain insight into the relationship between attitudes, beliefs, opinions, motivations, concerns, and problems with respect to current and anticipated activities – in other words, it is helpful in determining how and why people act as they do, and what they think about it (see Folch-Lyon and Trost 1981: 443; McLafferty 2004: 188). Earl Babbie (2005) writes that the most important strength of qualitative field research is the “depth of understanding it permits” in comparison with other methods (321). The aim of qualitative research is not to quantify group norms, traits and characteristics, but rather, “to expose underlying attitudes and opinions” (Folch-Lyon and Trost 1981: 445).

Williams (2001) claims with reference to music scholarship that there is a need for “qualitative empirical research” that “takes account of listeners’ own experiences and perspectives” with respect to popular music, and argues that asking people about their experiences provides significantly more insight than observing or theorizing about them without making contact (223-224). By interviewing individuals who both listen to Ani's music and are reproductive rights activists, I was able to explore the nature of those individuals’ experiences more deeply. I wanted to have contact with appropriate people, in part, because, as David Morley (1992) explains,

The interview ... remains a fundamentally more appropriate way to attempt to understand what audiences do when they watch television than for the analyst simply to stay at home and imagine the possible implications of how other people might watch television. (Morley 1992: 180, cited in Williams 2001: 224)

Interviews provide similarly significant insight into the experiences of music listeners and activists. Semi-structured qualitative personal interviews were attractive for this project because of their highly flexible nature, which allows them to be altered to suit the
course of participants’ information and experience as it is revealed within the interview (see Esterberg 2001: 87; Berg 2001: 71).

The depth of personal understanding that contact with fans yields makes interviews the key resource in answering my main research question. The assumption with semi-structured interviews is that people are able to make sense of their own experiences, and that the researcher is giving them the opportunity to share those experiences – the researcher’s job is then to listen, compare, and make broader connections between interviewees’ experiences. The people I interviewed had different, and sometimes dissimilar, experiences with activism and Ani DiFranco’s music and the connections between the two, and interviews gave me the opportunity to collect varying narratives (see Dunn 2000: 52), and trace similarities and differences among them. The interview process is one that shows respect for and empowers research subjects by valuing participants’ views and experiences and allowing those experiences to enter public discourse (Dunn 2000: 52). In addition, as my interviews were personal and only semi-structured interactions, they allowed participants an opportunity to correct any misunderstandings or misguided assumptions that I may have had as a researcher (Dunn 2000: 53). This was a particular advantage in my research because it prevented my conceptualizations from being overly influenced by existing literature and my own experience as an activist and fan of Ani DiFranco’s music.

Participants and Sampling Procedure (Decree)
I conducted personal, semi-structured interviews with ten women, each of whom is a self-identified reproductive rights activist and has an affinity for the music of Ani DiFranco. As my interest is in exploring the effects of Ani DiFranco’s music for
reproductive rights activists, it was important that members of my sample be both reproductive rights activists and listeners of Ani DiFranco's music. I sought participants who self-identified as members of both of these categories, thereby eliminating the need to require a particular set of activist sensibilities or fan experience; self-identification with the terms was considered sufficient. In my experience, activists are frequently passionate and active on varying political issues, so I did not exclude participants by narrowing my population to individuals who identify as activists primarily or solely in the area of reproductive rights. Although I was looking for participants who were familiar with DiFranco’s music, I did not make further requirements or criteria for selection (such degree of familiarity or era of particular interest in Ani’s music), which kept my study primarily exploratory. In this same vein, I did not seek out fans/activists of a particular age range, or limit their age.  

I recruited participants through snowball sampling. First, I sent an email including an informal invitation (Appendix 3) to people I knew, asking if they were interested in participating in the study, if they would forward the email to any others they knew who might be interested, or both. I also attached a formal Letter of Invitation (Appendix 4) and the Informed Consent Form (Appendix 5), for potential participants to review. Twenty-three people expressed interest in participating in an interview; ten of them were available for an interview either in person or on the telephone. I engaged with each participant in an email dialogue to answer questions about the study, and set up a

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13 The exception to this is that I made sure to observe the ethics board requirements for legal age of consent.
14 It was not possible to schedule interviews with 13 of the respondents who initially expressed interest. Once individuals contacted me with interest and self-identification with the requirements, they were screened only by their availability to be interviewed during the five months that I conducted interviews.
location, date, and convenient time for recipients of the email invitation who continued to be interested in participating in my study.

The ten women in my sample were all living, at the time of the interview, in either the province of Ontario or the state of New York. They shared a passion for reproductive rights and for making a difference in their worlds, and all of them have been fans of Ani DiFranco's music at some point over the past sixteen years, even if her music is not something they often listen to now.

I did not specify a gender requirement in my recruitment materials, but all of the people who contacted me and all ten participants whom I interviewed were female. Nor did I seek particular race, sexuality, gender, or ability characteristics, but I hoped that my sampling techniques would uncover a reasonable representation of the population to whom my criteria apply. In taking this outlook, I followed the example of Ann Savage (2003), who argues that this method of selecting participants should also shed light on the characteristics of the population. For example, she says, white women may be more likely than men or coloured women to listen to the music of white female artists, so it might be misleading to insist on interviewing a racially diverse sample of both genders (see Savage 2003: 17). I recognized that by choosing not to insist on a diverse sample, I would eliminate the nuances that diversity might present in experience and interpretation. However, I also felt that in a study of this small size, to insist on a diverse sample might have given me such disparate experiences that it would be difficult to find correlations, or to explore reasons for such diversity in detail.
Table 1. Participants’ Personal Characteristics (Names and Dates and Times)

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<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>Participants ranged in age from 20 to 39; 8 participants are in their 20s, 2 in their 30s. Most participants are in their mid-20s.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>All participants have some post-secondary education. 8 have undergraduate degrees; 3 are working on masters or professional degrees; 1 completed a college program; 1 is currently an undergraduate student.</td>
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<td><strong>Occupation</strong></td>
<td>Four participants are full-time students (1 in a BA, 1 in a Master of Social Work, 2 in Law); 1 is an LGBT community centre administrator; 1 recently opened a reproductive health shop; 1 is an artist; 1 is a singer-songwriter; 1 is a doula and yoga instructor; 1 is a business administrator. In addition to their main occupations, 1 works part-time as a counsellor at Planned Parenthood, 1 has been employed at a women’s fitness centre, 1 is a singer in a riot grrrl band.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical Location</strong></td>
<td>At the time of the interviews, 7 participants were living in Ontario, and 3 in New York State. 1 grew up in the US Midwest, 1 grew up on the Canadian Prairies, 1 grew up in the Canadian Maritimes, and 1 attended university in the Canadian Maritimes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Experience with Ani DiFranco</strong></td>
<td>Participants have been listening to Ani’s music for between 2 and 15 years at the time of their interviews. 8 have been listening to the music for 8 or more years.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Concerts Attended</strong></td>
<td>8 participants have seen Ani in concert, between 1 and 12 times. Of the 2 who have not seen a concert, 1 does not attend music concerts, and 1 has never lived in an area close enough to where Ani was touring to attend a show.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Experience with Reproductive Rights Activism</strong></td>
<td>Participants have between 18 months and 20 years of involvement in reproductive rights activism. Most have 4–7 years experience, with the average being about 5 years of involvement. They organize and participate in rallies, marches, fundraising, film screenings, clinic defence, and lead young feminist groups. 3 consider their main occupations to be based in reproductive rights activism (doula, reproductive health store, progressive musician).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Motherhood</strong></td>
<td>1 participant has a teenaged daughter; 1 has a 5-year-old daughter and was pregnant at the time of the interview; 1 expressed interest in becoming a parent in the near future.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sexuality</strong></td>
<td>1 participant self-identified as queer; 1 as lesbian, 1 as bisexual, and 1 as straight. 2 made comments about homosexuality that suggested that they are straight; the other 4 made no identifying comments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td>No participants chose to self-identify with respect to race.</td>
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My sample did include women with a considerable range of ages and life experiences, including their experiences with Ani’s music and reproductive rights activism (see Table 1). Many have been listening to Ani’s music for a number of years,
most since before they considered themselves activists for reproductive rights. While this may not be the case with all or even most individuals who fit my criteria of being both reproductive rights activists and listeners of Ani's music, it allows me to look at Ani as an influence in solidifying my participants' interests and taking action for reproductive rights. Their "distance" from initial impressions of Ani's music and activist experiences also allows participants to look back and reflect on their experiences when relating them to me.

The Interview Process (The Interview)

Two interviews were held in person with participants whose locations allowed me to meet with them; the other eight interviews were conducted over the telephone. To conduct each interview, I followed a semi-structured interview format, with a guide in front of me.\textsuperscript{15} I used the interview guide to direct conversation and used its questions to initiate and structure conversation under each topic heading. Follow-up questions and additional questions emerged in the course of the conversation. Each interview began with conversation about the music of Ani DiFranco, the interviewee's listening habits and history, and the feelings the interviewee has had while listening to the music on recordings and/or at live performances. I also asked about the interviewee's relationships with other fans and her initial introduction to DiFranco's music.

The interview then moved to questions about the interviewee's reproductive rights activist sensibilities. I asked about current activist activities and why activism is important to the interviewee, and then about past activist involvement and initial involvement in reproductive rights activism and influences (including in particular any

\textsuperscript{15} See Appendix 6 for a copy of the interview guide. After the first few interviews, I made minor revisions to the order of the topics, but the guide remained very similar throughout the process.
influence of the music of Ani DiFranco) that encouraged the interviewee’s initial or current reproductive rights activism. My last topic of interest was the interviewee’s interpretations of Ani DiFranco’s activist commitments in her music and her promotion of reproductive activism. After each interview, I reminded the participant of my contact information, should she have any aspects of the interview she would like to discuss, or anything she would like to add to our conversation.

Following each interview, I sent each participant a letter of appreciation and a transcript of our interview. The letter reminded the participant of the purposes of my research, and suggested that the participant review the transcript of our interview. It encouraged the participant to contact me if she wanted to revise, edit, and/or omit any part of her interview data, or if she had any concerns related to her participation in the research study. A few participants chose to make minor clarifications of points in their transcripts, but they all seemed content with the depth and type of information they had shared with me.

**Coding and Analysis (Self Evident)**

After completing several interviews, I immersed myself in the material I had gathered so far. I transcribed the interviews myself, and then proceeded to read and re-read the transcripts. First, I read them to familiarize myself with their content, and then began a process of open coding, where the codes came from the data (Berg 2001: 251; see also Lofland & Lofland 1995: 192; Esterberg 2001: 158). I read the transcripts in various orders and with different things in mind over a period of several weeks. Themes emerged from the data as I read, and I began looking for more specific things pertaining to those themes. Once I had established consistency of themes, I began a process of more
focused coding (see Esterberg 2001: 161; Lofland & Lofland 1995: 192). I grouped information roughly according to emergent types and themes, and I took notes on connections and relationships between ideas. After coding data according to themes and the typologies I developed, I ensured that the themes were clearly distinguishable from one another and that the data within each theme were homogeneous. I observed themes emerging about Ani's influences on the ways participants thought and spoke about themselves, the feelings and knowledge that people had about their communities and the world, and the different ways that participants used that knowledge to act on their passions.

My own position as both a fan of Ani DiFranco's and a reproductive rights activist undoubtedly influenced both the design of this research project and my analysis of my participants' narratives. I was first introduced to Ani DiFranco's music in the late 1990s, similarly to several of the women I interviewed. I have been listening to it since then, with more intensity during some periods in my life than others. My involvement in reproductive rights activism has varied, working with women's centres and campus women's groups for several years. While I have been a supporter of the reproductive rights movement for many years, I only really became an activist in this area over the past few years. I have attended rallies, marches, protests, and conferences; and I have written letters, designed leaflets and posters, and blogged as a reproductive rights activist.

These experiences made it easy for me to identify with many of the emotions and experiences that my participants described to me in our interviews. In their observations, I saw reflections of some of my own conscientization. This may have made it easy to
Analyzing the impact of climate change on economic growth and development is essential for understanding the potential consequences of inaction. The implications of global warming and rising sea levels on agriculture, a sector that is crucial for food security, are profound. It is estimated that by the end of the century, many regions will experience significant changes in their climate patterns, leading to more frequent droughts and floods, which will likely affect crop yields and the availability of food. Moreover, the destruction of coastal habitats and the increase in coastal erosion due to rising sea levels will pose significant challenges for coastal communities, who rely on the sea for their livelihoods.

In the context of economic development, the costs of adapting to climate change are substantial. The financial burden of constructing sea walls, improving drainage systems, and developing new agricultural techniques to cope with changing conditions is a major concern for countries that are vulnerable to climate impacts. Furthermore, the economic impact of losing coastal infrastructure or natural resources, such as coral reefs and mangroves, which provide essential services like carbon sequestration and shoreline protection, is significant.

Addressing climate change requires a global and integrated approach. This includes not only reducing greenhouse gas emissions but also implementing adaptation strategies that are socio-economically viable. For instance, investing in renewable energy sources and sustainable agriculture can help in both reducing emissions and increasing resilience to climate impacts. Moreover, it is crucial to ensure that adaptation measures are equitable and do not exacerbate existing inequalities. This can be achieved by involving local communities in the decision-making process and providing them with the necessary resources and technology to implement effective adaptation strategies.

In conclusion, the economic consequences of climate change are multifaceted and require urgent action. By implementing robust adaptation and mitigation strategies, we can mitigate the worst impacts of climate change and ensure a sustainable future for all.
focus on positive aspects, but I tried to be balanced in my questions and analysis, as many of my participants did in their own answers.

As themes emerged from my data, I realized that I had an insightful indigenous typology – that is, a categorization scheme that had emerged directly from one of my interviews. Mattea said that Ani had impacted her reproductive rights activism in five ways. When I considered the other interviews with respect to those five categories, I found that three of Mattea’s categories emerged in all of the other interviews, while two of them were less explicitly present. I also felt that the two that were less generally applicable – the emphasis that Ani placed on activism taking many forms and the importance of thinking of wider effects of their actions – could be understood in many ways to be part of the three main categories. As such, I have structured my analysis according to these three categories: the way that women see Ani DiFranco’s influence on their identities, on their consciousness, and on their activist practice. These themes, extracted from Mattea’s interview, allow me to talk about what people say, think, feel, and do, and allow me to explore the relationships between the three categories of influence. The following three chapters develop my analysis of the impacts that Ani DiFranco’s music has had on my participants’ activist commitments, activities, and sensibilities through these lenses of Identity (Chapter Five), Consciousness (Chapter Six) and Practice (Chapter Seven), and the concluding chapter (Chapter Eight) makes links between aspects of the three categories of analysis.
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Chapter 5: Identity (32 Flavors)

My first impressions [of Ani's music] were “Wow. I feel the same way.” (Angela)

I feel as though there aren’t many of her songs that don’t relate [to my life]. Because even if they’re not experiences that I’ve had, um, the ways that she describes them, or the feelings or the emotions … there’s always something that I feel that I can relate to. (Pepper)

I think it’s kind of made me get more in touch with myself. Like … I guess getting to know myself more, just from – like I guess … previously I was more like, trying to make other people happy and trying to make them comfortable [about who I was], and now it’s just like “I don’t really care if you’re comfortable with it or not, that’s fine, but this is who I am,” so, I think it’s kind of helped me to bring that [confidence] out in myself. (Lilith)

A lot of what she says speaks to women and, and I think how we’re socialized in North American society, and our experiences, and I think that it’s much easier for women to relate to her lyrics as a result of that. (Pepper)

In this chapter, I examine the influences of Ani’s music on participants’ identities, describing both how the music has been influential and what the influences have been. All of the women I spoke with recognized Ani’s music as contributing to shifts in their identity, and said that their shifting identities altered the ways that they identified with the music and its lyrics over time. I begin by relating music and identity in conceptual terms, drawing on Frith (1987; 1996b). I examine the ways that participants described Ani’s music as leading to self-discovery, or looking inside themselves, with the lyrics frequently confirming values that they already held, and helping them to articulate those values and identity characteristics to others as well as recognize them in themselves. I then look at the ways that Ani’s music influenced participants’ identities specifically as women, and the ways that they identified with her experiences as a woman and admired her perseverance through discrimination and particularly difficult situations for women, including sexual assault and unplanned pregnancy. I move from looking at participants’
personal identity as women to consider the importance of the group identity that women developed and claimed from listening to Ani's music. They forged their own personal identities in the context of a community of Ani fans, and identified with others, whether or not in their presence. I also consider participants' descriptions of the ways that Ani's music influenced and reinforced their feminist identities and their choices to represent those identities to others. Finally, I examine the ways that participants' identities have shifted over the time they have listened to Ani's music, and the changes their identity shifts have had in the ways women interact with Ani's music.

Each of the ten women I spoke with suggested that listening to Ani DiFranco's music had influenced their identities in some way. Most of them (eight of ten) began listening to Ani's music as adolescents, and it seems that being exposed to the music at such a formative time in their lives was a contributing factor to its importance for them. Frith (1987) argues that popular music's influences on identity are especially important for adolescents, and in fact suggests that it is common in Western culture for youths' identities to be developed partly through popular music (see also Bennett 2000: 34-35).

Through youth and into adulthood, my participants relate to Ani's lyrics as women, as feminists, and as activists. They told me that Ani's music confirmed their identities to themselves, and that Ani's lyrics helped them to articulate their identities to themselves and others. The music also influenced participants' identities through a feeling of community and identification with others. Women feel that they developed a kind of

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16 Not all participants self-identified as feminists, but all spoke with terms and frames of references that suggested to me that they have feminist-like identities, even if, as bell hooks (2000) and Jessica Valenti (2007) say, they may be reluctant to take on the label of 'feminist.' For the purposes of studying the women's movement as a whole (rather than its fractions or internal debates) I consider them 'feminists.'
collective identity from listening to the music, both when they listened with friends and
other fans at concerts, as well as when they listened to the music on their own.

Ani’s music has helped my participants to understand themselves as proud,
empowered, and strong women. Many suggest that they are more comfortable in the
multiplicity of their identities as women and feminists because of the influence of Ani’s
music. Through the music, women remember the paths they traveled in negotiating their
identities, and can see how far they have come. Ani’s music helps them to relate their
experiences of identity formation and expression with others’, and to imagine the identity
they anticipate for themselves (for example, as a mother or older woman) in the future.

A Theory of Music and Identity (Handsome Musician)

Simon Frith (1996a) claims that popular music and identity are intrinsically
linked: “The experience of pop music is an experience of identity: in responding to a
song, we are drawn, haphazardly, into emotional alliances with the performers and with
the performers’ other fans” (121). He argues that “music constructs our sense of identity
through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time and sociability, experiences
which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives” (1996a: 124), and
encourages researchers to ask how music creates musicians and audiences “as a web of
identities” (1996a: 121). I follow Frith’s understanding of identity with relation to music,
which is that identity is mobile (not static). Frith also says that identity is key to how we
listen to music and what we take away from it. He says that “our experience of music…
is best understood as an experience of this self-in-process” (Frith 1996a: 109; Frith’s
emphasis). Identity, Frith says, is often “enacted in musical activities” and “music gives
us a real experience of what the ideal could be” (Frith 1996a: 123).
Frith understands the experience of listening to an album or attending a concert to be identity-shaping. He writes that “the experience of music for composer/performer and listener alike gives us a way of being in the world, a way of making sense of it” (1996a: 114), and that “different sorts of musical activity may produce different sorts of musical identity, but how the musics work to form identities is the same” (1996a: 112). Music works on our identity through our feelings about it. This relationship, as detailed in my discussion in Chapter Two, is intrinsically linked with our judgement of how music is useful for us. As part of our judgement about music’s use for us, Frith (1996a) says that we like popular music “because it creates our understanding of what ‘popularity’ is, because it places us in the social world in a particular way” (Frith 1996a: 121). He writes that popular music “is determined by [social forces]” (119) and that listeners use music as an “aesthetic process through which we discover ourselves by forging our relations to others” (118).

Frith (1996a) says that music “creates and constructs … a musical experience, an aesthetic experience – that we can only make sense of by taking on both a subjective and a collective identity” (109). He emphasizes the role that music plays in collective identity formation (without suggesting that this happens only in subcultures), and the importance of collective identity in one’s personal identity formation. Music, he says, “seems to be a key to identity because it offers, so intensely, a sense of both self and others, of the subjective in the collective” (110). In Frith’s view, the community surrounding popular music is key; fans presume that “good music must be made and appreciated by good people,” (121) he says, and

Pop music becomes the more valuable aesthetically the more independent it is of the social forces that organize it … pop value is thus dependent on something
outside pop, is rooted in the person, the auteur, the community or the subculture that lies behind it. (121)

In the following section, I explore the ways that Ani DiFranco's music influences women's identities relative to their reproductive rights activism; that is, the relationship between music and feminist activist identities. Cheryl Hercus' (2005) study of 45 women's understanding of their feminist identities shows that each of her participants' understood her feminism as influenced by her life experiences, biography, and social location (58). Her participants tend to think that each woman should be free to interpret and present feminism in her own way (56). The women in Hercus' study are defined by themselves and others as having multiple identities, which they sometimes find difficult to reconcile (66). Hercus argues that part of feminism is challenging ideas continually as one encounters various barriers to feminist identity, following Calhoun's (1994) view that identity is never "a settled accomplishment" (24), but is always in process (Hercus 2005: 66-67).

