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Media Frames and Popular Music's Politics:
How Ancillary Music Media can Contribute to Democratic Politics

Lyndon C. S. Way

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Communication

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ABSTRACT

Media Frames and Popular Music's Politics: How Ancillary Music Media Can Contribute to Democratic Politics

Lyndon Way

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe claim that democratic social movements are most successful at democratizing society when social antagonisms unite by engaging in discursive exchange. Despite the findings of the studies by Tod Gitlin and Gaye Tuchman which illustrate how media frame their raw materials in a manner which maintains the status quo, this thesis proposes that some ancillary music media can promote the discursive exchange proposed by Laclau and Mouffe if music media frame their raw materials (both music and other information) in a manner which builds alliances amongst subordinate groups. Frith, Street, Hebdige, and Grossberg confirm that popular music's democratic potential is largely determined by its process, its context of consumption, and the way audiences use and interpret music's meanings. One of the contexts of the interpretation of music's meanings is ancillary music media such as fanzines. To determine music media's democratic potential, this paper divides music media into three 'secondary encoder' categories extracted from the decoding positions of dominant cultural messages described by Stuart Hall. This thesis analyzes (i) the frames contained in music articles in fanzines and (ii) fanzines as frames of information. The findings illustrate how music media can support existing social injustices or display democratic potential, depending on their method of framing raw materials. These results suggest that frames are the key determinant in music media's democratic potential and possible contribution to the democratizing of society.

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I dedicate this project to my wonderful mother who, if she were alive, would be impressed at its completion but unimpressed with its contents and utility.

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CHAPTER I
Introduction

In this thesis, I examine the ways ancillary media present music commodities. More specifically, I analyze the ways music media construct, use, and present frames for popular music and information which can enhance or disregard the democratic potential of these 'raw materials'. It is argued that music media can present music products in a manner which highlights music's democratic possibilities, which can aid in the democratizing of society; a desire expressed by many of today's social movements. I examine how music media frames of music and information can open up possibilities of political alliances around popular music.

A media frame is the manner in which media present issues, events, music products and any other raw material. It is the result of decisions which omit some facts and highlight others inherent in mass media's raw materials. Frames organize the world for those who report it and for those who consume it. Tod Gitlin (1980) defines media frames as "*persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual*" (page 7).

Television, radio, fanzines, and newspapers take raw materials such as records, tapes, and performances, and frame them using established norms and criteria set by the media institution. The finished product the consumer receives creates frames in both (i) individual stories, articles, or the manner of addressing raw media materials, and (ii) complete media products, such as fanzines, radio stations, or video programs. In other words, (i) fanzines contain frames in their articles; and (ii) fanzines are frames in themselves. The manner in which media frame music products affects the democratic potential of

both the music presentation and the ancillary media, in that the ancillary media can highlight the artist as a star, highlight the product's characteristics which justify it as part of a taste formation, or highlight its political content. These ancillary media and the manner in which they frame music products are well worn sites for the interpretation of music products for music fans, which warrants the study of the frames contained in music media an important consideration when one considers music's potential democratic role.

My study examines the various ways fanzines¹ frame their raw materials. I limit my study to a sample of frames constructed, used, and contained in fanzines during a one year period². There are various ways in which fanzines can frame popular music. I divide the frames employed by fanzines into three categories based on Stuart Hall's "Encoding/decoding". Hall offers three hypothetical positions from which decoding of a discourse may be constructed. The mediation he describes is between a mainstream televisual medium (encoder), and a televisual viewer (decoder). For my study, I transpose the mediations described by Hall, to mediations between popular music (encoder), fanzines (which I call a secondary encoder), and music consumer or 'fan' (decoder). For the purpose of my study, music products are seen as encoded messages. They are aural meaning systems. Fanzines, as secondary encoders, interpret these music products by framing them in a way which recodes and narrows music's ambiguous meanings. Fanzines frame music products in written form which recodes the meanings of music products for music fans. Thus frames are the key moment of recoding music for music fans to decode.

The manner in which fanzines can recode popular music parallels

the three decoder positions described by Hall. These three decoder positions are the "dominant hegemonic" code, the "negotiated" code, and the "oppositional" code. The following is an outline of the three decoder positions transposed into secondary encoder positions in the context of my study. The first is the dominant-hegemonic code which connotes meanings from the encoder "full and straight". In my study, this position is represented by "mainstream" fanzines which recode music products in a manner which supports mainstream popular music and its consumption. I use Rolling Stone to represent mainstream fanzines because it is a very popular and famous fanzine which focuses on mainstream music and its celebrities. The second is negotiated code or position which makes its own rules "at a more restricted, situational level". For my study, "taste formation" fanzines act as secondary encoders which fit this description by selecting their situational points of celebration and resistance to popular music. Reargarde (an 'alternative rock' taste formation fanzine) represents this position in my study since it celebrates anything which is 'alternative' and resists anything which is 'mainstream'. The final position is the oppositional code which detotalizes all messages and retotalizes them in an alternative framework. In my study, "political" fanzines fit this bill because they retotalize the meanings of popular music from a specific political perspective. MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL (a socialist/anarchist fanzine) represents political fanzines.

To determine the frames contained in fanzines, I divide my analysis into two distinct studies. First, I analyze the frames contained in music articles in fanzines in the following manner. I examine the music products which each fanzine features. That is, fanzines can feature the music product of an artist as a star, artist and music

commodities as part of a taste formation, or music commodity as a medium for political ideas. I then examine the characteristics of music products which are highlighted in the framing of music products. That is, I determine whether a fanzine prioritizes the personality and personal life of an artist, lyrics, sounds, style, mastering of technique, or the politics of music as important elements of music products. Finally, I discover what writers assume about readers. I note the assumption of readers' knowledge of music products and their politics. The examination of language (such as the use of "subcodes", categories, and obscenities) used in the fanzine aids in determining writers' assumptions. This first examination indicates to what degree each type of frame of music highlights democratic ideals.

The second area of my study examines fanzines as frames of information. That is, what are the music products and issues (political and others) the fanzine includes and highlights? I examine the various elements of the framing process of each fanzine. Elements of this framing process I consider are: (i) the cover, (ii) the handling of letters, (iii) music articles, (iv) articles whose topics are non-musical and non-political, (v) advertisements, and (vi) articles whose topics are conventional or nonconventional politics. I examine these elements not only in terms of their frequency, length, and detail, but also by the manner in which they frame and handle issues. These decisions by fanzines indicate the relative importance fanzines as frames of information give to each type of article and issue. These decisions by fanzines to include and omit issues in the fanzine's frame of information helps determine the democratic possibilities of the fanzine as a music medium.

At this point I break down the thesis into its chapters and give a brief explanation of each chapter.

Chapter Two: I first examine some theories of progressive social movements in this chapter to establish the terrain on which I base music media frames' potential democratic contribution. This examination reveals how music media's presentation of popular music can best contribute to democratic politics.

Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau (who are used extensively in this section since they offer a current viewpoint on social movements) suggest that people involved in various movements can bring about democratic change when different movements develop a dialogue with each other. This finding suggests that media can play a positive role in regard to social movements if they act as vehicles for dialogue between social movements. Music media, such as fanzines⁴, can play an active role in developing a dialogue and uniting various groups because, as Rosselson claims, music is "the most emotionally intense way - of sharing, of making connections between the personal life and the public world" (Rosselson in Frith, 1988, p.474). Some popular music has democratic potential which can be actualized in music media by framing it in a way which fleshes out this democratic potential. By the democratic potential in music, I mean music can promote awareness and possible action on issues which can bring subordinate groups together for the benefit of all involved groups. By subordinate groups, I mean groups of people whose rights are subordinated for the rights of other groups. The democratic potential of music media lies in both its potential of highlighting music's democratic potential and raising issues from sources outside of music which aids in creating a collective struggle for rights by individuals and individual groups.

For instance, music media can present, one after another, music products with various democratic messages which address various issues. The issues and the music can be discussed in the ancillary medium, creating a forum for the debate and amalgamation of democratic ideas to enhance solidarity and commonality between various movements.

But, Tod Gitlin and Gaye Tuchman claim mass media generally frame their raw materials conservatively. This makes for an incompatible match between mass media and music media's potential democratic function because democratic social movements attempt to change norms, not conserve them. However, a survey of radical and alternative media establishes that some media can provide the needed forum for social movements. This finding confirms that music media can enhance music's democratic potential if music media construct, use, and contain the proper media frame (as I discuss later).

Chapter Three: The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, this chapter examines the elements and mediations which contribute to the democratic messages in popular music products. These elements and mediations are divided into three categories (who records, what is recorded, and what reaches the public) according to Simon Frith's analysis in Sound Effects. This examination, supplemented by John Street's Rebel Rock, describes the dialectics which develop between elements involved in the meaning-making process. These dialectics affect and limit the democratic politics in popular music commodities. It is these politics that fanzines have the potential to include in their framing of music commodities.

The second purpose of this chapter is to illustrate different ways audiences use music. Dick Hebdige claims that subcultures use

music to display their dissatisfaction toward existing society, by including music in their generation of subversive style. These styles threaten dominant hegemony by revealing alternative (and sometimes democratic) meanings to accepted social definitions and exposing forbidden content such as class consciousness. Larry Grossberg introduces another level of analysis by examining the affective qualities of music. Grossberg claims the politics of music (which I define as the references in music through any means, to conduct or actions which are prudent, expedient, and advantageous in the eyes of their exponents) are played out in music related activities. Music and its related activities are an alternative map for dealing with the adult, boring, straight world. He claims that fans divide themselves into 'invisible subcultures' based on fans' definitions of 'their music', as well as each fan's social, historical, economic, and experiential contexts. This analysis introduces the importance of taste and how different fans with various tastes use music in different ways. Fanzines cater to the different uses of music by fans and fanzines. The extent to which fans and fanzines use music for democratic purposes contributes to the democratic information contained in fanzines.

The final purpose of chapter three is to discuss the ways music participants and consumers make sense of the politics in popular music commodities. Simon Frith claims there are two popular music sensibilities (rock and pop) which act as grids through which fans, fanzines, musicians, and everybody else involved in popular music make sense of the politics and meanings in popular music. These sensibilities are not polarities, or opposites, but overlap amongst audiences and individual fans. Although Frith claims the pop sensibility is predominant in Britain today, according to my study of fanzines, both sensibili-

ties are present and the rock sensibility seems to be predominant in North America. It is important to note these sensibilities because it is through the frames contained in fanzines that fans are exposed to these sensibilities which aid in determining political relevance in music.