Music and Self (As Is)

Many of my own participants said that Ani's music made them look inside themselves, leading to self-discovery. They found that the music seemed to make them realize things about themselves that they had not previously realized, especially when they first started listening to Ani's music in adolescence. Caz said that she really connected with DiFranco's lyrics, particularly when she listened to them with headphones. She was one of several women who told me that Ani's music made them think hard about who they were. They did not say that Ani changed who they were so much as that listening to Ani's music caused them to think about their experiences and where they had come from. Several participants attributed some of this identity discovery
to a feeling of “empowerment” that came from the music. Jo Rowlands (1997) argues that empowerment is a process of “bringing people who are outside the decision-making process into it,” and thus empowerment places “a strong emphasis on participation in political structures and formal decision making” (13). She considers four forms that empowerment can take, or types of power that may contribute to one’s empowerment: power over, which is control; power to, which is the power to achieve goals without undermining others’ power; power with, the awareness of the strength that comes from working with others; and power from within, personal strength and self esteem (Rowlands 1997: 13). Perhaps most importantly for this thesis, my participants spoke of empowerment with respect to activism and feeling that they can make a change (power to, power with). This feeling will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven. But there is also an element of personal empowerment related to identity for my participants, which does not refer specifically to political empowerment. This feeling of personal empowerment seems to come from power from within that my participants realized they had as they recognized inner strengths through listening to Ani’s music.

While several participants mentioned empowerment specifically, they seemed to find it difficult to articulate exactly what they felt, and where in the music it came from. Lilith says that she finds the connection that Ani has with her fanbase “empowering,” Kristal thinks that many fans are drawn to Ani and her music by empowerment: “people have been drawn ... to a sense of personal empowerment, of women’s empowerment, as human beings.” Kristal was emphatic about the importance of the role that Ani has played in the development of her own personal power, both with relation to power from within and power to:
I might not ever have realized that I had personal power without Ani DiFranco. I mean, her voice has been so, so important. It’s so important to have role models like that and to see women doing things like that. Um, and it’s even founding her own record label, and writing her own music. You know, like all the way through, not just the lyrics, [but also] writing her own music. And um, building her own life – [it] has been tremendous. (Kristal)

Kristal speaks about a link between understanding her own power from within and Ani's music, and suggests that Ani's independence, perseverance, and success has encouraged Kristal to believe in her own strength. Participants thought that Ani had significant influence on their identities, but especially that her music, lyrics, and persona had confirmed their previously-held values and helped them to articulate their identities more effectively to themselves and to others. When I asked what Pepper liked about DiFranco's music, she started to speak quickly and seemed particularly excited:

You know, it really confirms – for me it’s confirmation about who I am, what I do, what I say, what I think, what I believe, and how I deal with people in my life. It’s – it makes me feel less alone, it makes me feel like, um, I – that the decisions I make every day in my life, the way that I choose to talk to people, the things I teach my child, um, I'm not by myself in there, that there are other people that hold the same views. (Pepper)

Sky echoed Pepper’s feelings when describing her experience listening to DiFranco's music as a young adolescent:

It was out of my own head. It was – it was life changing. In the sense that I felt understood and I felt, you know, that there was, um, someone else who felt the same way … like I wasn’t alone in my own beliefs. (Sky)

Personal Identity as Women (Hide and Seek)

Most of my participants began listening to Ani's music when they were adolescents, a time when girls are figuring out what it means to become women, and what womanhood means to them. While all of my participants suggested that Ani's music speaks to their identity as women, this seemed to have been particularly important for those who listened to Ani's music as teenagers trying to negotiate their identities as young...
women. Several women indicated that they were lucky to have had the influence of Ani’s music in this adolescent phase of identity development, as well as the support that they felt from the surrounding community of Ani’s fans. Brett, in particular, commented that from a young age she appreciated the ability of Ani’s lyrics to confront the way that men in power treat women in less powerful positions. She said that these songs, and others, give her confidence and make her feel good about herself as a woman. Mattea was thrilled at age fourteen to have her second menstrual period during an Ani DiFranco concert, and to be able to celebrate her new womanhood in that context. She remembers thinking, “what a great experience, to have this happening surrounded by all these wonderful women.”

Not only did the women I interviewed find that Ani’s music informed their identities as women, but that this was particularly strong because they identified with Ani’s own experiences as a women, which Ani frequently writes about in her song lyrics and describes in concerts (which even those not in attendance have heard on CD or online recordings). Kristal comments that, both as an adolescent and a young professional woman, she has been able to identify with Ani’s experiences: “When I was younger as well, like, things that she was saying were related directly to, um, my experiences, and you know, specific situations that I was encountering.” Lilith finds a wide range of emotions and experience in Ani’s music, and feels that particular songs or albums resonate with events and emotions in her own life. She said:

I feel it’s very empowering, and, like, it’s the kind of music that if you’re going through something you can listen to it and feel, you almost feel better about yourself, to see that someone else is going through this, and you can relate, somehow ... I don’t really know of any other artists who actually sing about that stuff. Like, especially ... [in] the mainstream, it’s all about – relationships or love or that soupy crap (laughs). [Ani’s music is] more real to me.
Lilith seemed to feel an increased sense of *power from within* from the music. She reiterated throughout our interview that Ani's music has helped her realize that someone else (usually Ani) had experienced the types of tough situations that Lilith herself has gone through, and that the lyrics describing that struggle and success have given her strength.

Similarly, Kristal recalled one of the first times she really began to appreciate DiFranco's music, remembering how closely one song resonated with her life at that time:

One morning, before work, I got up and for some music just put on this tape, and put on um, “Going Once”. And just played it over and over and over and over. And it was a period where I was going through a lot of doubts myself about the choices that I’d made ... and just the story of, you know, a young woman not really knowing exactly where she was going, but knowing that she had to — she had to move, and she had to try and go out there and create her own life, and it just kind of like, you know — I mean, one of her lines is um, “waiting for her will to come and get her” — I think that’s totally what I was feeling for a long time.

This type of identification with Ani's lyrics seems to have made Kristal feel that it was normal for her to have periods of time where she was unsure of what she wanted to do, and also to push her to find the will to start to figure things out.

Others are inspired by their perceptions of Ani's perseverance through discrimination and stereotypes, especially with respect to her identity as a woman. Ani's music speaks to women in a way that makes them feel that she knows how they feel, that she has been in their position, giving them hope and confidence that they can get through these issues, too, suggesting that the music gives them a sense of *power with*. Lilith talked about this at length. She told me that Ani's lyrics and assertive tone tell her that Ani is a very strong person: she has made it through all of these experiences, and she is able to tell others about it. This resonated particularly strongly with Lilith on the albums

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17 See Appendix 1 for “Going Once” lyrics.
Not A Pretty Girl (1995) and Not So Soft (1991), in the songs “Gratitude” (about a sexual assault) and “Tiptoe” (about contemplating abortion). The songs help Lilith, who has been assaulted herself, to accept “the fact this has happened, and I can’t blame myself, I can’t … go back in time and change it.”

Group Identity (Small World)

Everyone I interviewed seemed to share a feeling of being part of something bigger than herself, just by listening to the music. According to Frith (1996a), obtaining a feeling of solidarity (or power with) is quite typical. He writes that through social music conventions, “music ... stands for, symbolizes and offers the immediate experience of collective identity” (121; Frith’s emphasis). As a young teenager, Brett was excited about going to her first Ani DiFranco concert and being part of the group: “I felt really lucky, and I think I thought it was really cool, ‘cause I was so young, and um, I felt like I belonged to a bigger group of something that I really wanted to be a part of.” Both she and Mattea struggled to find peers in their elementary and junior high school classes who shared their musical interest in Ani DiFranco. When arriving at concerts, they, like the others who have attended concerts, felt like part of something bigger than themselves, and as though the audience members tended to have a lot in common. Brett said:

It’s awesome. Especially having tried to share it with friends and being totally unsuccessful, it’s, it’s wicked to be surrounded by people that you know love the same thing you love.

This feeling of power with does not occur only at concerts with other fans’ physical presence, but also from listening to Ani’s music alone. Kristal said that even having never been to a live Ani concert, as a fan, she “see[s] [her]self as part of a larger community.” For Kristal, listening to Ani was about feeling less alone in her feminist

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18 Two women have not ever attended an Ani DiFranco concert (see Table 1, Chapter Four).
ideas, especially when she was first exposed to Ani's music as a high school student in the American mid-west. Sky echoed Kristal’s comments, and seemed to think that feeling was shared by a lot of Ani's fans: “I think overall … that common bond of her music being a catalyst for women to feel understood … or … [a] common bond with another woman is pretty common” (Sky). Caz, a woman who, in her 30s, is perhaps older than much of Ani's fanbase, said that she feels a connection to Ani and that listening to the music does make her feel less alone, but later also said that she “rarely” feels a particular connection with other fans or audience members. Instead, she enjoys the music with her partner and embraces the feeling that she is in her own groove when she is at live concerts.

Five of the women I interviewed have seen Ani's concerts many times. They live in areas where Ani performs frequently, and they make an effort to go to as many of her shows as possible. Mattea, Pepper, Sky, and Ruby like to go with groups of friends, most of whom have also seen Ani in concert before. Brett and Mal have seen Ani a couple of times with friends. Lilith and Caz have both seen Ani with their partners. Lilith went to her only Ani concert with her boyfriend. Caz attends concerts with her partner and occasionally other couples who are fans; she has seen Ani in concert about a dozen times. Despite arriving at the concerts with friends or partners, the women who have attended concerts all felt some connection to other strangers in the audience.

Many of the women who have attended concerts said that there was something special about them in terms of the vibe and being part of a large crowd, as well as because of Ani’s presence. Caz said that the community of fans at concerts was made up of a wide range of people, yet Ani's music appealed to all of them:
They go to all her concerts, and, um – so I think that she somehow has created a way for people from so many different walks of life to sort of connect to her music because of – a lot of it probably has to do with like the topics that she talks about in her songs.

Caz and Brett did not feel a particularly strong connection with other fans at concerts, despite the feeling of community that they acknowledged noticing. Mattea loved the variety of people at concerts. She said that as a young woman, she felt like she did not fit into a feminist stereotype, but going to concerts and seeing the range of people (mostly women) there who shared her beliefs, worked along with Ani’s lyrics to help her figure out how to take up a feminist identity.

As part of developing identity as a member of a fan community, women also identified with Ani, with other fans, and with other audience members at concerts. A number of women felt that the people at an Ani concert would typically share similar characteristics and values, which makes it easier for fans to identify with each other. Mattea said that it is easy to assume that people at concerts are familiar with her music, and that, “if you’ve listened to her lyrics and to some extent agree with those lyrics, then we have something in common, because we’ve got the same sort of core values.” Like other interviewees, Mattea seemed confident that most people at concerts were fans of Ani’s music, and that people who appreciated the music would be individuals who care about increasing the equality of women in society, who value thinking critically and questioning the status quo rather than taking situations or statements as a given, and who would make an effort to do extra research before taking status quo assumptions for granted.

Many of the women I interviewed found it difficult to explain the particular connection they felt with other fans at concerts. Ruby and two of her friends had
previously discussed the feeling of being surrounded by a fan community at concerts: “it’s a really cool vibe … it’s so amazing, actually … we’ve sat and tried to define that whole feeling – it’s like a feeling of like, feminism and intense awesome girl empowerment.” Ruby and Pepper seemed to think that this came from being surrounded by similarly-minded people, sharing both a quest for justice and a love of the music.

Feminist Identity (Coming Up)

The women I spoke with felt that in addition to contributing to their identities as women, Ani’s music has influenced and reinforced their feminist identities. Not all participants used the term “feminist,” but in their descriptions of the equality they wanted between sexes, and in the feminist goals they described, it was clear that they all identified with feminist ideals (see hooks 2000; Valenti 2007).

Kristal said that Ani had played an important role in her development as a woman, as well as in her understanding of her own feminist identity. Brett described her experience of figuring out feminism as a teenager, suggesting that it was difficult in her social and familial situation to rebel against the “norm” and declare her feminist convictions: “when I was younger, I thought that I was being forced to conform to something and I had like strong urges to try and break out of some things and I didn’t really know what it was.” She emphasized that listening to Ani’s music reinforced those urges to break out of mainstream culture, and gave her more strength to self-identify as feminist. Of her appreciation for Ani’s music in general, Ruby said, “she’s inspired me to feminism.” Sky was particularly emphatic about the connection between listening to Ani’s music daily as a teenager and her personal development:

Her lyricism really influenced me when I was really young … she was like my second mother when I was growing up, you know, because … every single day I
would come home and listen to Living in Clip\textsuperscript{19}, just, over and over and over again. And ... I learned a lot from that ... about the kind of person that I wanted to be and the kind of things that I believed in ... her music really solidified that ... and, in turn, really ... inspired me.

Several of my participants experienced difficulty reconciling all of their identities and lifestyle choices with feminism (see also Hercus 2005). Mattea said that as a teenager she struggled to feel a sense of belonging to the feminism she saw portrayed in the media, because she took part in traditional mainstream ‘feminine’ grooming routines, such as shaving under her arms and wearing tighter clothes. Listening to Ani DiFranco’s music and attending concerts, she says, helped her come to the realization that she was not the only woman who felt she did not fit perfectly into the stereotypical image of feminism: “she makes you feel not alone in realizing that it’s a real struggle to be a feminist and to incorporate all the different aspects of your life and it doesn’t always come together in a neat package” (Mattea). Lilith, who started listening to Ani’s music at the end of her adolescence, feels that she already had come to that realization, but she appreciates having it reiterated in Ani’s message that women can make a choice not to conform to this certain ‘ideal’ model that society has provided, especially for women. Like, you don’t have to be this little, skinny, have-no-brains person who just follows whatever anybody else tells them ... you can be your own person, you can try to make a difference, just like doing that.

These women appreciate that through songs like “Little Plastic Castle,” Ani speaks out clearly against the societal expectations that women be stereotypically beautiful and fit into the crowd.

Some of my participants who identify as heterossexuals found their sexuality to be a complication in their feminist identity that DiFranco helped them to move through. They became more comfortable with the intersection of their sexuality with their political

\textsuperscript{19} Living In Clip was Ani’s first live album, a 2-cd set released in 1997.
beliefs, as they watched DiFranco and other fans confront widespread stereotypes and conflicting parts of their identities. DiFranco herself has been referred to in the media as lesbian and bisexual at different times (Quirino 2004), and was married to a man for several years during her career. She frequently explores the intersections of her identity in her lyrics, perhaps most notably in “32 Flavors” and “In or Out.” Mattea describes the conflicts she felt in her own sense of self, and says that listening to Ani’s music helped her to incorporate her heterosexuality into her feminism:

I guess for me, being … a feminist who also identifies as being heterosexual, I really appreciate that she talks about how difficult that is; I mean, I feel guilty and all this stuff, I feel like ‘okay, somehow I'm letting down the crew’ and … I really appreciate her talking about … how difficult it is to fit all these different aspects of your life into this idea [of feminism]. (Mattea)

Pepper, who self-identifies as queer, agrees with Mattea about the complicated nature of fitting multiple identities into one label, such as feminism, and says that even though she was in her mid-twenties when she first started listening to Ani's music, it helped her to feel more secure about the multiplicity of her identity (like the women in Hercus’ 2005 study; see Hercus pp.55-66):

I think that through the content of the music and through Ani's beliefs … I feel as though I don’t have to disassociate certain parts of myself. That I am able as a person to encompass the political part of me, the human part of me, the emotional side, you know, the parent – everything, within one skin … it makes me feel as though I can absolutely be every facet of, and every range of my personality, and [maintain] all of my beliefs, and that it’s okay … and that I don’t have to compromise one or the other. (Pepper)

In this regard, Pepper and Caz both expressed particular interest in DiFranco's announcement that she was pregnant in the summer of 2006. Pepper, a queer-identified mother of a seventeen-year-old daughter, and Caz, a lesbian who is trying with her partner to become a parent, found that DiFranco's recent album Reprieve (2006)
resonated very strongly with them partly because of its message that “being a mother can be not only an incredibly rewarding experience, but it can also be a very sort of activist or feminist experience” (Caz). This was reassuring for both women, who may have felt as though others saw their motherhood or desired motherhood as contradictory to their feminist or queer politics.

Shifting Identity (Modulation)

My participants’ narratives suggest that their identities have shifted over the duration of their relation to the music and to Ani DiFranco. This malleable experience of identity is consistent with Frith’s conceptualization (1987). Frith argues that popular music “has been an important way in which we have learned to understand ourselves as historical, ethnic, class-bound, gendered subjects” (1987: 149). Brett feels that her maturation and the evolution of her identity have given her an increased feeling of ownership over her enjoyment of Ani’s music. She told me, “when I first was a fan, I felt like a bit of an impostor, and now I feel like I really own the music, and it’s like, part of me, and I can – I’m allowed to love it.” Sky finds that now the music reminds her of the process of discovering who she was and of who she used to be:

For me, um, her music has now become sort of a – a time and a place ... Like, I really associate her music with that period of my life, that was very confused and isolated and discovering who I was and how the world works, but, it will always hold a place in my heart.

Tia DeNora (2006) includes music’s ability to help listeners recall past identities as one of its key functions (143). She writes that music has a particular ability to “invoke past feelings and ways of being” (143) and that music associated with listeners’ identities can “[put] actors in touch with capacities, reminding them of their accomplished

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20 *Reprieve* is the first album that carries this message, which is particularly strong on the title track, a spoken word poem.
identities, which in turn fuels the ongoing projection of identity from past into future" (143). Ani's music still makes participants feel like they are learning about themselves, and they are, but they are also re-living events because, as DeNora says, it brings to mind past experiences of listening to the same music: “music is part of the material and aesthetic environment in which it was once playing” (144). DeNora argues that even after fans stop listening to a particular artist, the act of not listening to the music contributes to identity formation and assertion (146).

Several participants said that they listened to Ani’s music in some periods of their lives more than others, depending on events in their own lives and their resonance with the music. Most of the women I spoke with had been listening to Ani’s music for a number of years, and described changing patterns in how or why they listened to it. Mal, Kristal and Ruby all still listen to Ani’s music often, but feel that the ways they listen and relate to the music have shifted with their identities and life experiences. Kristal’s experience listening to Ani’s music is now less about her own identity than it used to be, and more about how she uses her identity to fit into and negotiate society:

When I first started listening to her, it was more, as more of a self-contained space, and it was more about me, personally, and my direct relationships with other people than it was about my relationship to the greater world. And it’s become more about my relationship to the greater world.

Ruby described the changes in the way she listens to the music with reference to her own experience and knowledge, suggesting that she understands the lyrics and stories better now than when she first started listening in middle school, and also that she has a heightened appreciation for the musical quality of Ani’s songs because she is a musician herself:
I listen to it [now] a lot more openly – you know, somebody who's a poet, now, and who's an artist, and kind of – and a musician. I listen to it more with those ears than from when I was a kid, just kind of figuring out just kind of who she was and what she was doing with her music. I think I have a better understanding of it now.

All of the women I interviewed said that Ani's lyrics resonated with their own experiences: going through adolescence, in social interactions, politically, in gaining independence and discovering their power to. Sky says that she listens only infrequently to Ani's music these days:

That music [Ani's] will always have a time and a place for me, because ... I absorbed her message and her music so much before that it's just not really in my listening repertoire now.

Lilith, Mattea, and Kristal all associate certain songs with particular experiences they had while listening to them, or at the time in their lives when they were often listening to those albums.

DeNora (2006) describes listeners' continued resonance with music, including music to which they no longer listen regularly, as being an important factor in the influence of popular music on identity:

Music may be understood as providing a container for feeling and, in this sense, its specific properties contribute to the shape and quality of feeling to the extent that feeling – to be sustained, and made known to oneself and others – must be established on a public or intersubjective plane. Music is a material that actors use to elaborate, to fill out and fill in, themselves and to others, modes of aesthetic agency and, with it, subjective stances and identities. (147)

DeNora's (2006) explanation of the connection between music and past identity correlate closely with the narratives of my participants, and suggest that their experiences are not isolated, but that music can have similar uses for others.
Conclusion (Back Around)

My participants’ descriptions of their experiences of identity show the fluid, dynamic, and multidirectional nature of the relationship between these women’s identities and their experiences listening to DiFranco’s music. As Frith (1987) argues many popular music listeners do, my participants have used their experience with DiFranco's music to help them construct and understand their personal identities. They have been able to see themselves in DiFranco's music, and they have come to understand themselves, in part, as fans of her music. DiFranco's music has led the women I interviewed not only to an altered sense of identity and the way they see themselves, but it has also impacted the way that they see their interactions with others and the surrounding world. The feeling of togetherness that the women get from the music and other fans enhances these other experiences, and makes women feel that they are not alone in their experiences, values, and identities. Participants feel that this leads to personal confidence and a sense of empowerment.