Chapter Four: In this chapter I present my analysis of the frames contained in popular music media. I divide frames of fanzines into three categories based on Stuart Hall's "Encoding/decoding" and perform the analysis described earlier. I present the results of my analysis in two parts (i) frames contained in music articles in fanzines, and (ii) fanzines as frames of information. It is suggested that the manner in which fanzines frame music in the three sample fanzines offer different democratic potential. Rolling Stone frames music and information in a manner which supports the status quo in terms of both music and politics, allowing minimal democratic potential. Rearguard critically attacks dominant-mainstream culture, but it is limited in regard to democratic potential because it does not offer democratic solutions to the problems it exposes. On the other hand, Rearguard brings together different groups of people or 'invisible subcultures' with various tastes and interests within its taste formation which offers democratic potential. Finally, MAXIMUM ROCK 'N' ROLL frames music and information in a way which both reveals music's democratic messages and acts as a forum for many democratic movements and ideas. However, this fanzine is limited in its democratic potential due to the limited music spectrum it includes in its frame of music and the appeal of its limited political perspective. This analysis illustrates how music media can frame music and informa-

tion in a manner which highlights music's democratic possibilities and potentially acts as a forum for dialogue amongst democratic movements and ideas.

Chapter Five: This chapter summarizes the findings in chapter four by proposing that the way music media frame popular music can benefit the democratic project proposed by Laclau and Mouffe. Music media can contribute to the existing hegemony or they can possess democratic potential by acting as a forum for a dialectic amongst various movements and groups. The various ways in which music media have democratic potential are examined in this chapter. By acting as a forum for debate and amalgamation amongst various democratic movements, music media can contribute to a strong unified social struggle instead of many weak social antagonisms. It is in this way that music and music media can contribute to the democratizing of society, according to Laclau and Mouffe.

Of course there are limits to the democratic project proposed in this thesis. The first revolves around the claim by Frith, Street, and Grossberg, to name a few, that music is used by fans as it fits into their lifestyle. Music fans, especially mainstream and taste formation music fans, do not read about and listen to music for the reinforcement of ideas on democratic movements and ideals. If fanzines changed their formats to blatantly political formats, they would probably lose their readership. However, some fanzines incorporate some democratic ideas into their framing of music and information and still remain relevant to their fans' lifestyles. The other limit with this project is that although the framing of music and information contained in political music media spread political, and sometimes democratic ideals, existing political fanzines are marginal in size.

The reason for this marginality can be that many music fans find the less blatantly political elements of music interpreted from a clearly articulated political perspective, such as the beat or the personality of the stars, as the most important elements of music. Another reason, in the case of MRR, is the limited range of political views and music tastes included in the frame of the fanzine. This marginality will remain so until either political music media change their formats or democratic politics from a particular political perspective come to the forefront of importance for music fans.

The analysis of the democratic contribution of music media is an important area to examine primarily because it opens up new possibilities for the spread of democratic values in a society where ownership of mass communication and the spread of ideology is becoming monopolized by an increasingly small minority. There is enormous democratic potential in some popular music since a lot of popular music carries democratic messages which "give hope and heart and at least a glimmer of a vision of a different sort of society" (Rosselson in Frith, 1988, p.474). Music media can frame music in a way which highlights this democratic potential. An examination of current literature reveals that work has been done on the concept of framing of news and entertainment on television and in newspapers (Gitlin and Tuchman). These studies reveal the importance of frames in articulation processes. The area of music and its politics and democratic potential has also been well researched by Hebdige, Grossberg, Frith, and Street, just to name a few. Music's role in political struggles has also been examined recently by Fernando Reyes Matta (1988, p. 447-460), in a Latin American context. However, I have found no work on the importance of

the frames contained in music media, including fanzines, in the spread of democratic ideals expressed in social movements. Thus, my analysis and its findings can be a new useful tool for those who wish to promote democratic ideals.

Notes

¹ A fanzine is a publication whose contents are music-oriented. I chose fanzines as my sample of music media frames due to the availability of fanzines with different manners of framing music products. As I describe later, some mainstream media tend to frame their raw materials in a conservative manner (that is, coverage favours established power structures and the status quo) while some alternative or radical media frame their raw materials in a way which includes democratic politics. Hall's three decoding positions (which I describe later) describes three possible ways music media can frame its raw materials. There are fanzines available (such as the three that I chose) which depict Hall's three positions. I chose fanzines as my sample of music media frames because of the availability of a diverse sample of fanzines which contain different ways of framing music commodities.

² I examine a one-year (as many as 12 issues) sample of each fanzine taken from the same time period. I believe one year is a large enough sample time to determine the type of frames constructed, used, and contained in each fanzine. The study period is from 1 March 1988 to 28 February 1989. Reargarde only published eight issues in this time period. MRR published twelve, but only eleven are in circulation which resulted in the omission of the March 1988 issue from my study. Rolling Stone publishes bi-weekly. I use a sample of twelve Rolling Stones throughout the year as a representation for this fanzine's frames for this time period. The same time period was chosen so comparisons in regard to music and social issues selected as part of the frame of information in the fanzine could be compared. As it worked out, there was little overlap in music selection which meant a comparison of the frames contained in different music articles of the same music product was impossible. Appendix A contains a detailed account of fanzines used in this thesis.

³ Rolling Stone is an entertainment magazine which grew out of a fanzine from San Francisco. Although it is now debatably a fanzine due to its expanded contents, I use it in my study as a fanzine because it is a good example of a mainstream music-oriented magazine with a dominant-hegemonic secondary encoder position.

⁴ In my study, fanzines are considered mass or alternative media because they are a medium which reaches many readers. Some, such as Reargarde, are alternative media due to their focus on music which is alternative to mainstream music, while others such as Rolling Stone are mainstream mass media.

CHAPTER II

Democratic Social Movements

and

Media's Relations With Them

OR

Small Parts Isolated and Destroyed,

See the Big Boys Play with Their Toys

There is one Thing I'll never do

TRUST YOU!

-Nonesano

An examination of current theories of social antagonisms can begin at any number of starting points. It can be as extensive as an entire thesis, or as scant as a mere passing reference. My particular examination is something of a compromise, leaning in favour of the latter. It is a brief examination which concentrates on the views of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. My examination also deals with alternative viewpoints, reviewed by A. Belden Fields, on the issues explored by Laclau and Mouffe. Alternatives are examined to critique and contextualize Laclau and Mouffe's perspectives on social antagonisms. My examination is brief because the purpose of this chapter demands no more. The purpose is two fold. The first purpose is to gain an understanding of a viewpoint (Laclau and Mouffe) of how antagonisms can effectively bring about democratic change. The second purpose of this chapter (and the intent of this study) is to explore media's relations to democratic movements.

For an understanding of media relations with democratic movements, the second half of the chapter examines the work of Tod Gitlin and Gaye Tuchman. Tuchman in Making News analyzes the practical activities of journalists and their relations with media institutions which contribute to the creation of news frames. Gitlin in The Whole World is Watching examines mainstream media's role in the rise and fall of the American New Left of the sixties. A survey of alternative and radical media² using examples from John Downing's Radical Media and Susan Krieger's Hip Capitalism illustrates these media's relations with social movements. Together, these examinations reveal alternative, radical, and mainstream mass media's potential and normal relations with social movements.

Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau both recently published papers in Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture which deal with how and why antagonisms are formed and the effectiveness of antagonisms. My discussion is based on these and the authors' collaborative effort: Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics.²

In their work, Mouffe and Laclau talk of the 'multiple subject position'. All social relations, such as sex, race, nationality, and vicinity, determine an individual's positionalities or subject positions. Every social agent is the locus of many social positions, thus social positioning cannot be reduced to only one locus. In classical Marxism, the determining social agent is class. Instead of this reductionism, Mouffe affirms that "the existence in each individual of multiple subject positions correspond[s] both to the different social relations in which the individual is inserted and to the discourses that constitute these relations" (Mouffe, 1988, p.90).

In his article, Laclau also diminishes the role of class identity in social struggles. He claims that "the dispersion of social struggles has created new forms of subjectivity which escape any kind of class identification" (Laclau, 1988, p.251). "While the class core remains very deeply buried below an ensemble of layers, it is this class core that we see dissolving today" (Laclau, 1988, p.252).

According to Laclau and Mouffe, social movements have erupted after the second world war in response to the solidification of a social hegemonic formation in western society which centres around production. I consider the hegemonic formation Laclau and Mouffe claim exists after I briefly examine the concept of hegemony. A hegemonic formation is characterized, according to Mouffe, by:

an ensemble of relatively stable social forms, the materialization of a social articulation in which different social relations react reciprocally either to provide each other with mutual conditions of existence, or at least to neutralize the potentially destructive effects of certain social relations on the reproduction of other such relations (Mouffe, 1988, p.90).

Tod Gitlin also sees hegemony as an articulated adhesive amongst different power groups. Like Mouffe, he claims hegemony not only fends off destructive powers, but also legitimizes and strengthens existing powers. In the definition that follows, Gitlin contrasts the concepts of ideology and hegemony and explains their relationships:

Ideology is generally expressed as common sense - those assumptions, procedures, rules of discourse that are taken for granted. Hegemony is the suffusing of the society by ideology that sustains the powerful groups' claims to their power by rendering their preeminence natural, justifiable, and beneficent...Hegemony is a collaboration. Its the terms through which alliances of domination are cemented (Gitlin, 1987, p. 241).

But this cementation, in terms of ideology, hegemony, and alliances, is not permanent. It is dynamic, always changing, and never conclusive. Signifieds are also fluid due to ever-changing ideology and hegemony. Laclau claims that because power, hegemony, and signifieds are fluid, society as a sutured space is an ideal, not a reality. His reasoning is as follows: Laclau claims that no group has the corner on the truth because "there are no signifieds that can be ultimately fixed. In other words, relations never succeed in totally absorbing the identity of every element" (Laclau, 1988, p.254). To make sense out of nonfixity of everything existing in society, discourse is a structure in which meaning is negotiated and constructed. Discourse is not just a mental act in the usual sense, according to Laclau, but "Material things, external objects as such, also participate in discursive structures" (Laclau, 1988, p.254). Due to the

nonfixity of meaning, society does not make sense. Laclau explains:

Society as a sutured space, as the underlying mechanism that gives reasons for or explains its own partial processes, does not exist, because if it did, meaning would be fixed in a variety of ways. Society is an ultimate impossibility, an impossible object; and it exists only as the attempt to constitute that impossible object of order (Laclau, 1988, p.254).

Society as a fixed intelligent object does not exist. Instead, according to Laclau, hegemony makes sense out of this lack of society and fixity. The concept of hegemony is preferred over the concept of society because hegemonic relations depend upon the fact that the meaning of each element of a social system is not definitely fixed. If meanings were fixed, it would be impossible to rearticulate elements in different ways unless rearticulation was thought under such categories as false consciousness (Laclau, 1988, p.254). The concept of hegemony instead of society takes in to account the nonfixity of meaning and the unequal privileging of groups' claims to truth.

The concept of hegemony also takes struggles into account. Laclau claims that because no meaning is ultimately conquered and mastered, there is space for hegemonic struggle. "Antagonism is the limit of the social, the witness of the ultimate possibility of society, the moment at which the sense of precariousness reaches its highest level..." (Laclau, 1988, p.256).