Listening to Ani DiFranco's music strengthened the sense of self my interviewees felt in being women, in being feminists, and in being part of a community of activists. Through the deeply personal nature of her lyrics and the feeling of community that surrounds her, women find themselves wanting to listen to the music often, and draw it into themselves. Although some women listen to Ani's music much less over time, they continue to believe that it has been an important influence in the ways they understand who they are. They feel a sense of power to and power from within when they listen to her music, even now that they know it well, because it demonstrates the success of a woman (Ani) who they think is a lot like themselves, and because they trust her opinion that ordinary individuals can make a difference in the lives of others and be important.
The following chapter will argue that, for my participants, listening to Ani DiFranco's music contributed to the development of a more critical way of seeing the world around them. The confidence and pride they felt in their woman/feminist identities was important in developing the lens through which they analysed the world around them. As they became aware of social issues (both through Ani's music and by other means), they examine society through a lens that shows possibilities for their actions to reduce injustice, which has helped them to shape who they are. Paulo Freire (1970) calls this process conscientization. Chapter Six will employ Friere's notion of conscientization to examine the ways that Ani DiFranco's music has influenced the development, maintenance, and content of critical consciousness of the ten reproductive rights activists I interviewed.
Chapter 6: Consciousness (Reckoning)

The things that she was talking about were old to me, in the sense that I had been thinking about them, but were new to me, in the sense that I wasn’t really sharing my thoughts into relating her politicized ideas with anybody else. (Sky)

I think it’s just mainly made me aware sooner than I might otherwise have been aware of certain issues. Um, and reinforced the importance of those issues, and also made me feel like I was part of a larger community to whom those issues were important ... it made it easier to feel confident about it. (Brett)

In the previous chapter, I explored Ani DiFranco’s influence on the identities of my participants. I showed that DiFranco's music was particularly influential in participants’ understanding of themselves as women and as feminists, and had a strong impact on the identities of girls listening to DiFranco's music as adolescents. Chapter Five examined the ways that participants’ understanding of self was influenced by DiFranco's music, and this chapter looks at how DiFranco, her music and lyrics, and the fan community that surrounds her, have encouraged my participants to think outside themselves, examine the world more critically, and develop what Paolo Freire (1970) calls critical consciousness. I show how Ani's music has facilitated my participants’ critical consciousness, and I enumerate what they feel the music’s influences have been.

This chapter highlights four main ways that Ani’s music has the effect of conscientization for my participants. First, I explore the ways that Ani DiFranco's music influenced participants’ awareness of social and political issues. I suggest that listeners’ perceptions of Ani as being trustworthy and authentic lead them to take her especially seriously, and trust what she says. Second, I show that Ani's lyrics lead participants to think about justice issues from new angles (such as the experience of a sex worker or a woman struggling with the decision to end a pregnancy). These lyrics challenge listeners to question things, and to ask why critical examination is not the norm. Third, I argue that
listening to Ani’s music gives my participants a feeling of solidarity with others (including Ani and other perceived fans), which offers listeners an opportunity to discuss or research issues in more detail, and helps women to feel as though there are others who are concerned about the same things they are. This community surrounding Ani’s music concentrates awareness on these issues for fans. They are then likely to feel a sense of power with – that the actions they can take in solidarity with those others can be valuable in creating change. Fourth, participation in the fan community also brings issues that are less immediately important in participants’ lives to the front of their minds. Ani’s lyrics remind listeners of previous experiences that they have been through or witnessed. They also lead listeners to think more deeply about issues that they may never have experienced (such as prostitution or clinic violence), but which listeners feel are important to consider.

The idea of “consciousness” is important for understanding the influence of Ani’s music for the reproductive rights activists I interviewed, because it interacts a great deal with the identities that they form and their choices to take up activism. Part of critical consciousness includes reflecting on one’s own position and contributions to society, which alters and/or reinforces components of identity. Further, critical consciousness includes, by definition, beginning an effort to make change, and so necessarily includes links to practice (see Hercus 2005: 3). I argue in Chapters Seven and Eight that critical consciousness is an important factor in shaping activists’ practice, and that seeing oneself as capable of contributing to making a difference is a critical motivator for activists.

conscientization as a complete shift of ideas, "in which an individual experiences the redefining of their ... boundary systems and a recreating of their own self-image" (Taylor 1993: 69). Ani DiFranco contributes to such a shift in the world-view of my participants not only by helping many of them to establish a positive self-image as young women, but also in constantly asking them to test their boundaries and beliefs.

**Conscientization (Light of Some Kind)**

Each of my participants felt that her awareness of social issues was heightened because of listening to Ani's music. A few women initially became aware of particular social issues through Ani's music. Many suggested that listening to Ani's music encouraged them to think of issues that they were already aware of from different angles, and all of them agreed that Ani's music heightened their awareness of both new and old issues.

Freire writes that a key factor in processes of social change is that individuals and groups learn "to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions" and that from social awareness, individuals can "take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire 1970: 19, translator's note). For many of my participants, a process of conscientization has been an important bridge from a particular sense of self to actually becoming an activist and taking action. This may of course happen simultaneously with the shifting of one's identity, but many of my participants understood it as a chronological process, experiencing first a changed sense of personal identity, and then

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21 This is a reflexive process as well: as people take action, they take on new identities and understandings of self.
an increased socio-political consciousness after they were first exposed to DiFranco's music.22

Sky listened to DiFranco's music daily in her early adolescence, and says now, at age twenty-three, that the lyrics guided her thoughts about injustice. One album she listened to a lot, Living in Clip, has several tracks that focus on the experience of young girls’ experiences of sexual advances from boys and men, sexual assault, patriarchy, and corporate culture. These were issues that Sky had seen, thought about, and experienced, but she feels that she had not recognized the strong connections between them before listening to Ani’s music as a teenager; nor had she realized the degree to which her experiences were shared with others.

I learned a lot from that [listening repeatedly to Living in Clip as a teen] … I will never forget how that music opened my eyes to certain things … The things that she was talking about were old to me, in the sense that I had been thinking about them, but were new to me, in the sense that I wasn’t really sharing my thoughts into relating her politicized ideas with anybody else. (Sky)

Lilith, who began listening to DiFranco's music in her late teens, does not feel that DiFranco raised a lot of new issues for her, but thinks that the music does do that for some fans: “some people don’t even know and think about a certain topic, and, I feel that they should know, because it’s so important to change the way things are right now.” To Lilith, Ani's lyrics stress the importance of women’s issues (among others of justice) and seem to be able to raise and concentrate listeners’ awareness.

Developing a critical consciousness means coming to a realization that social change is both necessary and possible, and either can be or will be created by humans

22 Two participants in particular (Pepper and Lilith) did not fit as nicely into this trajectory. They, along with Caz, started listening to Ani’s music after adolescence, and may have had more solidly formed identities and more politicizing experiences that actually led to their interest in Ani DiFranco, rather than the other way around, as it worked for other participants. This difference will be discussed further in Chapters 7 and 8.
(rather than god-like interventions). Conscientization is an ongoing process “that is understood to have the power to transform reality” (Taylor 1993: 52) – but the process of conscientization does not create social change or revolution on its own. Taylor elaborates:

While focusing on the individual and enabling them to name the forces which shape and control their lives, he [Freire] is able to conceal the secondary agenda which lies in motivating them to strive collectively towards a second goal. This is no less than the moving beyond the new perception or reflection into action, into understanding experimentally how to act upon the causes and processes that generate those forces. (1993: 69)

As I explained in the introduction to the thesis, I have chosen to use the term “conscious music” to describe music (including DiFranco's) that reflects on social issues and offers social critique. “Conscious” is more commonly used to describe reggae and hip-hop music (see Haupt 2004, Lipsitz 1999, and Anderson 2004). Haupt writes that the descriptor “conscious” suggests that the artist “engage[s] with the medium with a significant level of consciousness and critical awareness” and that people “need to engage in serious critical introspection before [they] can make a meaningful contribution to [their] political and social context as an artist, intellectual, or activist” (2004: 20). Lipsitz (1999) uses the term conscious to describe the socially and politically conscious reggae music of Bob Marley and other artists of his era. Like other conscious music, DiFranco's music has a strong sense of politics and the personally political, and advocates for the improvement of oppressed peoples’ situations. The musical genre of DiFranco's music is not usually very similar to other music commonly termed conscious, and her music is not associated with Rastafarianism (as conscious reggae commonly is [see Anderson 2004: 211]), but the mood of the lyrics and fan community can also be described as conscious.
In our interview, Mattea returned several times to the issue of reproductive choice, and two of DiFranco's songs that emphasize its importance, "Lost Woman Song,"\textsuperscript{23} and "Hello Birmingham."\textsuperscript{24} She thinks that as a young girl, listening to songs like "Lost Woman Song," she may have missed their meanings. She grasped the concepts further in her early teens, she thinks, and at that time as well as now, the poignancy of the lyrics really struck a chord with her. Mattea says she has always considered herself pro-choice, since she began to understand what reproductive choice meant for women. However, her realization of the importance of the availability of choice and difficulty women have in making and exercising choices to end a pregnancy came more powerfully from DiFranco's music than occasionally seeing protesters outside a women's clinic on her way to school:

I just, I cannot imagine how stressful and how upsetting that situation would be without all that [safety concerns], and then to add onto that, concern about your own safety, about whether you're going to come out of that clinic alive, with lots of protesters, I just, I can't imagine ... I feel like her lyrics really illustrate how difficult that experience is, and making me want to make it so that that's not the case for women, that they don't have to be so scared, and that on a practical note, that you shouldn't need a security guard to escort you in. (Mattea)

For Mattea, Ani's lyrics strike a strong chord partly because they are so personally relevant to Mattea's life. They describe situations that Mattea has been through, or witnessed with regard to her sisters' or close friends' experiences, and the songs serve both as a reminder and a call to action. Even when Ani's stories or comments are farther removed from Mattea's own life, such as in relation to American politics, they broaden

\textsuperscript{23} Lost Woman Song describes the difficult choice and process a young woman goes through to end a pregnancy, the protesters at the clinic, and the feeling of being desperately alone despite the presence of the man who impregnated her.

\textsuperscript{24} Hello Birmingham focuses on the murder of an abortion provider in his home in Buffalo (Quirino 2004: 159). The last verse describes one of the scenes from Lost Woman Song, in which Ani talks about her own experience of being escorted through clinic protesters by men in bullet-proof vests.
her ways of thinking. Mattea thinks that Ani has influence that is more effective because she speaks and sings about current issues: “[At concerts] she’ll talk about something that’s happened in the news ... her lyrics, [are] often reflective of current events.”

Another important characteristic of the lyrics that gives Mattea a strong feeling of connection is the amount of detail they contain.

That song ‘Hello Birmingham’ that I mentioned earlier, I find very powerful, the image of the glasses being knocked down, and it’s his ‘one safe place’ those, those lyrics, really resonate for me. Just because I can’t imagine what it’s like to spend your entire day trying to help other people and then you go home to your family and then someone killing you in your own home. So yeah, there’s definitely, her lyrics I find very powerful in terms of pointing out sort of the personal level of these people’s lives. In [just] one song I feel that I somehow know this doctor, is pretty amazing, just with those small details that she manages to put into her lyrics, um, you really feel a connection ... that image of the doctor being killed, and also [of Ani] being escorted by security guards, for me, is, the connection to reproductive rights is realizing, um, just that the fact that you’re just not safe going into these clinics and um, the fact that, as I mentioned before – it’s one thing to have it be legal, it’s another thing to actually in practice be able to do it without fear.

Mattea’s feeling of connection here is not only to Ani’s experience, but to the doctor who Ani describes, and Mattea says that this connection helps her to better understand the difficulties posed by anti-choice protesters, and reminds her that legalized choice does not solve all of the problems. This is something she was vaguely aware of before, but Ani’s songs brought the issues explicitly to the forefront of her mind.

Ruby related a similar experience listening to “Lost Woman Song” as a teenager, after actually going with a friend to a clinic. She said,

I’d heard the song maybe once or twice before I had to bring my friend to the clinic. And I remember going and remembering the things that she was saying. And like, out there, it’s just like she said in the song, these people really are... that ‘determined.’
Even before that experience, Ruby said, DiFranco's music had helped her to realize what was at stake in the choice debate: "Hearing 'Lost Woman Song' and 'Tiptoe' definitely helped push me in a direction where [I was thinking] 'this is a reality, this is going on, she didn't make this up.'"

Mattea thinks that Ani's influence on her social consciousness has been profound, particularly when she was a young adolescent. Others had similar experiences in adolescence or after high school, especially Angela, Brett, Kristal, Lilith, Ruby, and Sky. My participants had these experiences earlier in life than the participants in Hercus' (2005) study, where it was found that college years were a time when many (35%) women found themselves thinking about feminist issues for the first time (30). Mattea says, "her (Ani’s) lyrics always make me think about why it is that I just take certain things as for granted rather than really questioning them." This was true for Mattea in adolescence as well as presentely, and she found that Ani's lyrics pushed her to think not only about women’s position in relation to men’s, but also about conformity, consumption, sexuality, and heteronormativity –

At one point, I think she was really the only person who was getting me to question those things ... she’s just always challenging me and her listeners in general to question why it is that we just assume certain things are going to be the case, rather than questioning them.

Brett’s experience may have been similar. She told me stories of her adolescent experiences listening to DiFranco's music, and suggested that DiFranco and her fan community influenced Brett to reject mainstream consumerist conformity, and to conform instead to the less conventionally cool but oddly similar look of an anti-conformity crowd. She remembers arriving at one of her first Ani DiFranco concerts:
I remember that I wore a white t-shirt that said “GAP” on it, and when I got there everybody looked very alternative, and I was really intimidated ... I remember I went into the bathroom and I turned my shirt inside out so that nobody would see the “GAP” on it 'cause I just felt like I didn’t belong, and I was too – I don’t know – boring, and conformist.

Ani’s music continues to make people think more deeply about social issues. Mattea, Ruby, Sky, and Lilith all said that they hoped they would have come to similar realizations about reproductive rights issues without listening to Ani's music, but that they could not be entirely sure of that. Pepper, who was in her twenties before she started listening to DiFranco and had already developed a strong social and political consciousness, said that then, and even now, she could not “really feel ambivalent and be listening to Ani lyrics.” While the music has not necessarily raised new issues for Pepper, she does think that many people, including her daughter’s friends, begin thinking critically about these issues because of listening to Ani's music. She says that the lyrics seem particularly influential in this, because they contain important messages about social justice, and provide young (and older) women with a rare opportunity “to be able to assess the world around you and to make changes and not to be able to feel limited by gender, by age, [or] by social status.” One of Pepper’s biggest hopes is that this music may have such an effect that, “there can be a kid in small town America thinking they have no life and they have no options and they have no say, and yet, these lyrics may open up a whole new world for them,” by showing them that there are alternatives to conservative lifestyles, and that there are large communities of people who share their more progressive values.

Ani’s music has encouraged some participants to question the reasons for their own beliefs and actions, and to think more broadly about social and political issues, even
if these have little direct effect on them. For example, Ani has done tours of Burma to raise awareness of human rights violations there (see Righteous Babe Records US Campaign for Burma), and her albums have included songs about racism and corporate responsibility. Kristal feels that her experience listening to Ani’s music has shifted from an initial stage of primarily considering only the aspects that related closely to her life, to a new stage:

It’s become more about my relationship to the greater world. And about the state of the country, and women’s relationships to each other, and the artist, and human relationships to each other. So it’s deepened and it’s become a lot broader, and like I said, it’s matured.

Pepper said that she has always been able to relate to all of Ani’s music, even if there has not been a direct connection between her life and a song’s lyrics:

For example, if it’s a political song, or if it’s about … certain events, or the political climate or … there’s something in the news or in the media or, you know, in my life, or in the city, then it might be [more meaningful], but … it doesn’t have to be something that I’m experiencing here or personally, or in my life, for it to be meaningful.”

Through its apparent sincerity and presentation of current, relevant issues in a way that makes them personal and urgent, DiFranco’s music also serves as a reminder for those participants like Pepper and Kristal who live in more progressive areas that not all women have the same rights and protections as they do:

It’s very easy to feel [insular] you know, we have [reproductive choice] here in Ontario, and [you feel like things are pretty good], and then and then you have moments where ‘oh shit, you know what, this is still going on!’ So definitely, definitely, definitely, it serves as a reminder to me like, hang on a second, it’s not like it’s everywhere. People need help. (Pepper)

The Role of Authenticity (Superhero?)

Ani seems to be particularly effective in encouraging critical consciousness among her listeners because they trust her. This trust, to which all of my interviewees
refer, is built on a perception of authenticity. Simon Frith (1987) highlights the contested nature of authenticity when he writes that authenticity is the “most misleading term in cultural theory” (Frith 1987: 137; see also Willhardt 2006). Authenticity is the perceived “realness” of a song, performance, or artist. It is not internal to a performance, but is conferred by an audience (Armstrong 2004: 338). The dilemma in considering musicians’ authenticity is that the presentation of self for a musician (or anyone) is always a performance (see Butler 1990; Negus 1992). In the context of music such as Ani DiFranco’s, the authenticity that is attributed to the music by listeners is not “of the music as such (how it is actually made), but of the story it is heard to tell, the narrative of musical interaction in which the listeners place themselves” (Frith 1996b: 275).^25 Negus (1992) and Frith (1987, 1996b) agree on the centrality of authenticity, but Negus views authenticity as having something more solid behind it than simply a fan projection. He writes that in most cases there does have to be something real that an artist’s persona is based on in order for their music to be credible – and that audience members know this. Therefore, he says, authenticity is not a series of myths that cover up what is ‘real’ – at some point, there is a human-to-human connection between the artist and the individual fan, built on shared meanings (Negus 1992: 73-76).

The ten women I interviewed recognized the complexities and deliberately constructed character of Ani DiFranco’s authenticity to varying degrees. Sky, Kristal, and Pepper all pointed out that she is a musician, but she is also an entrepreneur, and at least some of her decisions about how she presents herself are related to what she thinks is

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25 Ani shares very personal details of her life in her songs and on stage; my interviewees seemed to think that if she is sharing so much, she probably isn’t hiding much or lying.
credible and what will sell. Nevertheless, all felt that they trusted Ani. Brett and Lilith were not quite able to articulate what it was about Ani that led them to this trust:

I don’t think it’s anything in particular, I just assume that she knows more about the things that she sings about than I probably do, and that if I’m going to listen to somebody, I should listen to her. (Brett)

Lilith attributed some of Ani’s credibility to her passion for the issues she champions: “I think she gives off like a certain vibe, like, she really believes in what she sings and really, like, she’s advocating it.”

This is a typical interpretation of authenticity in folk genres, which are understood to be down-to-earth and honest (see Connell and Gibson 2003: 29; Rodnitsky 2006:17-18). Further, according to Simon Frith (1981) “folk” music (a category Ani is often associated with) can be understood to be a descriptor of musical values … derived from a critique of commercialism: the description of folk creation (active, collective, honest) [is] in fact, an idealised response to the experience of mass consumption (fragmented, passive, alienating). (1981: 160)

As outlined in Chapter Three, part of what gives Ani an impression of sincerity is her rejection of the corporate music industry, and her insistence on maintaining her record company offices and production in her home town of Buffalo, New York (DiFranco 2003[1998]; Quirino 2004). Mattea was able to describe some particular characteristics of Ani’s music, lyricism, and experience that she found trustworthy:

I think that she’s a very articulate woman, she’s very intelligent, and I feel like I can, yeah, I can trust the things that she says because they’re coming from an informed space. Often, her anecdotes will often have a political aspect … So you can tell that she’s keeping her finger on the pulse in terms of what’s going on, that she’s not just off in seclusion writing on her own. (Mattea)

Ruby separated her trust in Ani into two components: personal and political. She said that she trusts that Ani is honest (i.e., sincere) about her personal experiences, and trusts that
her representations of those experiences are accurate. In terms of trusting Ani politically, she said:

I do believe that she’s honest and passionate ... definitely about her politics, and where she’s coming from, and again she’s not trying to preach to anybody, she’s just kind of talking about what honestly works for her and kind of what she would like to see. You know. I would say yes, as well, to that [to being able to trust Ani politically].

These women trust Ani because she comes across as being intelligent and worldly, and because she seems to admit when she does not have answers (see for example, “Self Evident”). My participants feel that, rather than telling women what to think, Ani presents them with her own thoughts and experiences. The women I spoke with draw from their understanding of her music, lyrics, history, and fan community to conclude that Ani will not misrepresent herself or her experiences. Those experiences conform sufficiently to women’s own lives and awareness that they can relate closely to them. Ani’s songs often bring something to the forefront that listeners have not thought about on a daily basis recently, and remind them of the importance of those issues.

Reinforcing the Importance of Familiar Issues (Ain’t That the Way)

Listening to Ani’s music brings up issues of reproductive rights (and other issues of justice) that participants are aware of, and have thought of before, but which have not preoccupied them recently. When they listen to Ani’s music, they are reminded of how important those issues are. Many of the women I interviewed reflected on how their consciousness has changed since they first began listening to DiFranco’s music, and how it is still changing with respect to the issues that Ani addresses. Mattea says,

Having gone to school for Women’s Studies, and feeling a little bit more informed about the kinds of things she’s talking about, I feel like I can go back and listen to her music and it resonates even more because I know the references that she’s making ... Her music really reflects where I am in my life, in terms of—
I feel very strongly about protecting women’s reproductive rights, and so listening to her music … reflects those views, and I guess the difference would be … at that point [when I first started listening to the music] it was articulating something that I didn’t know how to say myself, whereas now it’s kind of reflecting something I already feel.

Sky recollects her early experiences listening to Ani DiFranco's music during a formative period both of her identity and her growing consciousness of social issues. DiFranco's lyrics helped her to articulate some of her beliefs and feelings about the world:

Ani DiFranco, because that was sort of the awakening of when I really solidified, of when I heard her singing about those things, and I was like, ‘yeah, I believe that too’ and I really got on board with that and became much more active in those things. So, I would say that was probably the introduction of it [activism and activist consciousness].