I now wish to examine the hegemonic formation Mouffe claims exists today which is the hegemonic formation democratic social movements are responding against. Subordination³ becomes an antagonism under conditions characteristic of today's hegemonic formation. Mouffe identifies three of these characteristics. The first is the semi-automatic assembly line which had to link productivity with

wages to ensure worker cooperation and support for the new way of life produced by capitalism. The logic of accumulation of wealth was extended to all social activities, which became subordinated to the logic of production for profit. Individuals are submitted to the domination of capital through the sale of labour power and social relations. For instance, culture, leisure, death and sex are new areas for profit. Western society has become a big marketplace in which all the products of human labour have become commodity. Need satisfaction has become commodity. Mouffe claims: "Many of the new social movements are expressions of resistances against the commodification of social life and the new forms of subordination that it has created" (Mouffe, 1988, p.93).

The second aspect characteristic of the modern hegemonic formation is the Keynesian welfare state. Increased state intervention (which is now in decline) in all aspects of social life, such as health, transportation, housing and education, is characteristic of the Keynesian welfare state. With this increased state participation in peoples' lives comes an increase in bureaucratization. According to Mouffe, bureaucratization is the origin of new forms of subordination and resistance (Mouffe, 1988, p.93).

The final characteristic of today's hegemonic formation identified by Mouffe is the growing uniformity of social life. Mouffe blames this uniformity on the mass culture generally imposed by mass media. Groups struggle against this uniformity by claiming to be different through the consumption of 'alternative' mass produced commodities. They express their choice through going against what is considered the norm. According to Mouffe: "This imposition of a homogenized way of life [the kind promoted by some mass media] of a

uniform cultural pattern, is being challenged by different groups that reaffirm their right to their difference, their specificity, be it through the exaltation of their regional identity or their specificity in the realms of fashion, music, or language" (Mouffe, 1988, p.93). Some fanzines, such as Reargarde and MRR frame music which is an alternative to mainstream music. This selection of music products as part of the frame of these fanzines is an expression of choice and difference to mainstream music. The commonality of an expression of difference from mass culture has democratic potential as I discuss later.

The question which I wish to answer now is how relations of subordination become manifested in struggles. To answer this question I return to Mouffe's claim that social movements are a response to today's hegemonic formation. Mouffe asserts that all social relations can become the locus of antagonisms insofar as they are constructed as relations of subordination. Subordination does not automatically mean there is struggle. Social movements are erupting in the context of the dissolution of all social relations which were based on hierarchy. The dissolution process is linked to capitalism because capitalism destroys social relations and replaces them with commodity relations (Mouffe, 1988, p.91).

Before capitalism, subordinate social relations were not antagonisms because social relations were located in a hierarchical society which accepted inequalities as natural. Mouffe claims this vision of the world (a theological-political-cosmological vision) was one in which "people were born into a specific place in a structured and hierarchical society for which the idea of equality did not exist"

(Mouffe, 1988, p.95). This theological-political logic was one in which the social had its foundation in Divine will. Laclau and Mouffe point out: "For as long as such a holistic mode of institution of the social predominated, politics could not be more than the repetition of hierarchical relations which reproduced the same kind of subordinated subject" (1985, p.155).

The change in this world-view was symbolized by the post-French Revolution's Declaration of the rights of man (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p.155). The democratic revolutions of the nineteenth century asserted that "all men are equal". Mouffe claims that "As soon as the principle of equality is admitted in one domain,...the eventual questioning of all possible forms of inequality is an ineluctable consequence" (Mouffe, 1988, p.94).

The questioning of inequalities is not possible under a single divine discourse. Laclau and Mouffe claim antagonisms emerge when a collective subject is constructed in one specific way in an existing discourse and then finds its subjectivity negated by other discourses or practices. This negation can happen in two ways. The first is by having certain rights granted in one instance that are denied by other discourses or practices. For example, an environmentalist can be granted the right to clean air by a government statement, and then the following week that right is stripped by a corporation who claims jobs are at stake if the corporation has to clean up. At that point, there is a negation of subjectivity or identification which can be the basis of an antagonism. The second form in which antagonisms emerge is when a subject is constructed by different discourses as both subordinate and equal at the same time. Blacks and women experienced this contradiction of discourses when they were told that "all men are equal" yet

the church and other discourses told them otherwise. A contradiction of interpellation occurs as in the first instance but unlike the first, the "subjectivity-in subordination" is negated, which opens the possibility for its deconstruction and challenging (Mouffe, 1988, p.95).

This point indicates a strong link between discourse and antagonisms. In fact, Laclau and Mouffe claim that a condition of multiple positionality is necessary before a relation of subordination can be undermined into a relation of antagonism. For instance, women before the seventeenth century were subordinated by fixed discourses on their societal position by the church, family, law, etc. But with the democratic revolutions and their accompanying discourses which contradicted these positions, a contradiction in positionality occurred. It is for this reason that Laclau and Mouffe claim: "Our thesis is that it is only from the moment when the democratic discourse becomes available to articulate the different forms of resistance to subordination that the conditions will exist to make possible the struggle against different types of inequality" (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p.154).

I have made reference to the concept of democracy several times throughout my discussion of antagonisms without clearly stating its role. Laclau and Mouffe explain this relation very clearly. They claim that antagonisms are linked to the concept of democracy. Democracy, exemplified by the French revolution, finds its legitimacy with no other group but the people. One of the major elements of democracy is that inequality, in its many forms, is illegitimate. This illegitimacy transforms inequalities into forces of oppression; that is,

- sites of antagonisms. Laclau and Mouffe claim: "Here lay the profound subversive power of democratic discourse, which allow[s] the spread of equality and liberty into increasingly wider domains and therefore act[s] as a fermenting agent upon the different forms of struggle against subordination " (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p.155).

Both movements and democracy are subversive to power because their goal is to decentralize decision-making power and spread it to as many groups as possible. Mouffe claims that new social movements are widening the fields in which democracy is being questioned:

Democratic discourse extends its field of influence from a starting point, the equality of citizens in a political democracy, to socialism, which extends equality to the level of the economy and then into other social relations, such as sexual racial, generational, and regional. Democratic discourse questions all forms of inequality and subordination... Democracy is our most subversive idea because it interrupts all existing discourses and practices of subordination (Mouffe, 1988, p.96).

I now examine Laclau and Mouffe's position on how democratic movements can effectively democratize life. Firstly, a distinction should be made between democratic antagonisms and democratic struggles. Democratic antagonisms refer to resistance to subordination and inequality. Democratic struggles are directed toward a wide democratization of social life (Mouffe, 1988, p.96). This previous point of Mouffe suggests that antagonisms are limited in what they can accomplish. The shortcomings of democratic antagonisms are that they can be articulated into different kinds of discourses. This shortcoming can be avoided if antagonisms are articulated together. Mouffe claims that "Only if the struggle of the unemployed is articulated with the struggle of blacks, of women, of all the oppressed, can we speak of a democratic struggle" (Mouffe, 1988, p.96).

Through examples of the American and British Right, Mouffe illustrates how antagonisms can be articulated into nonprogressive discourses. A movement should not see itself as the new privileged revolutionary subject who can make effective democratic change by itself, but recognize the complexity of hegemony. Mouffe claims "if every antagonism is necessarily specific and limited, and there is no single source for all social antagonisms, then the transition to socialism will come about only through political construction articulating all the struggles against different forms of inequality" (Mouffe, 1988, p.98).

Laclau and Mouffe warn against movements based solely on negativity. If a movement's strategy is one which is purely destructive to the existing order without being linked to any viable project for the reconstruction of specific areas of society, the strategy is condemned to marginality. An alternative to the two kinds of marginal strategies just examined, is a strategy that strikes a balance or compromise between the maximum advance for the democratization of a broad range of spheres, and the capacity for the hegemonic direction and reconstruction of these spheres on the part of subordinate groups (Laclau and Mouffe, 1988, p.189).

This equilibrium Laclau and Mouffe propose involves a dialogue and networking between groups. An articulation between groups is possible due to the commonality Mouffe claims exists between all antagonisms. Mouffe claims that struggles of workers and the new social movements "are efforts to obtain new rights or to defend endangered ones. Their common element is thus a fundamental one" (Mouffe, 1988, p.96). It is this commonality which can be promoted to prevent antagonisms from being articulated into nondemocratic discourses.

For a democratic struggle to succeed, it must create what Gramsci called an 'expansive hegemony'. Mouffe describes this as "a chain of equivalences between all the democratic demands to produce the collective will of all those people struggling against subordination. It must create an 'organic ideology' that articulates all those movements together" (Mouffe, 1988, p.99). This ideology, or commonality does not mean the flattening out of difference. On the contrary, organic ideology means respecting the specificity and autonomy of struggles and establishing a plurality of subjects. Highlighting commonality is successful in creating a united struggle only if there is a sense of solidarity. Solidarity is achieved when the rights that certain subjects aim for do not conflict with the rights of other subjects. Mouffe proposes the most democratic program is one which sets up a system of equivalences between the greatest number of democratic demands and thus strives to reduce all inequalities (Mouffe, 1988, p.100).

The final point to examine in the work of Laclau and Mouffe is their criteria for judging a progressive versus nonprogressive movement. Mouffe says it is the link to other struggles that makes a movement progressive. The basis of this logic is mathematical. Mouffe proposes that:

The longer the chain of equivalences set up between the defense of the rights of one group and those of other groups, the deeper will be the democratization process and the more difficult it will be to neutralize certain struggles or make them serve the ends of the Right⁴ (Mouffe, 1988, p.100).

From the review of the writings of Laclau and Mouffe I note three important trends. The first is that social movements are offensive and defensive. Firstly, social movements can be defensive by defend-

ing existing rights which power groups attempt to take away. An example of this situation is when workers fight to keep their cost of living allowance, or when environmentalists fight for clean air in the wake of the construction of a garbage incinerator in their neighbourhood. Movements can also be offensive by demanding rights which they previously have not enjoyed. Examples of such movements occur in feminists' demands for social and labour equality or anarchists' demands for decision-making power from power groups. The second point I note is that movements are most effective at democratizing society if there is a dialogue between groups so they can work together. The third related point is the criteria used to determine a group's progressiveness. Progressiveness is determined by a group's ability to link its interests to the interests of other groups.

Before I accept these claims as they are, I review A. Belden Fields' review of four authors with different perspectives on these claims. This review of Fields acts as a critique of the issues raised by Laclau and Mouffe and clears the way for determining media's relations with social movements.

The first position Fields critiques is that taken by Mouffe in "Hegemony and New Political Subjects: Toward a New Concept of Democracy". He claims that Mouffe privileges discourse's role in antagonisms, yet she does not define discourse. When questioned on her definition of discourse at the conference where she presented the paper, Mouffe claimed: "I understand not only speech and writing, but also a series of social practices, so discourse is not just a question of ideas" (Mouffe in Fields, 1988, p.149).

Fields does not think this is a clear enough definition, so

he takes the liberty of assigning her two possible definitions. These are based on Ernesto Laclau's definitions⁵ because he is Mouffe's frequent collaborator. Fields claims that Laclau's first definition is that all social practices are discursive. The second definition disclaims this by stating that there are some non-discursive conditions from which antagonisms emerge. This second definition indicates antagonisms emerge from both discursive and non-discursive realms.