In this quotation, Sky articulates the connection between listening to Ani's music and the development of critical consciousness, and emphasizes the strong link between the formation of critical consciousness and taking a step towards activism. Sky was emphatic that there were other factors that led to her consciousness. If she had not had the life experiences to be able to identify personally with Ani's lyrics as well as she did, the music would not have been as influential – but she seems to believe that listening to Ani's music pushed her towards critical consciousness.

Ruby began listening to Ani DiFranco's music in junior high school as she was becoming aware of reproductive rights struggles. She told me that she did not think that she first became aware of clinic violence through DiFranco's songs, but that it was the personal, poignant lyrics of songs like “Lost Woman Song” and “Tiptoe” that made her realize how serious the anti-choice movement was, and that the clinic violence in the media was not being as sensationalized as she had originally thought; it was really there, and it was really stopping women from visiting the clinics safely.
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These are not examples of music’s ability to initiate interest in a justice issue, but they do suggest that listening to Ani’s music reinforces ideas about injustice, and reminds my participants of the importance of some issues. This reminder, in turn, re-awakens and can deepen their consciousness. Most people have some awareness of injustice from other areas in their lives, but music can contribute to making those injustices seem more relevant or more important, and can lead listeners to think more critically about their surroundings. According to Freire (1972 [1968]), this critical consciousness is a necessary precursor to anti-oppressive action, which is the subject of Chapter Seven.

**Community’s Role in Conscientization (Company)**

The women I interviewed felt that their social consciousness was something that others shared, giving them a sense of community as they listened to Ani’s music, *even when they were not actually in the presence of other fans*. Several participants shared Lilith’s sentiment that Ani’s music highlights that “other people have experienced things that I’ve experienced too, so I’m not alone in that.” Brett said: “[listening to Ani’s music] made me feel like I was part of a larger community to whom those issues were important.” Ani’s music seems to represent the centre of a community for these women, creating some of Rose’s (1994) “cultural glue” of a shared understanding of society. The lyrics express ideas about social equality and justice, and both attract listeners to whom these are important, and give those listeners corroboration and a feeling of solidarity. That solidarity seems to be key for encouraging some women’s exploration of critical consciousness, and in making them believe that it is possible to contribute to changes in the current ways society operates. Since Ani has been so successful over seventeen years,
listeners often presume there are others who feel the same way they do, and feel a sense of solidarity with them.

My participants have pictures of other fans, from their experiences interacting with others, or from their imaginations, which they feel make up the community of Ani fans from which they draw this feeling of solidarity and shared social conscience.

Different participants’ characterizations of “typical” fans varied only slightly. Mattea, for example, said that genuine fans pay attention to the lyrics in DiFranco’s songs:

They know a little bit more about her— not that they necessarily have to you know, go onto chat rooms and do extra research, but to have really listened to her lyrics and to really get what it is she’s about, and to not just listen to her, while they’re shopping, which seems like such a contradiction! (laughs) – if you listen to Ani DiFranco while you’re buying into consumerism … I guess I would say that there are some fans who are a little bit more genuine in that they think a little bit more about what it is that she’s saying rather than just being passive listeners.

In other words, Mattea seems to think that most “genuine” fans are quite a lot like her, in their understanding of themselves, their view of their positioning in society, and their part in creating alternatives to a norm of consumerism.

Many women said that people who listen to Ani for more than a short time typically are in other ways supporters of social justice and left-of-centre political ideas.

Pepper said,

There’s a good chance that they’re pro-choice, there’s a good chance that they maybe are left-wing or anti-Bush, there’s a good chance that they may be queer or queer-positive, and I think ultimately, it ties down to believing in and speaking up for what’s right.

Like Mattea, Pepper is describing characteristics of her own identity and social consciousness as qualities of a typical fan. She conceives herself as part of a wider fan community with shared social values (whether or not these values are actually shared by

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26 Even participants who were reluctant to generalize about ALL fans said that ‘most’ fans could be said to have certain characteristics or values to some degree.
most of Ani's fans), and feels solidarity with these other fans whom she imagines to have similar consciousness.

Lilith summed this up by saying that Ani fans typically have “social justice on their mind.” Caz stressed the importance, particularly for politically marginalized people, of finding such a community of shared beliefs:

I think that we all, on a very basic common level, have a lot of the same beliefs as far as you know, what should ... be happening with our government and with our country, and with our laws and, I think that ... when you are, sort of in that political minority, you start to sort of group together and find other people who have the same thought lines as you so that maybe you can work together towards that common goal of creating change. (Caz)

The feeling of commonality is likely to validate and reinforce the position that one can be part of creating change, and a sense of power with. I argue further in Chapter Seven that feelings of solidarity make women more enthusiastic about taking up and continuing activist work. Furthermore, I suggest that the feeling that one is not alone can go a long way towards combating burnout and despair that working for social change does not often bring quick large-scale results.

Some fans nurtured a sense of community and solidarity, and learned more about the issues addressed in Ani's songs, by visiting the Righteous Babe website and other fan sites or chat rooms. Mattea especially remembered this as being important:

Fan websites, sort of helped me to continue that ... conversation about political topics and questioning things, so I think that her music really spurred me on to research things more - which is why I think she was so important to me, because not only was her music specifically influential, but she got me thinking about topics, and then her fan sites and her website itself sort of gave more information about topics I was interested in and where to go to find out more information.

27 In the 1990s when my interviewees were using these the most, they were called “chat rooms” or “chat lines;” similar types of websites seem to be called “forums” now.
These websites provided Mattea – who had thought about reproductive justice only a little bit before her introduction to Ani's music as a preteen – with an easily accessible source of information and debate. Like some of Vrooman’s (2006) participants in her study of the online community of Kate Bush fans, even though Mattea does not remember actively participating in the chat debates, she found that taking that second step after listening to the lyrics of the music gave her more background on various arguments surrounding reproductive rights issues, and helped direct her to more information when she wanted it.

The digital or on-line community of music fans is a relatively new phenomenon. Although many of my interviewees regarded the fan chat rooms about Ani DiFranco that sprang up in the 1990s as a bit trivial (devoted more to idolizing DiFranco than discussing the social and political issues in her music), the sense of community that comes even from a remote setting such as a chat room can be important (see Vrooman 2006). While Mattea said she did not remember ever actually making any postings on chat sites she read, she was able to feel the commonality between herself and other conscious fans nonetheless, and used the sites to continue learning and thinking about the issues Ani raised in her music. Ani's songs, nearly all written from her own perspective and in her own voice (but see “Letter to a John,” Out of Range, 1994), give listeners exposure to one perspective on issues (Ani's). Although listeners, including Mattea and Pepper, believe that other fans probably have similar opinions to their own, chat rooms gave them opportunities to read about the experiences and positions of others besides Ani, making them more aware of a range of views on issues, including reproductive rights.
Ani DiFranco’s concerts have been one place where participants’ sense of community is especially strong. There is a particular vibe in the air at many music concerts, with large groups of people who are excited to see the main performers, but my participants feel that Ani concerts are even more special. All but two of the women I spoke with have seen Ani live at least once, and Ruby, Caz, Sky, Pepper, and Mattea have attended numerous shows. Pepper described feeling a commonality with other fans at each show she has seen, sharing Caz’s feeling, discussed above, that the community of Ani fans has a higher concentration of people who share her beliefs:

I think that people ... are going there because they’ve heard her, either have her music or they like her stuff; [so] I would assume that there’s a certain level of acceptance and agreement and similar beliefs. And I think that to feel – you know, in the rest of your life, there may not be many people who have those beliefs, depending on someone’s situation, you know, where they live, where they work, go to school, whatever... but I think this way, it’s sort of like the concert’s done the work for you – it’s almost – I wouldn’t say ‘high speed dating,’ but I would say that ... it sort of filters out the people that don’t like that stuff [Ani’s politics] and who may not have the same beliefs, and so you are left with this great auditorium or audience, a roomful of people who, okay, we all believe the same thing – that’s pretty cool. That means that there’s a good chance that I may want to have, you know, you as my friend, or may want to date you, or at least, we can have a great conversation. (Pepper)

For many of the women I interviewed, attending an Ani concert and feeling the excitement of the live performance itself and the conscious vibe of the other audience members, and sometimes sharing ideas with other fans at the show, makes them aware (or reminds them) of issues and their importance, and reminds them of the influence they can have in creating change together.

Ruby, who has been to about a dozen of Ani’s concerts, and many others, says that the atmosphere at an Ani DiFranco concert is unique, with a strong community vibe:

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28 Kristal gave several reasons for not having seen Ani live, one being that she rarely goes to any large concerts; Angela has never lived close enough to a performance venue to get to a live show.
It’s a really great safe environment ... it’s nice to know that you can go to a place and it’s not going to be so much like a rock show where people are, you know, getting into fights sometimes or anything like that, you know, it’s a really cool environment where everybody can just kind of like hang out and enjoy the music and sing along and have a good time.

As a teenager, Sky found it hard in her daily life to find like-minded people to spend time with or to share her love of Ani’s music with, so she looked forward to the sense of community that she felt at concerts:

I was always really excited [to go to concerts], because, you know, I spent, like, any waking moment I was home her music would be on. So, you know, it’s one of the rare concerts I could go to, and sing every lyric and be with a group of people that I knew felt the same way.

Grossberg (1984) argues that the spirit of a crowd, especially at live concerts, can invigorate both fans and musicians. This has been the experience of Sky and Ruby, who have found that they are re-energized by the crowd’s sense of solidarity; and the experience of being part of such a large group of people who (they think) have similar progressive visions can make them feel as though their role in working for social change is important, and that social change is possible.

Brett was the only participant who found the concert experience not to hold a lot of community meaning for her. She says,

I felt a sense of solidarity during the concert when people cheer for certain songs, or like, for certain lines, really, ‘cause – when it’s in the middle of a song and people cheer for a line – ‘cause then you know specifically what you’re cheering for, rather than just the requisite like ‘the song’s over, so you therefore cheer.’

Some of her strongest memories of interacting with other Ani fans at concerts, however, are negative: “the one thing that I remember before the concert wasn’t solidarity as much as competitiveness, as to who could prove that they were the biggest fan,” which left a bit of a sour taste in her mouth.
Many women expressed feelings of inspiration from being part of the crowd at the show, in addition to those that they felt came from DiFranco herself. For Caz, who has seen more than half a dozen concerts, it is inspiring,

To be around so many other like-minded individuals, so many people ... who really would like to see change for the better in this world, ...and in this country [the United States], specifically right now in this political climate that we are in ... So it’s sort of like a breath of fresh air. It’s sort of, you know, seeing your family, seeing your sisters and brothers who, you don’t necessarily see on the street every day.

Caz, a resident of the United States, feels like she lives and works in a climate that sometimes makes her feel dejected about her ability to contribute to meaningful social change. To combat this, she listens to music (like Ani’s) that reminds her of the importance of small steps and the work of others. She takes pride in the awareness that she is able to share with others, especially with respect to environmental and sexuality issues, but gets reenergized most by attending live concerts.

Lilith was especially impressed and inspired by the size of the crowd at her first Ani DiFranco concert,

like, how many people kind of have the same view of something, ‘cause obviously if we all listen to her, we all have kind of the same interpretations of what she’s singing, and, I think that’s really empowering I guess, to see that other people – like, all of those other people [share these beliefs that I do].

Mattea seemed to leave concerts on a high that made her feel like change was possible:

I guess, the sense of community that you get, ‘cause when you walk out of a concert, you’re surrounded by all these women, these people, sorry, I shouldn’t be discriminating, um, all these people, who you assume sort of have the same sort of core values that you do if they’re as interested in Ani DiFranco’s music as you are to go to a concert. Um, so you get that sense of ‘okay, here’s a room full of people who to some extent agree with me about certain political issues. And if all these people feel the same way, then imagine how many more people there are out there who also feel the same way, they just couldn’t come’ um, so I guess you start to feel a little – you feel empowered, you think ‘okay, well, I’m not alone in this fight, and there’s other people along here with me who feel the same way’
um, so I’d often come away being like ‘okay, you know, we can do something, if there’s this many people who care, then we can do something to change the things that we’re angry about.’

Mattea seems to gain a feeling of solidarity from the other people present at the concert, and from the possibility she imagines that there are other similarly-minded people in her community and in society more broadly who are not attending the concert. The solidarity she feels from this imagined community encourages her to believe she can contribute to making social change, and that her own contribution will be important. This demonstrates the impact that a feeling of community and solidarity among Ani fans can have on individuals, and emphasizes the relation between critical consciousness and the motivation to take up or continue activist work. It is also likely that a similar influence can be made by other socially conscious artists on their fan community, by drawing people together, and that this is therefore an important contribution that socially conscious music can make to relevant social movements.

It is the optimism that change is possible that leads many people to actually take action and adopt the identity of an activist. According to Freire (1970), intentional actions for social change only follow the development of critical consciousness. DiFranco’s music has played a significant role in the development of that consciousness. This is not to say that once individuals develop consciousness and become activists, their consciousness never changes; nor do I want to suggest that DiFranco’s music is the only, or even the main, influence in the development of participants’ consciousness. As Mattea said (quoted earlier), learning about women’s issues in an academic context after having been introduced to feminism in a non-academic context has deepened her understanding, and plays a part in the development of her critical consciousness.
Conclusion (Back Around)

This chapter describes some ways that DiFranco's music has contributed to heightening participants' critical consciousness. Women have developed and increased their awareness of issues, both through listening to Ani's music and by doing their own research, partly encouraged by Ani's passion, the fan community's dedication, and Ani's emphasis on the importance of being informed.

Several features seem to combine in Ani's music to make it particularly influential for women's consciousness. First, Ani's poignant lyrics are detailed, poetic, and relate closely to current issues. Additionally, many listeners find that the lyrics are deeply personal and resonate closely with their own lives. Ani's songs challenge listeners to question the status quo – and to ask why critical examination is not the norm. Ani is understood by her fans as an authentic musician and a trustworthy source of information, giving her lyrics increased credibility. I suggest that people's perception of Ani's authenticity leads her music to be especially powerful, and that other conscious music with similar characteristics may have comparable effects within the reproductive rights movement and other social movements, by raising and concentrating awareness, making people think more deeply about issues, and providing listeners with a sense of solidarity. Finally, the (perceived) community that surrounds Ani's music gives my interviewees a feeling of solidarity with others who share their perspectives or are becoming aware of the same things they are. They are able to engage with some of those others at concerts and in online forums, which gives them broader perspectives (rather than just Ani's) to build more concrete awareness. They also feel a sense of *power with*, especially from concert vibes. It seems to them that the community surrounding Ani makes social change a more attainable goal, and is one to which they can contribute.
In the next chapter, I will look at the ways that participants have used Ani’s music, as Mattea said, to “do something to change the things [they’re] angry about.” This chapter has shown some of the ways that DiFranco’s music has contributed to their critical consciousness, and how the community surrounding DiFranco has helped these women to see the importance of that consciousness. The following chapter will build on this, acknowledging that there is an iterative relationship between critical consciousness and action in my participants’ lives.
Chapter 7: Practice (Hell Yeah)

She's made a tremendous influence in what I saw as possible for me, as a single [just one] woman in America. (Kristal)

When I first started listening [to Ani's music], I was only listening to what activism [others were doing], and kind of learning and reading about activism and anarchy and things about that, of that nature, so I was only kind of on the, like, voyeurview times, only listening and watching what other people had done, I hadn't gotten to do my own thing, so ... when I was listening to her music, I was like, 'yeah! I want to get involved in that, I wanna do that, I wanna do that.' So, I think, now that ... her music has definitely helped me out in kind of pushing me in that direction and kind of how do I get involved in this, how do I do this, how do I - how do I start. (Ruby)

I think [Ani's music is] oddly uplifting. I think that in the same breath that she is sort of questioning what's happening in this world, she's sort of giving you that energy to go out and try to do something about what is happening, and try to make things better. (Caz)

I have chosen to develop my analysis by first examining identity, then consciousness, and finally practice, partly because I found that many of my participants loosely followed that progression in their relationships to Ani's music, with significant overlap and constant re-assessment, as they came to understand themselves as activists.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the influences of Ani's music on the activist practices of the ten women I interviewed. They find that the music reminds them of their personal power to, and they use it to "get pumped", feel empowered, and build their strength. Ani's music motivates these listeners to do activist work in response to their awareness of injustice, and it inspires them to create new ways to integrate their activism into their everyday lives.

The women I interviewed had varying definitions of activism and have taken part in different forms of activism in their own lives. Each participant has to some extent brought her identity and her political consciousness together within her activism. From
my interviews, it is apparent that as these women’s understanding of their oppression and the oppression of other groups grows through critical consciousness, they become frustrated and angry, and many turn that anger into action.

This chapter begins with a discussion of activism in the context of some relevant scholarly literature. I then consider interviewees’ emotional attachment (anger) to issues of which they have become conscious, and the influence that Ani’s music has had on their acceptance of that anger as justified. My evidence suggests that the application of anger towards activism has been a particularly important influence of Ani’s music for these reproductive rights activists. After looking at participants’ anger, I examine some of the other ways that participants understand Ani’s music to encourage their activism, including inspiration and motivation for action. Finally, I analyze my participants’ descriptions of their activist work in relation to Ani DiFranco’s music, and explore the ways that they work to integrate their activism into all aspects of their lives, as they have seen Ani do.

All of my participants consider themselves activists working towards reproductive freedom. Young (2001) defines activists as those who are “committed to social justice … and to the idea that politically responsible persons ought to take positive action to promote [it]” (43). An activist, Young says,

Opposes particular actions or policies of public or private institutions, as well as systems of policies or actions, and wants them changed. Sometimes he (sic) also demands positive policies and action to reduce injustice or harm. (2001: 43)

In addition to being motivated by a commitment to justice,

The activist is often also propelled by anger or frustration at what he judges to be the intransigence of people in power in existing institutions who behave with arrogance and indifference toward the injustices the activist finds they perpetuate…” (Young 2001: 43)
Meyer (2007) and Young (2001) both build their discussions of activism around a focus on direct action. Meyer (2007) says that an activist is someone who engages in activities ranging from signing petitions to risking arrest (46), while Young (2001) gives other examples of direct action, including street marches, boycotts, and sit-ins (Young 2001: 41). Young says that typically,

The activist is suspicious of exhortations to deliberate, because he believes that in the real world of politics, where structural inequalities influence both procedures and outcomes, democratic processes that appear to conform to norms of deliberation are usually biased toward more powerful agents. The activist thus recommends that those who are about promoting greater justice should engage primarily in critical oppositional activity, rather than attempt to come to agreement with those who support or benefit from existing power structures. (2001: 41)

Young's (2001) characterization of the activist is an ideal type, and focuses primarily on direct action as activism. My participants, with a wide range of involvement in direct action, all felt that one of the most important parts of the definition of activism for them was raising awareness. Young suggests that the most effective course of action requires:

Individuals and organizations seeking to undermine injustice and promote justice … both to engage in discussion with others to persuade them that there are injustices which ought to be remedied, and to protest and engage in direct action. (2001: 54)

She cautions, though, that awareness-raising discussion with others and direct action cannot usually be concurrent activities. Young says that “one of them is liable to eclipse the other” (2001: 54). She suggests that instead, “the best democratic theory and practice will affirm them both while recognizing the tension between them” (2001: 54).

According to McAdam and Paulsen (1993: 644), two critical factors in activist recruitment are interpersonal ties (knowing someone who is already in the movement)
and membership in organizations (primarily because they provide interpersonal ties). They argue that “knowing someone who is already involved in social movement activity is one of the strongest predictors of recruitment into the membership” (McAdam and Paulsen 1993: 644), and that it can be especially powerful if one has a strong interpersonal network of involved people. A network is likely to “encourage the extension of an invitation to participate and ... ease the uncertainty of mobilization” (644). Given the feeling of community that listening to Ani DiFranco's music provides my participants, it is evident that membership in the fan community has contributed to participants' involvement in activist activity. Furthermore, it has helped them to maintain and augment their activist work.

The Role of Emotion and Anger (Fuel)

Seven of the women I interviewed spoke extensively about anger. Frye (1983) writes that anger is an emotional “reaction to being thwarted, frustrated, or harmed” (85). The response of anger to a situation “implies not only that the inhibition or obstruction was distressing, but that it was an offense” (86). Elizabeth V. Spelman (1989) writes that anger is not only justified by many situations, but that “certain situations ... cry out for anger and other emotions in response” (272). Participants commented that Ani’s lyrics made them more aware of social and political issues, and that the issues Ani raised made them angry. Her lyrics and actions made women realize that their anger was justified – but that they needed to turn anger into positive work for change, rather than keeping it to themselves as a destructive emotion.

Spelman (1989) and Frye (1983) both work from cognitive theories of emotion, which imply that “being angry suggests that some wrong has been done” (Spelman 1989:
The understanding that something is wrong comes to participants through critical consciousness, to which DiFranco contributes for many. Conscientization can lead to anger when it becomes apparent to women that they or others have been unjustly treated (Spelman 1989: 268). Anger involves empowerment and self-righteousness, believing (as part of one’s identity) that one is:

a being whose purpose and activities require and create a web of objects, spaces, attitudes, and interests that is worthy of respect, and that the topic of this anger is a matter rightly within that web (Frye 1983: 87).

Anger is therefore an assertion of self-importance and self-esteem.