Both of these definitions have problems. Fields claims that to say that everything is discursive is nonsensical and leads to theorization beyond the realm of reality. At the same time, the acknowledgement of a non-discursive realm means the non-discursive realm needs specification in terms of systemic effects and concrete human experiences, interests and relationships. In other words, once Laclau acknowledges that there is a non-discursive realm for antagonisms, Fields feels discourse should no longer be prioritized in Laclau and Mouffe's writings.

The next issue Fields takes with Mouffe is its idealism. He questions Mouffe's claim that new movements 'ineluctably' march toward equality and democracy in all aspects of life once the concept of democracy is accepted into one aspect of life. Fields claims: "The language used in the first three-quarters of Mouffe's essay lulls us into an idealistic, deterministic reading that is quite at odds with the fertility of the concluding section" (Fields, 1988, p.151).

The three issues Fields likes most about Mouffe's essay are what is most important to my project. These are: (i) the potential offensiveness and defensiveness of movements, (ii) the call for discourse between groups as a means of effectively promoting democracy, and (iii) Mouffe's criteria for determining whether a movement is progres-

sive. I now review Fields' examination of these points as seen by Michel Foucault, Jurgen Habermas and Paul Patton. Fields critiques these authors' positions and adds strength to Laclau and Mouffe's positions.

The first examination by Fields that I review is the position of Habermas which states that movements can only be defensive. Habermas offers two concepts in order to understand social movement's defensive nature. These two concepts are (i) system and (ii) life-world. Systems contain mechanisms that enable them to avoid or overcome crises which occur when "members of a society experience structural alterations as critical for continued existence and feel their social identity threatened" (Habermas in Fields, 1988, p.146). Life-world thematizes the normative structures (values and intuitions) of a society. Life-world "permits a communal critique of system requisites by rational-moral beings who establish criteria through linguistic communication" (Habermas in Fields, 1988, p.146). People establish moral truths through language and limit the claims of system and cognitive/technical knowledge on the basis of language.

Habermas claims new conflicts, which "entails problems of quality of life, equality, individual self-realization and human rights" (Habermas in Fields, 1988, p.146), arise at the seam between system and life-world. These are spaces where economic and political-administrative systems of action do not penetrate and where movements live and engage in rational communication. Movements, with the exception of the feminist movement because it struggles against patriarchal oppression and struggles for the realization of equality (1988, p.146), are defensive. They are resistances and retreats which fend

off the exterior system. They do not seek to conquer new territory.

Fields criticizes Habermas' view that movements are defensive. Fields claims that there are no spaces free from the larger systems of domination and subordination as Habermas describes. There can be no spaces where the dominant system does not penetrate and is fended off. Movements are not completely defensive, according to Fields, since "all will be forced to confront the dominant systems...and each emancipatory movement will be just as defensive/ offensive as any other" (Fields, 1988, p.148).

Fields' next reviews and critiques I examine are the positions of Foucault and Patton. Although their positions differ from one another, both share the view that movements should be isolated from each other. Ideas of Foucault also challenge Laclau and Mouffe's criteria of progressiveness. Once again, the positions of Foucault and Patton are critically examined by Fields, adding strength to Laclau and Mouffe's positions.

Fields claims Foucault's position questions whether there should be networking and discourse between antagonisms. Foucault also differs from Laclau and Mouffe in regard to criteria for a movement's progressiveness. In an attempt to challenge Althusser's structuralism, Foucault criticizes all forms of political action which are not spontaneous. Fields claims that in "Revolutionary Action: 'Until Now'", Foucault privileges spontaneity because he sees a problem with pre-planned-utopian-revolutionary theories' use of techniques of present systems to bring about social change. Using the techniques of present systems is a problem because they carry the inherent inequalities of the present system. That is, by using the same forms, movements resurrect and/or maintain old ways. There should be no master

strategy or plan to avoid any possible carry over of the present system's inadequacies.

Foucault claims power is something that is diffused throughout society. Power is decentralized and circulates. Discourse, according to Foucault in The Archeology of Knowledge, is "the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation" (Foucault in Fields, 1988, p.143). It is through discourse that disciplines articulate their knowledge, and in "Prison Talks" Foucault claims there is an integral relationship between power and knowledge. Despite the link between discourse, knowledge, and power, Foucault claims that not all domains are discursive. However, Fields claims the relationship between the discursive and the non-discursive is not satisfactorily examined by Foucault.

On the one hand, according to Foucault in "Prison Talk", power is manipulated at the extremities by anonymous and changing agents. Power has grown up piecemeal from the bottom up, almost randomly and without any strategy. Local conditions and particular needs shaped power prior to any class strategy. On the other hand, while holding this 'piecemeal' conception of power, Foucault in "Intellectuals in Power", admits that these decentralized powers with their own discourses and techniques serve capitalism. Like dominant powers, Foucault proposes that movements should engage the system at all fronts, like universities, prisons, etc., with no overall-pre-planned theory. This process eliminates the threat of 'totalizing'. 'Totalizing'-utopian-pre-planned theories are a threat because they become distorted through action. Foucault's strategy avoids totalizing by allowing only regional theories and a piecemeal conception of

power.

Fields does not like Foucault's strategy. Fields claims there is a problem in Foucault's denying antagonisms a general strategy for fear of 'totalizing' while admitting present power systems all serve capitalism (Fields, 1988, p.144). By only allowing regional strategies and theories, Fields fears movements cannot rise above local sites of struggle.