Spelman and Frye argue that in situations where someone is unjustly wronged, it is not only acceptable for one to be angry, but that one should be angry (they do acknowledge that misdirected anger is not productive). For many participants, DiFranco's music stresses the importance of anger. Through her lyrics and her own actions, Ani encouraged them to gain awareness, get angry, and use that anger for a larger productive purpose. Frye (1983) states that “anger is always righteous” (86). This compares closely to participants’ perceptions of Ani’s own anger (and the common negative perception in the media that DiFranco is angry), and her rebellious independent record label, Righteous Babe Records.

Interviewees talked about their own anger, and the anger Ani conveys to them in her music. Spelman’s (1989) conceptualization of the role of anger in activism is supported by Caz’s comment that anger is an important impetus for action:

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29 Spelman (1989) quotes Aristotle, recognizing that he did not intend to include women, but claims herself that women ought to be included: “[anyone] who does not get angry when there is reason to be angry, or does not get angry in the right way at the right time and with the right people, is a dolt.” (in Spelman 1989: 263).
I think that in order to really go out there and be an in-your-face activist, you have
to be pissed off about something ... I think that that's what's needed: I think
people have to be pissed off.

Caz was openly queer for a number of years and worked in an LGBT community centre,
but it was not until the United States government and several states started threatening to
overturn Roe v. Wade, which would make abortion illegal, that she felt angry enough to
take action in the area of reproductive rights. Since that time, she has found that Ani's
lyrics resonate with her experience of anger as being a precursor to activism.

Mattea spoke repeatedly about the difficulties she felt with her identity as a
teenager, and what she called “teen angst,” which she felt Ani helped her to deal with in
more positive ways than other influences in her life, by suggesting that her anger was
natural and could be used productively. Her mother first flagged the anger in Ani's music
for her:

I remember very distinctly that when I started listening to her, my mum didn't
like me listening to her music 'cause she was like “it's just so angry [Mattea],
she's not gonna – she's just going to make you this angry person” so at first I was
struck by sort of the angry aspects, and then, my impressions ... changed because
I started to realize that yes, she was angry, but she was angry with a purpose. And
I guess the more I started to listen to her music and really get what it was she was
talking about was that idea that “yeah, you've got to be angry with a purpose,
you've got to use that anger to motivate you to do something.” So I guess it
changed for me about being just about the anger and the frustration and changed
into something sort of more productive ... I'm constantly reminded listening to her
music that if I don't agree with something that I can't just sit in my room by
myself and be angry, that I've got to get out there and do something.

Pepper made a comment that could have summed up the conclusion that Mattea
reached gradually in response to her mother’s comment about Ani's anger: “it's not just
this angry frustration, it's actually making change and motivating people.” She, Ruby,
Brett, and Lilith all find it admirable that Ani does speak up about her own and others’
experiences with abortion and her other social and political critiques, and that she doesn’t apologize for her views. Brett said,

I find it uplifting that she acknowledges the existence of any number of a variety of problems. I find that uplifting. It makes me happy that – that somebody is speaking up.

Lilith and Sky both found that Ani’s outspokenness made them more aware of their own capacity for action. Sky said that Ani taught her that being quiet did a lot less good than speaking out; Lilith found that Ani’s music gave her both *power from within* and *power to*. She said that Ani’s music is

making me aware that I can actually go out and do something, like I don’t have to be silent, like I can, you know, try to make a difference, like, try and change the world or whatever, but um, yeah, I think it’s kind of provided me with more strength, to go do that.

Pepper, who started listening to DiFranco’s music when her now-seventeen-year-old daughter was a toddler, thinks that Ani has influenced her daughter’s capacity to work for change as well as her own:

She’s grown up knowing to question things ... [and to say] ‘hang on a second, this is not okay, you know what, racism is not acceptable’... I mean, yeah, she’s very politically-minded ... and I think that’s also been flagged by Ani lyrics.

Fans seem to be attracted to identifying with Ani because she is young, actively involved, hip, independent, and honest (see also Frith 1996).

**Encouraging Activism (Face Up and Sing)**

Rosenthal (2001) argues that encouraging action, by maintaining activist spirit and motivating activists to go beyond what their actions might have otherwise been, is one of the key influences of conscious music. He acknowledges that participants in his

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30 “Tiptoe,” “Lost Woman Song,” and the last stanza of “Hello Birmingham” all refer to Ani’s experience with abortion; the bulk of “Hello Birmingham” is a narrative about an abortion provider being shot in his home, and the similarities between cities with increasingly volatile anti-choice movements.
study found it difficult to say how or when music had impacted their own political development, even though they were “overwhelmingly” sure that it had (16). My participants had similar experiences to his. Only two of the women I interviewed think that Ani makes a deliberate effort to cultivate consciousness and activism in her listeners. Most of my participants own all of her studio albums and DVDs, and can quote song lyrics extensively, but Ani's songs like “Face Up and Sing” were mentioned only by Kristal and Angela. In reference to “Face Up and Sing,” Kristal said: “I think it’s a rallying cry. I mean, it’s so empowering, and I mean, she’s evidence that it is possible to do something. And that you can start – that I can start doing something now, and that it’s important.” She continued to describe the power in the song:

Like “Face Up And Sing.” And that song was sooo important. Um, I mean the line that really caught my attention was ‘some chick is saying thank you for saying all the things I never do, and I said, well, the thanks I get is to take the shit for you’. And that really struck home. You know, um, that people like her – and you know, I was sort of, appreciating people like her and other activists from a distance, but, I hadn’t really – I was slow to take action, myself, and that really hit home for me. You know, that, women who are doing it end up taking a lot of bullshit and a lot of crap for – I mean, if more women who really believed this way just did something, then it wouldn’t be so meaningful and so ostracising and so, sometimes, alienating, for the women who do do it … you know, that’s a pretty direct battle call. Um, ‘the thanks I get is to take the shit for you. It’s nice that you listen, it’d be nicer if you joined in’ you know. I mean, god, it’s pretty direct.

As we have seen, participants feel that Ani has reinforced and influenced their identities, and helped to raise their level of critical consciousness, which has made many of them angry at the state of things. Additionally, Ani has helped them to understand that their anger is appropriate and desirable, and that they should not keep that anger to themselves. Further, her music has encouraged these women to stand up for their values, especially when they are angry, and as Kristal pointed out about “Face Up and Sing,” Ani
argues that it is essential that women do speak up. For Mattea, Ani’s message that anger could be used productively was particularly strong, even though she did not mention “Face Up and Sing,” or agree that Ani intended to arouse these feelings in her audience members:

She’s not the kind of person to just bitch about things and not actually encourage you to do anything about it. So I guess on one hand, it allowed me to be angry, and it also allowed me to realize, ‘okay so if you’re angry, you need to do something about it, you can’t just sit in your room and wallow’ because yeah, her music definitely encourages her, her listeners to yeah, get up and do something about things that make you angry. And she talks a lot about how it’s actually worse to complain and not do anything about it. Like, to be aware of what’s going on in the world and to be complicit in it. So I think her music allowed me that space to be angry, but also encouraged me to be like ‘okay, well if you’re mad about something you’ve got to do something about it, and you’ve got to promote change if that’s what you want.’ (Mattea)

Ani’s music reminds Lilith of the importance of acting on her anger, and helps her feel she has the power from within that she needs to do that:

I think it gives me strength to … actually go out and do something. If I’m so angry about something and not doing anything, it’s not productive. It’s not helping anyone really. Even myself, it’s making myself more frustrated and stressed out, and I think that it helps me to kind of find that place inside me where I can go out and do stuff.

Caz echoes some of Rosenthal’s (2001) participants, who found that conscious music encouraged them to take action. She reiterated some of Mattea and Lilith’s comments, saying that, “listening to Ani DiFranco’s music has encouraged me to stand up and step out and speak my mind … And I think that that’s very empowering and … you know, it drives me.”

When she was first introduced to DiFranco’s music by a friend in the early 1990s, Pepper was blown away by the strong politics and the determination in the lyrics. She said that there may be more artists out there now who are as outspoken as DiFranco, but,
Especially in the early days, it was a big deal. You know, being an out dyke, with you know, pregnant with a child, you know, as queer ... and it was really a struggle. And I think a lot of her lyrics really gave me that support, and the foresight to just keep going, you know, keep saying what I believed, and it just really kept me motivated.

The Relation of Music and Activist Practice (Served Faithfully)
Many women found DiFranco's music inspiring for their activist activities. Ruby told me that she first became aware of reproductive rights through DiFranco's music, but got into reproductive rights activism through the music in the local riot grrrl scene when she was in high school.

I started hearing about it, and researching it, and, you know, with the internet, just doing that, and then going into libraries and researching it, and doing lots of research about Roe v. Wade, and seeing how it spanned out into everything else. And just kind of, going out from there, learning that I can actually, like, do something, I didn’t have to just sit idly by and watch these laws get passed or not passed, I could do something to influence it. It all comes back to relating to the connection to her, to being able to empathize with a lot of her personal work, and politically, since I’ve, uh, become politically active, uh, in college. Or—and since I’ve graduated and have chose, and made it my job and what I do. So yeah, her music is definitely filled with even a huge inspiration.

Ani's music spurred Ruby to research reproductive rights, and helped her feel that she might be able to make a difference. In describing the most important ways Ani’s music has influenced her, Lilith talked about a feeling of power to and said:

It makes me feel like I can actually do something, like I can actually – I'm not just – well, I am just one person, but I'm not so insignificant that I can’t go out and change something about a community or my family or kind of greater things.

Caz draws strength of power with from the community feeling of listening to Ani's music, both the feeling of solidarity with other fans (and knowing that there are other fans out there with and acting on similar values) as well as the feeling of camaraderie with DiFranco herself.

I think by immersing myself in the solidarity of other people who believe as I do and want to see the same changes that I do. I think, um, listening to music by
various musicians whether it's Ani DiFranco, or Indigo Girls, or Ember Swift, um, you know, who — who discuss any of these number of issues, um, that certainly is really a way to sort of keep motivated.

Participants spoke of the inspiration that Ani’s music suggested to them, and the courage they heard in it and drew from it. Kristal said that she felt that Ani is very brave. And very — at least through her music, a very direct person. And, um, not afraid to make herself emotionally available. And not afraid to really stand up for the things that she believes.

I asked Ruby if Ani’s quality as a role model for activists was important to her as a fan. She told me:

It’s important in the sense that, it’s great to have somebody who’s out there, who’s definitely taking a stand on a lot of really important issues globally, and personally. And kind of — she stands for them, this is what she believes, she won’t let anybody shake her, and she’s going out, and she’s promoting it, which is, I don’t care what anybody says, I think it’s, it’s great — inspiring, and I hope she continues to do it.

Several of my interviewees said that they use Ani’s music as a source of motivation for their activist activities, and draw strength from it now, especially when they are feeling dejected or are on their way to an activist activity. Ruby listens especially to Ani’s more politically-oriented music, “before I go to do clinic defence at Planned Parenthood, or before I go to do meetings … yeah, so kind of like to get me all like energized and stuff.” When Caz first started listening, she would “listen to her music when I wanted to like pump my adrenaline up or you know, get excited, or have fun, that sort of thing.” Now, she still gets pumped listening, but she finds that she turns Ani’s music on:

A lot of times when I am angry about something, as far as like, something political that might be happening, or something, you know, I feel like I want to get sort of, set for … an act of activism that I’m going to do, or something like that.” (Caz)
Kristal especially likes to listen to DiFranco’s music in the morning, before leaving for work. She says listening to Ani in the morning is:

Like I'm touching base – you know what I'm saying? Like I'm touching base emotionally and touching base with the things that are important to me and self-fulfilling, kind of strengthening before going into a workplace that’s not necessarily so nurturing of those things.

She has found Ani’s music to be energizing in preparing for other situations that she anticipates being difficult for her as a lone pro-choice activist, such as going to visit her conservative family in the Midwest.

Kristal was one of several participants who talked about using Ani’s music to create or enjoy a particular mood. Kristal uses Ani’s music strategically when she wants to think about the types of social justice issues that Ani sings about, or when she needs to recharge her dedication to reproductive rights:

Some of her songs have a nice mood of introspection, and I just kind of want to listen on my own, and be kind of quiet, and reflect on things, and there’s an um, refuelling aspect you know, like listening to things like “Face Up and Sing” and songs like that. It’s a very energizing and empowering element to a lot of her music, too. So it just depends on which song, and I kind of choose which songs to put on, depending on what it is that I feel like I need at the moment.

Lilith uses Ani’s music to remind her of her own personal power and that even as just one young woman, she can make a difference:

It kind of gets you pumped up, like it makes me more empowered, it makes me feel stronger … Society kind of makes women out to be [people] who [aren’t] able to do anything, but just listening to her, it’s just like, ‘I can actually do something, I’m not an insignificant person who’s following everybody else.’

Ruby finds the music motivating in terms of her activist work, and “refreshing.” She said that she is sometimes discouraged that it is necessary for Ani to be still working for change after so long. She commented though, that change takes time, and you have to keep at it.
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Activism as a Lifestyle (Revelling)

All of my participants understand DiFranco's music itself to be a significant form of activism, and feel that she reminds them that there are "a variety of ways to enact change" (Mattea), including through music. Ani's example in this regard may have been particularly influential for Sky, who is now a professional singer-songwriter herself, and who considers her music to be a form of activism:

She also taught me that you can speak out in a way that also enables you to express your creativity. And release that through art, instead of through anger or shouting or whatever ... I realized from listening to that the kind of power that music has to create change, positive change, and um, I guess indirectly that has influenced me because it's now what I've chosen to do with my life and I'm actively pursuing that.

My participants take part in a variety of activities that they consider activism. Although many women said that some of the first activities they think of as activism are rallies, marches, and sit-ins, many do not regularly participate in those types of events (although most have, at some point). Several participants mentioned that they try to lead by example, like they feel Ani does, and live their lives according to the way they would like to see the world. For Caz, this means driving a hybrid car, and Mattea strives to use inclusive language. All of the women I spoke with see raising awareness about the possibilities for change as one of the primary impacts they can have as activists, by contributing to maintaining or expanding the movement.

When speaking about their reproductive rights activism, most participants highlighted their smaller efforts in addition to their significant activist lifestyles. Angela is a doula, supporting reproductive rights by providing pregnancy, birthing, and post-partum assistance to mothers. She is also interested in starting a support program for women who have had abortions. Ruby and Kristal both do clinic defence at Planned
Parenthood. Ruby is also a counsellor there, and regularly leads a young feminist group at a nearby university. In addition to volunteering at Planned Parenthood, Kristal sits on a family planning advisory board, and has been a key organizer in awareness and fundraising events such as films and concerts that support women’s legal access to reproductive choice. Mattea has also spearheaded fundraising events and campaigns for national pro-choice organizations, and recently opened a reproductive health store.

Caz travelled over night to attend the 2004 March for Women’s Lives in Washington D.C. The LGBT community centre she works at regularly partners with the nearby Planned Parenthood in political activity, and Caz is passionate about “Causes in Common,” which links women’s rights, including reproductive rights, to gay rights.

Lilith is still a full-time student, and attends campus pro-choice rallies when possible. Her activist passions have recently been focused on peace marches and fundraising for health and education in developing countries, and in the past she has organized film screenings to raise both awareness and money for peace, development, and reproductive rights causes. Her dream is to set up an organization to fight violence against women and children in her community.

Unlike the others, Sky is a full-time musician. Her current focus is on her music, which she hopes encourages her audience to think critically about reproductive rights. In the past, however, she has organized pro-choice demonstrations and been a part of the V-Day campaign to end violence against women. She was a long-time volunteer in a women’s shelter, and volunteered to work with rape victims, sexual abuse survivors, and HIV-AIDS patients.
Like many of the others, Pepper has diverse activist interests and passions. She has participated in clinic support and pro-choice rallies, but recently she has tried to choose her activist focuses to have the most impact. She feels that her involvement in her local neighbourhood community and municipal politics is especially important right now.

Bret and Mal are both law students who hope to use their legal training to benefit others. Already, Bret works at a legal aid clinic and attends protests to give legal council to anyone engaging in civil disobedience. She has organized working groups on a number of progressive issues at her law school, including the environment, homelessness, and reproductive choice, and writes about such progressive issues in her regular community newspaper column.

The participants who considered themselves strong reproductive rights activists before they were introduced to Ani's music, and so understood her music in relation to that previous experience, were Pepper and Lilith. Pepper was in her mid-twenties, a queer parent and active in clinic defence and protests against restrictions on choice, when a friend introduced her to DiFranco's music. She found that her activist identity and activities resonated strongly with DiFranco's music and recognizes that listening to DiFranco's music has had significant influence on her activist motivations and understanding:

I think that her lyrics have spoken to my innate beliefs. And addressed them – and also continued to sort of prod me and sort of push me out there and encourage me to not just sit back but to do that. You know, I'm just trying to think, without her lyrics, would I have been as much of an activist? No. Definitely not.

Lilith was introduced to DiFranco's music in her late teens, when she was already taking part in peace marches and anti-poverty campaigns. She found that DiFranco's music resonated with her activist interests, and makes her feel empowered. She first
became involved in activism for choice after she had been listening to DiFranco's music for a year or two, but she does not acknowledge a particularly strong connection between her exposure to DiFranco's music and taking up reproductive rights activism. She feels that a combination of factors would likely have led her to reproductive rights interests even without the contribution of DiFranco's music. As I have noted throughout the thesis, it does seem that listening to DiFranco's music has influenced her understanding of feminism, consciousness, and activism, and she recognized this connection explicitly in a few points in our interview.

Most of the women I spoke with recognize Ani as a role model for themselves and for other listeners. They admire her particularly for her activism and standing up for herself, but are hesitant to admit that without qualification. Many of them recognize that one celebrity role model does not typically define women's identity and actions, but that admiration of the celebrity does play a role in how they express themselves. Kristal was not the only one who felt this way:

I'm very very leery of using artists just as 'people' as role models, I don't think - that's a huge order for anybody to fill, and I kind of think it can put undue pressure on an artist um, and can create all sorts of false expectations. And then kind of the message can be skewed. But um, a lot of things that she's - I mean like, god, starting her own label, and um, sustaining herself, and um, she is very true to her vision and to her work, and um, to her own image, and to all of those things. I think she's a fabulous role model in those ways.

Several participants are trying to make activism (for some, specifically reproductive rights activism) their careers, and many commented that watching a woman like Ani succeed in doing that has helped to make that goal seem more realistic for them. While Kristal, and Lilith have yet to figure out how to merge what are currently two separate spheres of their lives, Caz feels like an activist both at work at the LGBT
community centre and in her personal life. Ruby, Mal, and Brett hope to have similar opportunities soon when they finish their Social Work and Law programs. Sky and Pepper have already been able to make a living doing what they love: creating politically conscious art. Pepper makes jewellery as part of a business, but does consider much of her drawing and painting to have incorporated an activist sensibility. Sky describes her music as being similar to Ani's in some ways. She says that it both suggests that change is necessary, and so raises some awareness, but also that her lyrics “provide insight into how that change can be manifested.”

Most of my participants also talked about the challenges they face in maintaining stamina in their activist work, and not giving in to frustration. After all, despite the achievements of the women’s movement and other social justice movements in the two decades since DiFranco released her first album, there are many similar challenges to reproductive rights in Canada and the United States. Some new ones, such as disapproving physicians' and pharmacists' refusal to provide the now-legal emergency contraception to women who ask for it, make activists feel like time is going backward. Pepper combats negative energy by devoting herself more strongly to other causes in phases:

I think I kind of go back and forth on it because it gets – it’s so volatile, and it’s just so frustrating, so I think to be able to ensure that I'm not really burnt out, I kind of have to go back and forth. Um, which means I'm not always taking part in situations that revolve around reproductive rights. Whereas, in the past, I may have more so. You know, I think it’s just, it’s burnout.

Looking back on her increasing activist interest, and contemplating the influence that Ani DiFranco’s music has had on her activism, Kristal said that while the music was
not the direct primary reason for her activism, it was very important in the way that she chose to take up reproductive rights activism.

It’s just that I think that her lyrics are so powerful, it’s been kind of a constant undercurrent and the – I think I said that pretty well – and the personal shift that I’ve had, like I said, from being a listener and a sort of believer in activist rights, to somebody who actually does something. Um, and as I saw other women, like um, for the [name] who put together I Had An Abortion, and Ani DiFranco played a tremendous part in – when I talked with [name] when they put that project together. But um, seeing how other women were kind of drawing strength from her music and using it to be active, I have become more active myself. And drawn strength from her as well.

Conclusion (Back Around)

All ten women felt that there was a connection between their appreciation of Ani’s music and their activist ideas and activities. It could be suggested that a lot of music an activist listens to will influence their activist ideas and actions, but I argue that with its particular personal and political resonance for listeners, DiFranco’s music has a more profound effect. Some participants, especially Caz, seemed reluctant to answer affirmatively when asked whether DiFranco had impacted the ways in which she took up activism, but all of them demonstrated that there were clear links between their interest in DiFranco’s music and their activist activities. In many cases, these links were forged as DiFranco’s music influenced listeners’ identities and consciousnesses, which in turn affected their motivation to take action.

My participants understand themselves as activists who participate not only in direct action, but who also have an important activist role to play by raising awareness. An increasing awareness of injustice (some of which, as explored in Chapter Six, was influenced by Ani’s music) has made many of my participants angry, and they find that Ani’s music helps them to recognize the appropriateness of their anger and its potential uses. Ani encourages her listeners to take a stand when they are angry about injustice,
and this message pushed many of the women I interviewed towards becoming an activist or reinvigorating activist efforts.

I have shown in this chapter that my participants drew a feeling of productive anger from Ani's music. They find that listening to Ani's music makes them feel "pumped" and energized, and they use it to maintain or recover their activist motivations. They heard her message that anger can be used as energy to make things better, and they understand Ani's anger, lyrics, music, and performances as a type of activism because she raises awareness and encourages other activists through them. Women use Ani's music purposefully in relation to their reproductive rights activist practice in four main ways. One main way is that women listen to Ani's music in the car or on their personal music players to get "pumped" on their way to a demonstration, activist meeting, or activist paid work. They also listen to it first thing in the morning to get excited and passionate for the day, even when they are not doing particularly activist activities. Second, some women use Ani's music to remind themselves of the importance of their activist work for reproductive rights, particularly if they are feeling dejected. Third, women will occasionally put on some of Ani's music for nostalgic reasons, and to remember how empowered they felt to first listen to her music. Fourth, they listen to Ani's music to feel connected to other listeners, activists, and to Ani herself through the music.

Ani seems to be effective in getting people to listen to her partly because of her independent, hip status, and her own experiences with activism and advocacy for reproductive freedom. Her lyrics are strung together in a poetic and compelling manner, and her performances — even on recordings — are emotionally charged. She presents issues in her lyrics in a poignant, personal way that keeps them at the front of people's
minds. Through her lyrics, music, and the emotions in her performance, she is able to evoke feelings that people share but have not been able to express to themselves. She catches people's attention and makes them see that not doing anything about injustice is not helping, and even makes some listeners feel guilty for not standing up for justice. Ani is an activist both through her music and through other aspects of her public life.

Ani's lyrics and personal example have shown interviewees that activism can take many forms, including music, and they take up their activism in diverse ways, including, where possible, as their careers. My participants largely agreed that one of the most common activist activities for them is to spread awareness about reproductive rights struggles. They include in their reproductive rights activist experiences diverse activities ranging from political marches (e.g. the 2004 March for Women's Lives), support of abortion clinics and clients, and fundraising for campaigns to overturn anti-choice legislation. They also include smaller scale activism, such as working as a counsellor at Planned Parenthood, maternal and birthing support, and raising awareness among friends and family.

The following chapter considers the role of affect in participants' relationships with Ani's music. I integrate the influences that her music has had on their identity, consciousness, and practice, and consider the interconnectedness of these three frames of analysis. The chapter highlights the major points of the thesis, with a focus on the overlapping themes. I conclude by suggesting some of the ways that this study can contribute to understanding the potential influence of music on social movements and their individual actors.
Chapter 8: Conclusions (So What)

I mean, I might not ever have realized that I had personal power without Ani DiFranco. I mean, her voice has been so, so important. It's so important to have role models like that and to see women doing things like that. Um, and it's even founding her own record label, and writing her own music. You know, like all the way through, not just the lyrics, writing her own music. And um, building her own life has been tremendous ... she's made a tremendous influence in what I saw as possible for me, as a single [just one] woman in America. (Kristal)

Ani DiFranco's music has had important influences on the reproductive rights activism of the women I interviewed for this thesis project. As I explored in Chapter Seven, their activist activities and use of Ani's music vary in practice, but all ten women have found Ani's music to be a powerful and inspiring tool for their activism. In this concluding chapter, I tentatively suggest that the understanding of how music shapes and inspires actors in social movements can be augmented by further considering the relevance of affect. I examine the ways in which Ani DiFranco's impact overlaps among women's identity, consciousness, and practice. I highlight the interconnected nature of these effects and emphasize the feeling of togetherness that Ani's music gives her listeners. Finally, I argue that my study of Ani's influence on reproductive rights activists suggests increased understanding of the possibilities for music to encourage activist involvement and commitment in other social movements.

Music, Affect, and Social Activism (Pulse)

In addition to the forms of contextual and subjective responses to Ani's music that I have explored, there is still the question of the subtle and elusive effect of music on human bodies. The analysis that I have made in Chapters Five through Seven prepares for the consideration of the enduring effects of the music: the affective nature of music performance. Brian Massumi describes affect as a combination of performance,
movement, and the potential for hope (Massumi 1996; Massumi in Zournazi 2002) and says that it connects individuals to others by giving one an “angle of participation in processes larger than [one]self” (Massumi in Zournazi 2002: 214). Affect is a kind of non-conscious physical and emotional potential energy in that it has an effect on both the body and the mind (Massumi 2002: 31). Massumi (2002) writes that affect is not exactly a feeling or emotion (but both feeling and emotion may be relevant for my study in addition to affect), but is better described as an “intensity” (25). Tompkins (1995) compares affect to a pain mechanism: without nerve endings, he says, we can see if we have hurt ourselves, but there is no urgency to remedy the injury. Affect, like pain, is an internal call to consciousness (88). This is important for better understanding the effects of music in social movements, in part because, according to Shouse, “affect plays an important role in determining the relationship between our bodies, our environment, and others, and the subjective experience that we feel/think as affect dissolves into experience” (Shouse 2005: 11).

Simon Frith (1996b) argues that music is an art form that can elicit a particularly strong affective response:

In responding to a song, to a sound, we are drawn ... into affective and emotional alliances. This happens in other areas of popular culture, of course ... but music is especially important for our sense of ourselves because of its unique emotional intensity - we absorb songs into our own lives and rhythm into our own bodies. (273)

Lilith said that listening to Ani's music sometimes puts her in a better mood (and never puts her in a worse mood), giving her a buzz, or a sort of euphoric feeling. She tried to describe that sense, saying:

31 E.g.: a sad movie evokes sad feelings, but make also evoke (positive/not sad) affect (Massumi 2002: 25).
It makes me feel like I can actually do something, like I can actually – I'm not just – well, I am just one person, but I'm not so insignificant that I can't go out and change something about a community or my family or kind of greater things ... and it makes me more – not more angry, but kind of more – passionate about it. Just kind of, 'cause a lot of music you get energy from it, you draw energy from it ... if it's angry song you might get like more passionate about something. (Lilith)

Frith also says that,

because of its qualities of abstractness, music is, by nature, an individualizing form. We absorb songs into our own lives and rhythm into our own bodies; they have a looseness of reference that makes them immediately accessible. (1996a: 121).

This individual bodily experience is particularly complicated because it can be intensified by the presence (or suggestion) of others who are experiencing something similar, and the perception of solidarity and shared experience that comes with that. “Music ... provides us with an intensely subjective sense of being sociable ... it both articulates and offers the immediate experience of collective identity” (Frith 1996b: 273). For Ruby, the affective “buzz” of both music and activism is heightened when it is shared: “I would definitely say ... two of the biggest times [are] when I'm working at Planned Parenthood and after I've seen [Ani] live.”

Affect may also help to explain why it is not always the people who listen the most, or the longest, to music who are most strongly impacted by it. For example, Kristal was careful to identify herself as not being an “avid” fan, even though she was emphatic about the importance of Ani's music in developing her activist sensibilities:

I'm not avid, in the way that I don’t have every album, you know, I don’t know everything that she’s done, but she’s played a major role in um, in my thought process and in my development as a woman, and certainly, in my development as an activist.

Affect may also play a significant role in the solidarity that fans feel from listening to music. Grossberg (1984) argues that the spirit of a crowd, whether present or
imaginative, can build a feeling of empowerment for fans. It was difficult within the parameters of my research to explore my participants’ experience of affect. I think there are two main reasons for this. First, I found it difficult to phrase questions about affective response, and my participants found it even more difficult to put their previous experiences of affect into words after it had dissipated. Second, the nature of our interviews (with an unfamiliar interviewer and primarily over the telephone) may have made it particularly hard to verbalize such a personal, bodily experience. The details that participants were able to share with me about the affective nature of Ani's performance, and their excitement about the way they feel when they listen to her music, do suggest strongly that affect is an important dimension of listening to conscious music.

The Influence of Ani DiFranco’s Music for Reproductive Rights Activists (Marrow)

I began this research by asking how reproductive rights activists feel that their activist commitments, activities, and sensibilities have been influenced by their relationship with Ani DiFranco’s music. I have found that Ani's music seems to have affected listeners in the three interrelated areas of identity, consciousness, and practice.

Listening to Ani’s music has influenced my participants’ identity, particularly in adolescence, and also in adulthood. They understand themselves as strong, confident women and feminists, and the ways that they express this identity to themselves and others have been shaped by listening to Ani’s music. Ani's music makes my participants feel like a part of an important community, giving them a sense of power with, and helps them to define their roles as feminists. Her poignant, personal lyrics are easy to relate to even when listeners have not shared exactly the same experiences; they remind my
participants of where they have come from, and how they would like to see themselves in the future.

In addition to influencing participants’ identity, Ani DiFranco’s music has contributed to their consciousness. Her music contributes to their conscientization by heightening their awareness of social and political issues, and encouraging them to critically examine the world around them. Participants feel that Ani’s music is particularly effective in this because they perceive Ani as being authentic and trustworthy. They also recognize that the solidarity they feel with other fans, and with Ani, helps them to maintain an interest in learning and a belief that change is possible.

The ten women I interviewed all identify as reproductive rights activists, and felt that listening to Ani's music has influenced their activist practice. Ani's music reminds them of their personal strength, power to, and power from within. It can make them angry, but it encourages them to use their anger about injustice to work towards change. Many of my participants feel that they would be activists without their experience of listening to Ani's music, but they believe that Ani has inspired some of the spirit with which they take up activism. They also think that exposure to Ani's music helps them to see the links between social issues, and types of activism. Although only three of my participants have been able to incorporate significant aspects of reproductive rights activism into their primary occupations, several others expressed a strong ambition to do so. They dedicate a substantial amount of effort training, volunteering, or working part-time as they pursue that ambition.
Intersections in Analysis (Overlap)

The three areas of influence that I have identified – identity, consciousness, and practice – are not mutually exclusive, or easily separable as they are practiced, or even conceptually. They are both cumulative and overlapping in their influence on Ani DiFranco’s listeners. Identity formation and transformation informs activists’ practice and consciousness, and identity and consciousness are important factors in the ways that my participants take up activism. The complex relationships among the three areas are significant in understanding the nuances of activist development and the influence that Ani’s music has on my participants.

Women’s identities are central to their feelings of self-esteem and personal goals, and have an important effect on the ways that they relate to the world around them. My interviews show that women enjoy listening to music that they identify strongly with as women, feminists, activists, and fans. In addition, the women who participated in my study enjoy listening to Ani DiFranco’s music because when they listen to it, they feel that they are “not alone”. This sense of togetherness encourages them to feel secure and confident in their identity and deepening consciousness. Further, it helps them to feel that they can be a part of creating change, which, according to Freire (1970) is a key factor in reaching critical consciousness.

It was evident from my interviews that the type of activist practice that my participants engage in is related to their identity. Their confidence and self-esteem, as well as the ways that they view themselves as having the capacity to engage others in meaningful dialogue, lead them to take on leadership roles in fundraising and event organization, or work in organizations like Planned Parenthood. The feeling of empowerment that participants feel they get from Ani’s music helps them focus on their
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personal strengths and continue their activist work. Additionally, the types of practice that people engage in and the level of their involvement affect participants' understandings of themselves and how they fit into communities of women, feminists, activists, and others.

Several participants feel that their activism has come to be a core part of their identity, and strive to make their activism their careers. Ani seems to have a strong effect on my participants because they see her as an activist herself, not only in her personal life, but also in her performances. Three women incorporate reproductive rights activism into their full-time jobs; another does part-time paid work she considers to be activism, and Kristal and Lilith both expressed a motivation to take on careers related to improving women's access to reproductive rights.

As I have demonstrated, critical consciousness and activist practice are closely related. According to Freire (1970), a necessary component of critical consciousness is moving from a deepening understanding of injustice to the motivation to take action. This, Freire argues, may come from a realization that change to reduce injustice is possible, and further, that an individual can make important contributions to creating that social change. In my own examination of reproductive rights activism, all of my participants saw injustice and developed a degree of critical consciousness before they got involved in activism. The critical consciousness of some participants developed partly through their introduction to Ani DiFranco's music, and all ten of my participants affirmed that their experiences listening to Ani's music had affected their conscientization.
The activist practice of many women is influenced by Ani’s music, because her lyrics highlight the importance of their activist work. It encourages them to begin or continue projects, and reminds them of the struggles that other activists are working to overcome. Ani’s music helps with motivation for reproductive rights activism in contributing to making listeners aware, or reminding them that others are working in solidarity with them. That feeling of solidarity serves as motivation to begin or continue activism with renewed vigour.

Ani’s music and the community surrounding it highlight issues of injustice, presenting listeners with new ideas or reminding listeners of familiar issues that are important to them. Pepper highlighted this when she said:

My understanding and my social awareness becomes deeper because of her lyrics. And, you know, it’s like I can go – I don’t know – to a rally, and come home, and feel as though all of these – there’s a huge range of different dynamics happening in this one space, and kind of absorb that, and I can put on an Ani song and feel as though, ‘okay, it’s going into place, okay, I can kind of settle – this is within me.’ Um, and so it’s giving my activism a place. And addressing the fact that you know what, it’s okay to have a voice and say what you think.

For Pepper, as well as for others, the music simultaneously impacts her consciousness, her identity, and her practice. Participants’ feelings, both of personal resonance with the lyrics and the community surrounding Ani’s music play a role in each aspect of the music’s influence. All of the women I spoke with were influenced in each of these three areas through which I have chosen to construct my analysis, and made strong links among them.

**Positioning Findings within Existing Literature (Harvest)**

A substantial body of literature suggests that listening to some music can shape the roles actors play in social movements (see Finnegan 1989; Frith 1987, 1996; Pratt
1990; Rosenthal 2001; Fischlin and Heble 2003; Sakolsky 2003). I apply this suggestion to the reproductive rights movement, and show that Ani DiFranco's music has been influential in the ways that some activists in the movement develop an interest and stay motivated in reproductive rights activism. My evidence supports the ideas of Pratt (1990) and Sakolsky (2003), by showing that Pratt's hypotheses that music influences its listeners in particular ways and Sakolsky's own experiences have been the experience of several other social movement participants.

The narratives of my participants also show that Frith (1987, 1996b) has made keen observations about popular music that are felt by at least some of Ani DiFranco's fans. In particular, the women I interviewed have feelings about Ani's music (music they like) that are consistent with Frith's (1987) argument that listeners use popular music they like to shape their identities, and to present their evolving ideas of self to themselves and others (see also Frith 1996b, 1996b). Frith (1996b) writes that most listeners claim that the "meaning" of a song is in the lyrics (158-159). He argues that listeners are more likely to take the lyrics seriously if they find that the song resonates with their own experiences (163). My participants feel that the quality of realness in Ani's lyrics and similarity to their own identity is an important part of why they like the music, and why Ani's music in particular has been so important for them. Several participants said that they could understand Ani's emotions, even in situations they had not experienced themselves, and that Ani's music helps them to articulate their own feelings and beliefs (see Frith 1996b: 168). Frith (1996b) argues that "the most significant political effect of a pop song is not on how people vote or organize, but on how they speak ... [it] offer[s] listeners new ways of performing (and thus changing) everyday life" (169). I argue that
this is an accurate description of one of the biggest influences of Ani DiFranco’s music for the reproductive rights activists I interviewed. Further, the shift in articulation of identity they draw from Ani’s music plays a significant role in the ways that they engage in activism and the place they see for themselves in the reproductive rights movement.

My research verifies Rosenthal (2001) and Fischlin (2003), who contend that popular music can have significant impact on social movements. I show that their observations are similar to those I made of my participants. Ani DiFranco’s music “serves the committed” (see Rosenthal 2001), in that women I interviewed who are activists in the reproductive rights movement continue to listen to the music and draw strength from it. They deliberately listen to Ani’s music when they want to “get pumped” for activist activities, or when they are feeling dejected and low and are looking for positive energy and hope. The women I interviewed said that they listen to Ani’s music driving in the car, while cleaning the house, or commuting to work, and even when they do not turn it on looking for a particular response, they find that most of Ani’s music puts them in a positive mood that makes them feel like they can make a difference in the world. Rosenthal (2001) argues that these functions of justice-oriented music for listeners who are already activists are some of the most important influences that music can have on social movements.

Ani’s music gives listeners the feeling of connection to others. Rosenthal (2001) also argues that music has a particular ability to build and maintain a feeling of solidarity in groups, which my participants felt very strongly. As Vrooman (2004) and Frith (1996) observe, my participants feel that Ani’s music gives them that sense of community and solidarity even when they are not in the physical presence of others. According to

My participants' experiences resonate closely with those of Rosenthal's (2001) correspondents. In addition to the strong feelings of community they feel from Ani's music, both groups see the music as validation of their own identities. They feel that listening to the music helps them to create their personal ideology and consciousness, in part because the conscious musician is understood to be an authoritative voice (see Rosenthal 2001: 18). My participants' descriptions of their experience with Ani's music support Rosenthal (2001) in suggesting that music can also be valuable for its ability to educate and mobilize people outside the music, and recruit supporters to take action.

Rosenthal (2001) also cautions that music may negatively affect social movements, if listening to it replaces activities that would make active strides towards achieving the movement's goals. This can be seen to some degree in some of my participants, who told me they feel that listening to music and raising awareness on a small-scale are important parts of their activist work. While they may do these things on a daily basis, and so consider them more prevalent in their lives, the larger actions they participate in less frequently may be more effective in creating the awareness and eventual social change that they are working for. In this sense, listening to Ani's music may be understood as a preparatory activity that helps provide participants with the energy and conviction required to engage in more productive activist activities.

My study builds on the work of Frith (1987, 1996a, 1996b) and Rosenthal (2001) to apply their ideas to a new and very specific context. The participants in this study give insight to the particular ways that Ani DiFranco, as one specific artist, has influenced
their participation in a specific branch of the women’s rights movement. These reproductive rights activists also have particular characteristics that have been less studied. The feminist-oriented characteristics of Ani’s music and the predominantly female audience it attracts make my study different from most other studies of popular music, conscious music, and subculture (see Denisoff 1983, Frith 1987, Middleton 1990, Bennett 2000, Muggleton 2000, Hodkinson 2004). I add to work by McRobbie and Garber (1991[1975]), McClary (1991), Whiteley (1996 & 2000) and Vrooman (2006) that does examine female fans and subculture by centering on activist fans, and through my focus specifically on Ani DiFranco’s listeners.

My work contributes to understanding how music appeals to and resonates with these groups of listeners. I have found that a key feature of Ani DiFranco’s music for her activist listeners is that her lyrics are deeply personal and resonate closely with their identities and range of experiences. The women I interviewed felt that their strong emotional and experiential ties to Ani’s stories made them understand her, even feel that they know her. While Frith (1987) states that a feeling of ownership is common among fans of popular musicians, in the case of Ani DiFranco it seems that this ownership comes both from knowing Ani through the music, and from “knowing” her through themselves and through their shared experiences. It would be useful to see to what extent other conscious music builds on this personal emotional connection, and not only on a shared activist interest. Several women I interviewed find that Ani is one of few artists who is able to resonate so strongly with their emotions and identities. A few have found that Ani is only one of many artists they feel so strongly about, but think that because
they listened to Ani intensely and for a long period of time before they discovered other such artists, Ani has been particularly important for them.

This research develops a new sense of the level of activist fan engagement with Ani DiFranco’s music by focusing on the experiential and narrative dimension of participants’ listening experience. It builds on others’ research by focusing on one artist and one group of activists, and gives a new understanding of the ways that female fans who are members of a female-dominated feminist movement interact with the music of a popular independent female artist.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Lyrics
   Blood in the Boardroom
   Face Up and Sing
   Going Once
   Gratitude
   Hello Birmingham
   I'm No Heroine
   In or Out
   Little Plastic Castle
   Lost Woman Song
   The Million You Never Made
   Napoleon
   The Next Big Thing
   Not So Soft
   Self-Evident
   'Tis of Thee
   Tiptoe
   Subdivision
   Willing To Fight

Appendix 2: Brock University Research Ethics Board Approval

Appendix 3: Informal Letter of Invitation

Appendix 4: Letter of Invitation

Appendix 5: Informed Consent Form

Appendix 6: Interview Guide
Blood in the Boardroom (Puddle Dive, 1993)

Sitting in the boardroom
The I'm-so-bored room
Listening to the suits
Talk about their world
They can make straight lines
Out of almost anything
Except for the line
Of my upper lip when it curls
Dressed in my best greasy skin
And squinty eyes
I'm the only part of summer here
That made it inside
In the air-conditioned building
Decorated with corporate flair
I wonder
Can these boys smell me bleeding
Though my underwear

There's men wearing the blood
Of the women they love
There's white wearing the blood of the brown
But every woman learns to bleed from the moon
And we bleed to renew life
Every time it's cut down
I got my vertebrae all stacked up
As high as they go
I but I still feel myself sliding

Face Up and Sing (Out of Range, 1994)

Some guy tried to rub up against me
In a crowded subway car
Some guy tried to feed me some stupid line
In some stupid bar
I see the same shit everyday
The landscape looks so bleak
I think I'll take the first one of you's home
That does something unique

Some chick says
Thank you for saying all the things I never do
I say
The thanks I get is to take all the shit for you
It's nice that you listen
It'd be nicer if you joined in
As long as you play their game girl
You're never going to win

From the earth that I know
So I excuse myself and leave the room
Say my period came early
But it's not a minute too soon
I go and find the only other woman on the floor
Is the secretary sitting at the desk by the door
I ask her if she's got a tampon I could use
She says
Oh honey, what a hassle for you
Sure I do, you know I do
I say
It ain't no hassle, no, it ain't no mess
Right now it's the only power
That I possess
These businessmen got the money
They got the instruments of death
But I can make life
I can make breath
Sitting in the boardroom
The I'm-so-bored room
Listening to the suits talk about their world
I didn't really have much to say
The whole time I was there
So I just left a big brown bloodstain
On their white chair

Today I just want someone to entertain me
I'm tired of being so fierce
I'm tired of being so friendly
You don't have to be a supermodel
To do the animal thing
You don't have to be a supergenius
To open your face up and sing

Somebody do something
Anything soon
I know I can't be the only
Whatever I am in the room
So why am I so lonely?
Why am I so tired?
I need backup
I need company
I need to be inspired
Appendix 1 (Lyrics)

Going Once (To the Teeth, 1999)

Going once, going twice
Sold to the girl
Who ignored all the advice
Of all the people who knew her better
She just stood there
On the front porch
Waiting for her will
To come and get here

She was packed
She had a suitcase
Full of noble intentions
She had a map
And a straight face
Hell bent on reinvention
And she was ready
For the lonely
She was in it for
It only

Going once, going twice
Down the road less taken
With her diary and her WD40
And her Swiss army knife
And her beer
And there was always
Someone there to say
Why don't you just stay
And hang your hat here

But she was packed
She had a suitcase
Full of bungles and near misses
And she was swinging

Through a jungle
Of last calls and first kisses
And she was learning
About please
And huge humiliities

Then one day she looked around her
And everything up 'til then was showing
And she wondered how did I get here
Without even knowing where I was going?
Now there's no getting out of this
And there is no going back
And it all seems so odd sometimes
And the odds all seem stacked

Going once, going twice
Sold to the girl
Who ignored all the advice
Of all the people who knew her better
She just stood there
On the front porch
Waiting for her will
To come and get here

She was packed
She had a suitcase
Full of noble intentions
She had a map
And a straight face
Hell bent on reinvention
And she was ready
For the lonely
She was in it for
It only

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Gratitude (Not So Soft, 1991)

Thank you
For letting me stay here
Thank you for taking me in
Thank you
For the beer and the food
Thank you
For loaning me bus fare
Thank you for showing me around
That was a very kind thing to do
Thank you
For the use of the clean towel
Thank you for half of your bed
We can sleep here like brother and sister,
You said

But you changed the rules
In an hour or two
And I don't know what you
And your sisters do
But please don't
Please stop
This is not my obligation
What does my body have to do
With my gratitude?

Look at you
Little white lying

For the purpose of justifying
What you're trying to do
I know that you feel my resistance
I know that you heard what I said
Otherwise you wouldn't need the excuse

Thank you
For letting me stay here
Thank you for taking me in
I don't know where else
I would have turned
But I don't come and go
Like a pop song
That you can play incessantly
And then forget when it's gone
You can't write me off
And you don't turn me on

So don't change the rules
In an hour or two
I don't know what you and your
Sisters do
But please don't
Please stop
This is not my obligation
What does my body have to do
With my gratitude?
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Hello Birmingham (To the Teeth, 1999)

Hold me down
I am floating away
Into the overcast skies
Over my home town
On election day

What is it about Birmingham?
What is it about Buffalo?

Did the hate filled want to build bunkers
In your beautiful red earth
They want to build them in our shiny white snow
And now I've drawn closed the curtains
In this little booth
Where the truth has no place to stand
And I am feeling oh so powerless
In this stupid booth
With this useless little lever in my hand
And outside
My city is bracing
For the next killing thing
Standing by the bridge
And praying for the next Doctor Martin Luther King

It was just one shot
Through the kitchen window
Just one or two miles from here
If you fly like a crow

A bullet came to visit a doctor
In his one safe place

A bullet ensuring the right to life
Whizzed past his kid and his wife
And knocked his glasses right off of his face

And the blood poured off the pulpit
Yeah the blood poured down the picket lines
And the hatred was immediate, yeah
And the vengeance was divine

So they went and stuffed god down the barrel of a gun
And after him they stuffed his only son

Hello Birmingham; it's Buffalo
I heard you had some trouble down there again
Just calling to let to know
That somebody understands

I was once escorted
Through the doors
Of a clinic
By a man
In a bulletproof vest
And no bombs
Went off that day
So I am still here to say
Birmingham
I'm wishing you all of my best
Oh Birmingham
I'm wishing you all of my best
Oh Birmingham
I'm wishing you all of my best
On this election day
I'm No Heroine (*Imperfectly*, 1992)

You think I wouldn't have him
Unless I could have him by the balls
You think I just dish it out
You don't think I take it at all
You think I am stronger
You think I walk taller than the rest
You think I'm usually wearing the pants
Just 'cause I rarely wear a dress

Well...

When you look at me
You see my purpose,
See my pride
You think I just saddle up my anger
And ride and ride and ride
You think I stand so firm
You think I sit so high on my trusty steed
Let me tell you
I'm usually face down on the ground
when there's a stampede

I'm no heroine
At least, not last time I checked
I'm too easy to roll over
I'm too easy to wreck
I just write about
what I should have done
I just sing
What I wish I could say
And hope somewhere
Some woman hears my music
And it helps her through her day

'Cause some guy designed
These shoes I use to walk around
Some big man's business turns a profit
Every time I lay my money down
Some guy designed the room I'm Standing in
Another built it with his own tools
Who says I like right angles?
These are not my laws
There are not my rules

I'm no heroine
I still answer to the other half of the race
I don't fool myself
Like I fool you
I don't have the power
We just don't run this place
In or Out (Imperfectly, 1992)

Guess there's something wrong with me
Guess I don't fit in
No one wants to touch it
No one knows where to begin
I've got more than one membership
To more than one club
And I owe my life
To the people that I love

He looks me up and down
Like he knows what time it is
Like he thinks it's his
He says,
Call me, Miss DiFranco,
If there's anything I can do
I say,
It's Mr. DiFranco to you

Some days the line I walk
Turns out to be straight
Other days the line tends to deviate
I've got no criteria for sex or race
I just want to hear your voice
I just want to see your face

She looks me up and down
Like she thinks that I'll mature
Like she's got my number
Like it belongs to her
She says,
Appendix 1 (Lyrics)

Little Plastic Castle (Little Plastic Castle, 1998)

In a coffee shop in a city
Which is every coffee shop
In every city
On a day which is every day
I pick up a magazine
Which is every magazine
And read a story then forgot it right away

They say goldfish have no memory
I guess their lives are much like mine
The little plastic castle
Is a surprise every time
It's hard to say if they are happy
But they don't seem much to mind

From the shape of your shaved head
I recognized your silhouette
As you walked out of the sun and sat down
And the sight of your sleepy smile eclipsed all the other people
As they paused to sneer at the two girls from out of town

And I said "look at you this morning
You are by far the cutest
But be careful getting coffee
I think these people wanna shoot us
Or maybe there's some kind of local competition here
To see who can be the rudest"

People talk about my image
Like I come in two dimensions
Like lipstick is a sign of my declining mind
Like what I happen to be wearing the day
That someone takes my picture
Is my new statement for all of womankind

I wish they could see us now
In leather bras and rubber shorts
Like some ridiculous team uniform
For some ridiculous new sport
Quick someone call the girl police
And file a report

In a coffee shop in a city
Which is every coffee shop
In every city
On a day which is every day
Lost Woman Song (Ani DiFranco, 1990)

-for Lucille Clifton

I opened a bank account
When I was nine years old
I closed it when I was eighteen
I gave them every penny that I'd saved
And they gave my blood
And my urine
A number
Now I'm sitting in this waiting room
Playing with the toys
And I am here to exercise
My freedom of choice

I passed their handheld signs
Went through their picket lines
They gathered when they saw me coming
They shouted when they saw me cross
I said why don't you go home
Just leave me alone
I'm just another woman lost

You are like fish in the water
Who don't know that they are wet
As far as I can tell
The world isn't perfect yet
His bored eyes were obscene
On his denim thighs a magazine
I wish he'd never come here with me
In fact I wish he'd never come near me

I wish his shoulder
Wasn't touching mine
I am growing older
Waiting in this line
Some of life's best lessons
Are learned at the worst times
Under the fierce fluorescent
She offered her hand for me to hold
She offered stability and calm
And I was crushing her palm
Through the pinch pull wincing
My smile unconvincing
On that sterile battlefield that sees
Only casualties
Never heroes
My heart hit absolute zero

Lucille, your voice still sounds in me
Mine was a relatively easy tragedy
Now the profile of our country
Looks a little less hard nosed
But that picket line persisted
And that clinic's since been closed
They keep pounding their fists on reality
Hoping it will break
But I don't think there's a one of them
Leads a life free of mistakes
Appendix 1 (Lyrics)

The Million You Never Made (Not A Pretty Girl, 1995)

The air comes off the ocean
The city smells fishy
The air is full of fish and mystery
Whispering who, what, when
I am warning you I am weightless
And the wind is always shifting
So don't hang anything on me
If you ever want to see it again
I am telling you I'm different than you
Think I am

And you can dangle your carrot
But I ain't gonna reach for it
Cuz I need both my hands
To play my guitar
And life is a sleazy stranger
Who looks vaguely familiar
Flirting with a bimbo named disaster
At the end of the bar
And I am telling you that I am different
Than you are

At night when you're asleep
Self hatred's going to creep in
And try to blame it on the devil
The one who's bed you sleep in
And don't tell me what they did to you
As though you had no choice
Tell me, isn't that your picture?
Isn't that your voice?

If you don't live what you sing about
Your mirror is going to find out
Oh yeah

I'd like to go to all the pretty parties
Where all the pretty people go
And I ain't really all that pretty
But nobody will know
Cuz everybody loves you
When you're a star
And nobody questions
What it takes to go that far
And life is a sleazy stranger
And this is his favorite bar

No I don't prefer obscurity
But I'm an idealistic girl
And I wouldn't work for you
No matter what you paid
And I may not be able
To change the whole fucking world
But I could be the million
That you never made
Oh yeah

I could be the million that you never made
I could be the million that you'll never make
You're looking at the million that you'll never make
Napoleon (Dilate, 1996)

They told you your music could reach millions
The choice was up to you
You told me they always pay for lunch
And they believe in what I do
And I wonder if you'll miss your old friends
Once you've proven what you're worth
And I wonder when you're a big star
Will you miss the earth
And I know you always, always want more
I know you, you'll never be done

Because everyone is a fucking napoleon
Everyone is a fucking napoleon

And the next time that I saw you
You were larger than life
Yeah you came and you conquered
You were doing all right
You had an army of suits behind you
And all you had to be was willing
And I said I still make a pretty good living
You must make a killing, a killing

Appendix 1 (Lyrics)

And I hope that, that you are happy
I hope that at least you are having fun

Oh but everyone is a fucking napoleon
Well everyone is a fucking napoleon

You say that, so that's the way it's gonna be
So that's what this is all about
I think that that's the way it always was
You chose not to notice until now
Oh now that, now that there's a problem
You call me up to confide
And you go on for over an hour
About each one that took you for a ride
And I guess that you dialed my number
Because you thought for sure that I'd agree
I said baby, you know I still love you
But how dare you complain to me

Oh but everyone is a fucking napoleon
Everyone is a fucking napoleon
Everyone is a fucking napoleon

The Next Big Thing (Not So Soft, 1991)

Hello
It's me
I'm returning your call
It's Monday Wednesday Friday
Between noon and three
He says I
Usually just let the phone ring
But I've always got a minute of time
For the next big thing

And I wonder
How can he see where he's going
With those dollar signs in front of his eyes?
I say thank you
For your interest
But my thing is already
Just the right size

And I think
He does not hear what I'm saying
He's just looking at my eight by ten
And wondering about
The part that was left out
Does she have a body
That will really draw them in?

How much do you want
How much are you willing to do
Baby this is no business
For a sweet little girl like you
Can you play the game
Act it out
Frame for frame
Do you know your lines
Let's hear them one more time

But I'd rather pay my dues
To the six people
Sitting at the bar
Than to all those men
In their business suits
Who say I'll take you away from this
If you'll just
Get in the car

Hello, It's me
Yes I'll play for the door
Nothing more
On a Tuesday
He says baby
What is your name
I forgot
He says baby, tell me again
Are you really hot
Not So Soft (Not So Soft, 1991) – Spoken Word Poem

In a forest of stone
Underneath the corporate canopy
Where the sun
Rarely
Filters
Down
The ground
Is not so soft
Not so soft

They build buildings to house people
Making money
Or they build buildings to make money
Off of housing people
It's true
Like a lot of things are true
I am foraging for a phone booth on the forest floor
That is not so soft
I look up
It looks like the buildings are burning
But it's just the sun setting in the window
The solar system calling an end
To another business day
Eternally circling signally
The rhythmic clicking on and off
Of computers
The pulse
Of the American machine
The pulse
That draws death dancing
Out of anonymous side streets
You know
The ones that always get dumped on
And never get plowed
It draws death dancing
Out of little countries
With funny languages
Where the ground is getting harder

And it was
Not
That
Soft
Before

Those who call the shots
Are never in the line of fire
Why
Where there's life for hire
Out there
If a flag of truth were raised
We could watch every liar
Rise to wave it
Here
We learn America like a script
Playwright
Birthright
Same thing
We bring
Ourselves to the role
We're all rehearsing for the presidency
I always wanted to be
Commander in chief
Of my one woman army

But I can envision the mediocrity
Of my finest hour
It's the failed America in me
It's the fear that lives
In a forest of stone
Underneath the corporate canopy
Where the sun
Rarely
Filters
Down
And the ground
Is not so soft
Self Evident (spoken word poem, *So Much Shouting, So Much Laughter*, 2002)

(Inspired by the WTC disaster)

yes,
us people are just poems
we're 90% metaphor
with a leanness of meaning
approaching hyper-distillation
and once upon a time
we were moonshine
rushing down the throat of a giraffe
yes, rushing down the long hallway
despite what the p.a. announcement says
yes, rushing down the long stairs
with the whiskey of eternity
fermented and distilled
to eighteen minutes
burning down our throats
down the hall, down the stairs
in a building so tall
that it will always be there
yes, it's part of a pair
there on the bow of noah's ark
the most prestigious couple
just kickin back parked
against a perfectly blue sky
on a morning beatific
in its indian summer breeze
on the day that america
fell to its knees
after strutting around for a century
without saying thank you
or please

and the shock was subsonic
and the smoke was deafening
between the setup and the punch line
cuz we were all on time for work that day
we all boarded that plane for to fly
and then while the fires were raging
we all climbed up on the windowsill
and then we all held hands
and jumped into the sky

and every borough looked up when it heard the first blast
and then every dumb action movie was
summarily surpassed
and the exodus uptown by foot and motorcar
looked more like war than anything i've seen so far
so far, so far
so fierce and ingenious

a poetic specter so far gone
that every jackass newscaster was struck dumb
and stumbling
over 'oh my god' and 'this is unbelievable' and on
and on
and i'll tell you what, while we're at it
you can keep the pentagon
keep the propaganda
keep each and every tv
that's been trying to convince me
to participate
in some prep school punk's plan to perpetuate
retribution
perpetuate retribution
even as the blue toxic smoke of our lesson in
retribution
is still hanging in the air
and there's ash on our shoes
and there's ash in our hair
and there's a fine slat on every mantle
from hell's kitchen to brooklyn
and the streets are full of stories
sudden twists and near misses
and soon every open bar is crammed to the rafters
with tales of narrowly averted disasters
and the whiskey is flowin
like never before
as all over the country
folks just shake their heads, and pour

so here's a toast to all the folks who live in
Palestine, afghanistan, iraq, el salvador
here's a toast to the folks living on the pine ridge reservation
under the stone cold gaze of mt. rushmore

here's a toast to all those nurses and doctors
who daily provide women with a choice
who stand down a threat the size of Oklahoma city
just to listen to a young woman's voice

here's a toast to all the folks on death row right now
awaiting the executioner's guillotine
who are shackled there with dread and can only escape into their heads
to find peace in the form of a dream
cuz take away our playstations
and we are a third world nation
under the thumb of some blue blood royal son
who stole the oval office and that phony election
I mean
it don't take a weatherman
to look around and see the weather
jeb said he'd deliver florida, folks
and boy did he ever

and we hold these truths to be self evident:
#1 george w. bush is not president
#2 america is not a true democracy
#3 the media is not fooling me
cuz i am a poem heeding hyper-distillation
i've got no room for a lie so verbose
i'm looking out over my whole human family
and I'm raising my glass in a toast

here's to our last drink of fossil fuels
let us vow to get off of this sauce
shoo away the swarms of commuter planes
and find that train ticket we lost
cuz once upon a time the line followed the river
and peeked into all the backyards
and the laundry was waving
the graffiti was teasing us
from brick walls and bridges
we were rolling over ridges
through valleys
under stars
i dream of touring like duke ellington
in my own railroad car
i dream of waiting on the tall blonde wooden benches
in a grand station aglow with grace
and then standing out on the platform
and feeling the air on my face

give back the night its distant whistle
give the darkness back its soul
give the big oil companies the finger finally
and relearn how to rock-n-roll
yes, the lessons are all around us and a change is waiting there
so it's time to pick through the rubble, clean the streets
and clear the air
get our government to pull its big dick out of the sand
of someone else's desert
put it back in its pants
and quit the hypocritical chants of freedom forever

cuz when one lone phone rang

in two thousand and one
at ten after nine
on nine one one
which is the number we all called
when that lone phone rang right off the wall
right off our desk and down the long hall
down the long stairs
in a building so tall
that the whole world turned
just to watch it fall

and while we're at it
remember the first time around?
the bomb?
the ryder truck?
the parking garage?
the princess that didn't even feel the pea?
remember joking around in our apartment on avenue D?
can you imagine how many paper coffee cups
would have to change their design
following a fantastical reversal of the new york skyline?!

it was a joke, of course
it was a joke, at the time
and that was just a few years ago
so let the record show
that the FBI was all over that case
that the plot was obvious and in everybody's face
and scoping that scene, religiously
the CIA
or is it KGB?
committing countless crimes against humanity
with this kind of eventuality
as its excuse
for abuse after expensive abuse
and it didn't have a clue
look, another window to see through
way up here
on the 104th floor
look
another key, another door
10% literal
90% metaphor
3000 some poems disguised as people
on an almost too perfect day
should be more than pawns
in some asshole's passion play
so now it's your job
and it's my job
to make it that way
to make sure they didn't die in vain
sshhhhhh....

baby listen
hear the train?
'Tis of Thee (Up Up Up Up, 1999)

They caught the last poor man on a poor man's vacation
They cuffed him and they confiscated his stuff
And they dragged his black ass down to the station
And said "ok the streets are safe now.
All your pretty white children can come out to see spot run
And they came out of their houses and they looked around
But they didn't see no one.

And my country 'tis of thee
To take swings at each other on talk show TV
Why don't you just go ahead and turn off the sun
'Cause we'll never live long enough to undo everything they've done to you
Undo everything they've done to you

And above 96th street,
They're handing out smallpox blankets
So people don't freeze
The old dogs they got a new trick
It's called criminalize the symptoms
While you spread the disease
I hold on hard to something
Between my teeth when I'm sleeping

And I wake up and my jaw aches
And the earth is full of earthquakes
And my country 'tis of thee
To take shots at each other on prime time TV
Why don't you just go ahead and turn off the sun
'Cause we'll never live long enough to undo everything they've done to you
Undo everything they've done to you

They caught the last poor man
Flying away in a shiny red cape
And they brought him down to the station
And they said "boy you should know better Than to try and escape"
And I ran away with the circus
'Cause there's still some honest work left for bearded ladies
But it's not the same going town to town
Since they put everyone in jail
Except the Cleavers and the Bradys

And my country 'tis of thee
To take swings at each other on talk show TV
Why don't you just go ahead and turn off the sun
'Cause we'll never live long enough to undo everything they've done to you
Undo everything they've done to you

Tiptoe – spoken word poem (Not A Pretty Girl, 1995)

Tiptoeing through the used condoms
Strewn on the piers
Off the west side highway
Sunset behind
The skyline of Jersey
Walking towards the water
With a fetus holding court in my gut
My body hijacked
MY tits swollen and sore
The river has more colors at sunset
Than my sock drawer ever dreamed of
I could wake up screaming sometimes
But I don't

I could step off the end of this pier but
I've got shit to do
And I have an appointment on Tuesday
To shed uninvited blood and tissue
I'll miss you I say
To the river, to the water
To the son or daughter
I thought better of
I could fall in love
With jersey at sunset
But I leave the view to the rats
And tiptoe back
To The Teeth (To the Teeth, 1999)

The sun is setting on the century
And we are armed to the teeth
We're all working together now
To make our lives mercifully brief
And school kids keep trying to teach us
What guns are all about
Confused liberty with weaponry
And watch your kids act it out
And every year now like Christmas
Some boy gets the milk fed suburban blues
Reaches for the available arsenal
And saunters off to make the news
And the women in the middle
Are learning what poor women have always known
That the edge is closer than you think
When the men bring the guns home
Look at where the profits are
That's how you'll find the source
Of the big lie that you and I both know so well
By the time it takes this cultural
Death wish to run it's course
They're gonna to make a pretty penny

And then they're going to hell
He said the chickens all come home to roost
Malcolm forecast the flood
Are we really going to sleep through another century
While the rich profit off our blood
Yeah it may take some doing
To see this undoing through
But in my humble opinion
Here's what I suggest we do
Open fire on Hollywood
Open fire on MTV
Open fire on NBC and CBS and ABC
Open fire on the NRA
And all the lies they told us along the way
Open fire on each weapons manufacturer
While he's giving head to some republican senator
And if I hear one more time
About a fools right to his tools of rage
I'm gonna take all my friends
And I'm going to move to Canada
And we're going to die of old age

Subdivision (Reckoning, 2001)

White people are so scared of black people
They bulldoze out to the country
And put up houses on little loop-dee-loop streets
And while America gets its heart cut right out of its chest
The Berlin wall still runs down main street
Separating east side from west
And nothing is stirring, not even a mouse
In the boarded-up stores and the broken-down houses
So they hang colorful banners off all the street lamps
Just to prove they got no manners
No mercy and no sense

And I'm wondering what it will take
For my city to rise
First we admit our mistakes
Then we open our eyes
The ghosts of old buildings are haunting parking lots
In the city of good neighbors that history forgot

I remember the first time I saw someone
Lying on the cold street
I thought: I can't just walk past here
This can't just be true
But I learned by example
To just keep moving my feet
It's amazing the things that we all learn to do

So we're led by denial like lambs to the slaughter
Serving empires of style and carbonated sugar water
And the old farm road's a four-lane that leads to the mall
And our dreams are all guillotines waiting to fall

I'm wondering what it will take
For my country to rise
First we admit our mistakes
And then we open our eyes
Or nature succumbs to one last dumb decision
And America the beautiful
Is just one big subdivision
Willing to Fight (Puddle Dive, 1993)

The windows of my soul
Are made of one way glass
Don't bother looking into my eyes
If there's something you want to know,
Just ask
I got a dead bolt stroll
Where I'm going is clear
I won't wait for you to wonder
I'll just tell you why I'm here

'Cause I know the biggest crime
Is just to throw up your hands
Say
This has nothing to do with me
I just want to live as comfortably as I can
You got to look outside your eyes
You got to think outside your brain
You got to walk outside your life
To where the neighborhood changes

Tell me who is your boogieman
that's who I will be
You don't have to like me for who I am
But we'll see what you're made of
By what you make of me
I think that it's absurd
That you think I
Am the derelict daughter
I fight fire with words
Words are hotter than flames
Words are wetter than water

I got friends all over this country
I got friends in other countries too
I got friends I haven't met yet
I got friends I never knew
I got lovers whose eyes
I've only seen at a glance
I got strangers for great grandchildren
I got strangers for ancestors

I was a long time coming
I'll be a long time gone
You've got your whole life to do something
And that's not very long
So why don't you give me a call
When you're willing to fight
For what you think is real
For what you think is right
DATE: July 19, 2006

FROM: Linda Rose-Krasnor, Chair Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: David Butz, Geography
     Anna Lise Domanski

FILE: 05-339 DOMANSKI

TITLE: Righteous Sounds and Reproductive Justice: The Effects and the Affect of Ani DiFranco's Music for Reproductive Rights Activists

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above research proposal.

DECISION: Accepted as clarified.

This project has received ethics clearance for the period of July 19, 2006 to June 30, 2007 subject to full REB ratification at the Research Ethics Board's next scheduled meeting. The clearance period may be extended upon request. The study may now proceed.

Please note that the Research Ethics Board (REB) requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and cleared by the REB. During the course of research no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol, recruitment, or consent form may be initiated without prior written clearance from the REB. The Board must provide clearance for any modifications before they can be implemented. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/forms to complete the appropriate form Revision or Modification to an Ongoing Application.

Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety of the participants and the continuation of the protocol.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored. A Final Report is required for all projects upon completion of the project. Researchers with projects lasting more than one year are required to submit a Continuing Review Report annually. The Office of Research Services will contact you when this form Continuing Review/Final Report is required.

Please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence.

LRK/bb

Brenda Brewster, Research Ethics Assistant
Office of Research Ethics, MC D250A
Brock University
Office of Research Services
500 Glenridge Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2S 3A1
phone: (905)688-5550, ext. 3035 fax: (905)688-0748
email: reb@brocku.ca
http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/ethics/humanethics/
Hello,

My name is Anna Lise Domanski. I am a graduate student at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, and I am writing to ask for your assistance in completing my M.A. thesis research for a study titled: Righteous Sounds and Reproductive Justice: The Effects and Affect of Ani DiFranco’s Music for Reproductive Rights Activists. The purpose of this research project is to make connections about participants’ experiences as fans of folk-rock singer Ani DiFranco’s music, their experiences as reproductive rights activists, and their interpretations of how those overlap. I am particularly interested in politicization, and the ways in which Ani DiFranco’s music may encourage her fans to take an increased interest in reproductive rights activism.

I am looking to interview 12 fans of Ani DiFranco’s music who consider themselves to be activists in the area of reproductive rights. Interviews will last 60-90 minutes and can be completed either in person at a location that is convenient for you, or over the telephone if needed. I am attaching a formal “Letter of Invitation” to this email, and a copy of the “Consent Form” which participants will be asked to sign at the beginning of their interviews. These contain more detailed information about the study and what participation will involve. If you choose to participate in this study, all information you share with me will be confidential, and you are in no way obligated to participate. My hope is that you will forward this email to anyone you think might be interested in participating in this study, even if you choose not to participate yourself. This study has been reviewed and received clearance from the Brock University Research Ethics Board (file #05-339).

Please contact me if you are interested in participating in this project. You are also welcome to contact me or my research supervisor, Dr. David Butz, with any questions you have about the project. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Anna Lise Domanski

Attachments:
Letter of Invitation
Consent Form

Anna Lise Domanski, Principle Investigator
MA Candidate in Social Justice and Equity Studies,
Brock University
905.688.5550 x3477
adomanski@brocku.ca

Dr. David Butz, Research Supervisor
Professor, Geography
Brock University
905.688.5550 x3205
dbmarley@brocku.ca
Appendix 4

October 12, 2006.

Title of Study: Righteous Sounds and Reproductive Justice: The Effects and Affect of Ani DiFranco’s Music for Reproductive Rights Activists

Principal Investigator: Anna Lise Domanski, MA Candidate in Social Justice and Equity Studies, Brock University

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. David Butz, Professor, Department of Geography, Brock University

Hello,

My name is Anna Lise Domanski. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project titled: Righteous Sounds and Reproductive Justice: The Effects and Affect of Ani DiFranco’s Music for Reproductive Rights Activists. This research will be published as my MA thesis in Social Justice and Equity Studies.

The purpose of this research project is to make connections about participants’ experiences as fans of folk-rock singer Ani DiFranco’s music, their experiences as reproductive rights activists, and their interpretations of how those overlap. I am particularly interested in politicization, and the ways in which Ani DiFranco’s music may encourage her fans to take an increased interest in reproductive rights activism. This research should provide both scholars and activists with an increased understanding of the ways in which Ani DiFranco’s music, lyrics, performance, and persona have had effects on reproductive rights activists.

Participants who agree to be a part of this study should be fans of Ani DiFranco’s music and consider themselves activists in the area of reproductive rights. The study involves personal interviews with twelve activists who are fans of Ani DiFranco’s music. If you choose to participate, your participation will involve a 60-90 minute interview in a location of your convenience. There is a small chance that I would contact you to request a follow-up interview if any issues need clarification.

If you choose to participate in this study, all information that you share with me will be confidential. You are in no way obliged to participate in this study. You will not be penalized in any way for declining this invitation. A decision not to participate in this study will have no direct negative consequences for you, or for me. I understand that there a number of reasons why someone may not want to, or be able to, participate in a study of this nature, and you can be assured that there are many other potential research participants with whom I can engage in these discussions.

Should you accept this invitation to participate, you will be asked to arrange an appropriate time, date and place during which we can sit down and discuss these issues in the form of a one to two-hour, face-to-face, conversational interview, or a telephone interview. Before the pre-arranged interview begins, I will ask you for your permission to audio tape our conversation. I will also repeat and explain the purpose and objectives of this study to you. I will review, and give you a copy of, the Letter of Invitation and Informed Consent Form that accompany this study. In these documents, you will find a list of the potential risks and benefits associated with participation in this study. At this time, I will also inform you that you may stop the recording of the interview at any time and that you may decline answering any questions posed during the interview process.

The interview will be semi-structured, beginning with questions about your interest in the music of Ani DiFranco and your current activist activities. I will have a list of questions to which I will refer during the interview, but they are not fixed, and the structure will follow the course of conversation. I will be asking about your introduction to DiFranco’s music, your listening habits,
and ways in which you may interact with other fans. I will also be interested in your reproductive rights activist activities and any ways in which you feel DiFranco’s music to have been a politically motivating force.

My research is funded by a Canada Graduate Scholarship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), Award No. 766-2006-0156.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University’s Research Ethics Board (file #05-339). If you have any pertinent questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Brock University Research Ethics Officer (905 688-5550 ext 3035, reb@brocku.ca)

Thank you for taking the time to consider this invitation. Please contact me via email or telephone if you are interested in participating in this study, or if you would like more information.

Thank you

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Appendix 5

Informed Consent

Date: 
Project Title: Righteous Sounds and Reproductive Justice: The Effects and Affect of Ani DiFranco's Music on Reproductive Rights Activists

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You are invited to participate in a research study that explores connections between participants’ experiences as fans of folk-rock singer Ani DiFranco’s music and their experiences as reproductive rights activists, as well as their interpretations of how those overlap. I am particularly interested in politicization, and the ways in which Ani DiFranco’s music may encourage her fans to take an increased interest in reproductive rights activism. This research should provide both scholars and activists with an increased understanding of the ways in which Ani DiFranco’s music, lyrics, performance, and persona have had effects on reproductive rights activists.

WHAT’S INVOLVED
As a participant, you will be asked to participate in a personal interview with the investigator. The interview will be tape recorded with your permission. Participation will take approximately 60-90 minutes of your time. There is a small possibility that I would contact you to request a follow-up interview if any issues need clarification.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS
Possible benefits of participation include an opportunity to share your activist commitments and your music influences, as well as a forum to explore ways in which the two overlap. There also may be a slight emotional risk associated with participation in this study, because of the personal nature of the interview. This risk is not likely to be greater than that in everyday life. If you experience emotional distress at any time during the interview you may terminate the interview or ask me to redirect my line of questioning.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The information you provide will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study; however, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. About a month after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. Data collected during this study will be stored in a locked location and/or in password-protected computer files. Access to this data will be restricted to the principal investigator, Anna Lise Domanski, and the research supervisor, Dr. David Butz. Data will be kept for one year following the completion of the research project after which all files will be destroyed.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS
Results of this study will be published in an MA thesis and may be published in academic journal articles and conference presentations. These publications will be made available to the participants in the study.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE STUDY
This study is funded by a Canada Graduate Scholarship through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), Award No. 766-2006-0156.
CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact the Principal Investigator or the Faculty Supervisor (where applicable) using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (file #05-339). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Invitation Letter and in this consent form. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: ______________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Witness: _____________________________ Date: ___________________________
SEMl-STRUcrured InTerVlNe GuIDER
[Note: This guide is meant to direct conversation. The questions below are examples of those that will be used to initiate and structure conversation under each topic heading. Follow-up questions and additional questions will emerge in the course of the conversation.]

- Review Letter of Invitation and Consent form; sign consent forms
- Get permission to make audio recording, TURN ON TAPE

As we have discussed, the purpose of this research project is to make connections about participants’ experiences as fans of folk-rock singer Ani DiFranco’s music, their experiences as reproductive rights activists, and their interpretations of how those overlap. I am particularly interested in politicization, and the ways in which Ani DiFranco’s music may encourage her fans to take an increased interest in reproductive rights activism.

1. Music of Ani DiFranco

I’d like to start by asking you some questions about your interest in Ani DiFranco and her music. I’m interested in this because it will give me information about your interest in DiFranco’s music, the way you listen to and research music, and the aspects of the music and of the artist that are important to you as a fan. I’m starting with this because it is an easy place to begin the interview, and a topic which I anticipate will be quite comfortable for us to discuss.

- How would you describe Ani DiFranco’s music to someone who hadn’t heard it?
- What do you like about her music?
- What do you think her music tells you about her as a person? (ask for examples)
- What do you think her music gives you?
- I have to come up with some description of my participants, so I might describe you as an “Ani DiFranco fan” in my thesis. Do you think that’s an accurate description? Would you want to expand or qualify that in any way?
- What are your tastes in music? What other music do you like? (get specific examples, not just genres)

Current listening habits & opinions:
- What context do you listen to Ani in?
- How often do you listen to Ani?
  - Describe the places you like to listen to Ani’s music
  - when do you listen? How often is this?
  - how do you like to listen to her? (what is your favourite setting for listening?)
  - how is this different from the other music you listen to?
- What are your favourite Ani albums? Songs?
  - what do you like about them?
  - What do you think while you listen? Do they lead you to think about certain things?
  - How has this changed over time?
  - (Get to talk about more than one song or album)
- What are your sources for Ani music? (studio albums, live albums, dvd, website, official or unofficial concert bootlegs...)
- Have you seen her live recently? will return to live experience – or jump there now?
- Who do you listen to Ani’s music with?
- How does her music make you feel?
  - Does it give you a ‘buzz’?
  - Can you describe that feeling?
  - what aspects of DiFranco’s music give it to you?
Now that I’m starting to get a feel for your current interest in Ani DiFranco, I’d like to know more about how you were introduced to her music:

Introduction to DiFranco’s music:
- When did you first listen to Ani? In what context?
- How were you introduced to her music?
  - What were your initial impressions?
  - How have your impressions changed?
Describe the history of your relationship to her music – phases, stages...
- In what ways does DiFranco’s music relate to your life?
- Have you introduced DiFranco’s music to others? Who, in general terms (friends, partners, relatives, colleagues, co-activists?)

I’m also interested in how you originally and currently have gotten information about Ani DiFranco and her music:

Ani & Media
- What are the different ways you get your information about Ani DiFranco?
  - To what extent do you follow Ani in the media (even if no, mention a few of these: studio albums, live albums, dvds, website, official or unofficial bootlegs, fan sites, magazines, etc.)
  - How is Ani portrayed in the media? – trying to get their ‘theory’ of her portrayal
  - Is the public portrayal of her accurate to your understanding?
  - Do you follow the RBR website? Other fan sites?
- Are you planning to buy her new album (due August 2006)?
  - What have you heard about it?

For many people, live concert experiences are particularly memorable and may be significantly different from experiences listening to a studio album, so I would also like to ask you about live experiences:

Ani in Concert:
- Have you ever seen Ani perform live?
If yes:
- When did you last see Ani live?
  - What is she like as a live performer?
  - Describe your concert experience: (who were you with? What was it like? How did it make you feel? etc…)
  - How was live performance different from listening to albums?
  - How did your impressions of her or her music change/strengthen?
  - What inspired you at the concert? Are there different elements of inspiration at a concert than on studio albums?
  - What do you think about her as a person when you see her in concert?
    - what does her stage presence tell you?
    - How do you respond/relate to:
      Banter in between songs
      Her relations with the audience
      Relations with other musicians on stage
      Special guests (politicians, other musicians)
      Lights? Sounds? Special effects? (video monitors?)
Not tuning her own guitar anymore?]
The mix of people in the crowd?
- What types of people were there?
  • Who did people seem to have come with?
- (how) did you see people interacting?
- did you think there was a sense of solidarity among concertgoers? (try to get a description of the solidarity and what creates it)

Trying to get sense of any comradeship at concerts -- participants’ relationships to and description of the audience...any sense of solidarity or subcultural identity emerging out of concerts... either here or below

If no:
Is there any particular reason why you haven’t seen her in concert?
What have you heard about Ani’s concerts?
What do you think she would be like? (and what gives you those impressions?)
Have you listened to official or unofficial concert recordings? Live dvd?
• How did you feel about Ani’s recent hiatus from touring? About her starting to tour again?

I’m also interested in the relationships that you have had with other fans, either at concerts or in other contexts.

Relationships with Ani, relationships with other fans:
• Describe the connection you feel with Ani’s music
  • How do you explain or account for that connection?
• Do you think this is characteristic of the way others relate to her? When you look around you, do you think others feel a similar connection to Ani or is it different?

• What sorts of people do you think like her music?
• Do you know other Ani fans?
  - How would you describe your relationships with them?
• What commonalities do you feel with other fans?
• If you meet someone who is an Ani fan, do you feel it is something in common that is significant? In what ways?
  ➔ What sort of generalities does it allow you to make about that person?
  ➔ Is liking Ani a code of some kind? Is that code reliable?
  ➔ Are some fans more genuine? How can you tell?

- How would you describe the connection between Ani and her fans?

As you know, we are going to talk about activism later, but while on this topic, do you think Ani deliberately cultivates that (social/political commitment) in her audience?
- asking about intentionality and how she is doing it to elicit this response

Do you think she understands herself as a leader or role model? Do you think she is? In what ways?
- What do you admire about her?
- In what ways does Ani practice what she preaches? (looking for admiration, sense of authenticity, also how much they know about her)

I’m getting a good sense of your interests in Ani DiFranco and her music, as well as your experiences and insights. We will return to some discussion of DiFranco later in the interview.

2. Activism
I am now going to turn the conversation to the topic of activism – first, to your own activist activities in general, and then I will ask you about reproductive rights activism more specifically. I am interested
null
in your thoughts on the importance of activism and its relation to social change, the ways you think of yourself as an activist, and your influences and inspiration for your activist activities.

I'll begin with questions about your activist activities, in any activism context:

Current General Activism
- How would you describe your activist work?
- Any organizational affiliations? (get details)
  o Can you direct me to websites, pamphlets, email lists, etc.?
  o Friendships within organizations?
- Why is it important to you?
- How does it make you feel? (a ‘rush’? – describe it)
- How do you promote your activism to others?
- What are you hoping to active through your activist work?

Now that I have a sense of your overall activist activities, I'd like to move to the more specific area of reproductive rights activism:

“Reproductive Rights” Activism Involvement
- How do you describe reproductive rights? What are the issues?
- Why are these issues important to you?
  o Why should they be important to other people?
- How did you get involved in reproductive rights activism? When?
- What factors lead to your involvement in reproductive rights activism?
- Describe your involvement in reproductive rights activism/issues?
- What particular reproductive rights issues animate/motivate you the most?
- What are your goals as an activist in this area?
- How do you feel about recent US legislation limiting access to contraception, abortion, etc.?
- How do you maintain motivation (especially in light of recent anti-rights legislation trends)?
- What do you think you’ve achieved?
- What are your activist goals, plans?

Can you describe your current ideas about the state of the world? (trying to get at their attitudes and sense of their general political positioning)

General Thoughts on Activism (looking for a sense of their understanding of the relationship between individuals and politics or individuals and social change)
- what do you understand activism to be? What does it mean to be an activist?
- Why is activism important?
- What are the goals of activism?
- Does it make a difference? In what ways?
- What is the state of activism in our society?
- In what ways do you think Canada/United States is a society where activism is particularly important?

3. Ani and Activism

⇒ we have talked about Ani DiFranco and your interest in her music and your activist involvements. The following section is the core of my interest, which is the difference that Ani DiFranco has made to your career as an activist:

- How do you think listening to Ani’s music has influenced your activist sensitivities and activities?
  o let ppl answer
  o ask other questions below as appropriate:
- How did you learn about Ani’s activist affiliations?
- What do you think of the way Ani promotes her personal activism, e.g., on website, at concerts, as well as in lyrics?
- Does any feeling of personal connectedness with the music/lyrics/Ani increase your motivation/interest in reproductive rights activism?
  ➔ Are there particular times that this connection operates more intensely (e.g., after concerts)?
- Is your relationship with her music a resource you can draw on strategically for motivation/inspiration/etc.?
  ➔ how so? How do you use it?
- What ways are there that being a fan of Ani interferes with or diminishes your capacity to be an activist? (does it create problems in any other kind of way?)
  ➔ How do spouses you’ve had react to Ani? To your reproductive rights activism?
- Do you feel you would be as good an activist? as committed an activist? and productive an activist, if you weren’t exposed to Ani’s music?
- Are other activists you hang out with fans of Ani DiFranco? Is she a catalyst for activism?
- In what ways is being an Ani fan important to your sense of self as an activist?
- How has being an activist been important in your relationship to Ani’s music?
- How has your interest in Ani DiFranco influenced your political activism, in terms of:
  - Groups involved with?
  - Activism?
  - People you work with in activist work or socially?
  - The ways you take up activism and the activities you participate in?

Want to know by end:
- age
- location
- Sexuality (maybe not needed?)
- (Activist) Organizational affiliations
- Occupation — activism-employed?
- Past occupations
- Education

One last thing, is that I will need to put a description of you in my thesis, so that my readers have some idea of the background you come from. How would you like to be described?

So, today we have moved from your interest in Ani DiFranco’s music and your activist activities to talk about the influence that the music has on your activist interests. This insight will be important in putting together my project, and I’d like to thank you for your participation. I’d like to draw your attention once more to my contact information on the informed consent form, and remind you that I will be in touch once I’ve transcribed the interview.