Fields also does not approve of Foucault's criteria for the progressiveness of social movements. Foucault's only criterion is that a movement is progressive if it does not replicate the existing system. Fields claims this position has two problems. The first is that Foucault's claim that a group is progressive simply because it does not replicate existing forms means many groups which are not democratic are considered progressive. There can be non-progressive/non-democratic groups which do not replicate existing forms. An example of this kind of group is La Gauche Proletarienne. This group, according to Fields, struggled beside any group that was willing to take on the state in a violent manner. The problem was they aided struggles such as one in which small shopkeepers protested violently against taxes. The revolt was in no way progressive, but a resurrection of right-wing populism. Despite this blatant non-progressiveness, Foucault's logic deems this action progressive (Fields, 1988, p.145). The second problem with Foucault's criteria is that by saying that any group which does not replicate existing forms is progressive, Foucault does not explain the forms of a system which are preferred. Foucault claims the ideal form of any system is yet to be discovered. Fields claims this position leaves no room for general theories for fear of 'totalizing' and does not explain how to struggle, even at the

peripheries.

The final position Fields examines which I review is that of Patton. This review also strengthens Laclau and Mouffe's positions that movements are most effective at democratizing life if they link up with other movements. Laclau and Mouffe's claim that movements are offensive and defensive is also challenged by the ideas of Patton. Patton, like Habermas, claims that movements are defensive. The state is totalizing, practicing a kind of internal imperialism to 'capture' the new social movements by destroying what makes them different.

Patton contends that the most effective way to fend off the state's imperialism is for social movements to reflect their difference and be totally separated and isolated from one another. They should be separated because coalitions result in a complex of power which threatens the autonomy of each group. Oppression can be altered piecemeal at the local level.

Fields argues against this piecemeal outlook by claiming that the best way for social movements to function is by transcending their boundaries. This enables groups to come to an understanding of the systemic impediments to their projects and reach out to other groups to engage in mutual expressions of solidarity and strategic networking. Fields claims "It [a movement] can, indeed, be engaged in a project for the creation of a more humane world reflecting 'difference'. But it cannot do this unless it transcends its boundaries..." (Fields, 1988, p.152).

Fields does not discount local struggle altogether even though he claims the local should not be prioritized. This position mirrors that of Laclau and Mouffe. Fields acknowledges that local-grass-roots

work is important, as long as it is part of a national or international undertaking. He questions whether fragmentation of the oppressed is helpful to any particular group except those in power. Fields points out the same shortcomings Laclau and Mouffe acknowledge in regard to purely local movements: "Totally disconnected efforts are much more likely to be either frustrated or assimilated by the dominant structures than are efforts that are part of a larger social movement" (Fields, 1988, p.154). Movements need to be connected to each other to work most effectively.

The examination of literature presented thus far highlights positions on movements held by Laclau, Mouffe and Fields. There are three positions common to the writings of these authors which I wish to reiterate. The first position is that movements are offensive and defensive. This position accounts for the numerous stances, demands and possibilities of social groups. Movements are not seen as merely standing alone holding off the evil forces of the existing system, but they are also recognized as fighters for new democratic rights. The second and third related positions are that movements' progressiveness are judged by their links with other groups and that groups' effectiveness are determined by these links. Fields' critiques of alternative positions strengthens these positions.

If I accept these positions, as I do, a dialogue between groups is needed to achieve the links necessary for groups to work together. Dialogue between groups is needed which accentuates their commonality of interests in democratizing society in as many spheres as possible. Judging by the three main points on social movements by Laclau and Mouffe, criteria for the democratic potential of media, and fanzines more specifically, can be set. Firstly, fanzines have democratic

potential when fanzines expose ideas of both defensive and offensive movements in music and other articles. Fanzines can expose ideas which both defend existing rights and demand new ones. The second and third criteria for a fanzine with democratic potential is that fanzines can be considered progressive and effective if they act as a space for many different groups with many ideas to express their views. This space has the potential to articulate alliances amongst various groups of oppressed who can form a democratic struggle (not many dispersed antagonisms). Democratic struggles are more effective at changing non-democratic elements of existing hegemony. To determine whether or not media achieve this democratic potential, I examine the relationship between the use of media frames in general, hegemony, and social movements. The examination of how media construct and use frames to make sense out of, and present social movements indicates how and why media work in a manner which promotes democratic movements' ideas or strengthens existing power structures.

In this section, I rely heavily on Gaye Tuchman's Making News and Tod Gitlin's The Whole World is Watching and "Television Screens: Hegemony in Transition". Examples of alternative and radical media's relations with democratic ideals are taken from John Downing's Radical Media and Susan Krieger's Hip Capitalism. The point of this section is not to discuss in great detail the factors which determine media frames (even though these are discussed), but the results of these determining factors. The question which is addressed is how and why media frame events, issues, and all its other 'raw materials' in a way which contributes, positively or negatively, to democratic ideals expressed in social movements. The finished media products (such as

radio programs or fanzines) contain events, issues, music products, and other raw media materials which have been framed in a way which highlights and omits various aspects inherent in each raw material. The frames contained in media products are examined to determine media's contribution to democratic ideas expressed in social movements.

People and media frame reality in order to negotiate, manage and comprehend it. Frames organize the world for those who make sense of and report it, and for those who listen/watch and consume it. Media workers use and construct frames to make sense out of media's raw materials. Media products (such as fanzines) contain frames which selectively focus events, issues, and other raw materials into commodities readers consume. Frames organize the world in a largely unspoken and unacknowledged manner. Gitlin offers this definition of media frames: "*Media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual*" (Gitlin, 1980, p.7).

Frames are constructed and used for practical reasons. They enable media workers to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely. They enable media workers to distinguish what is relevant information, assign information to cognitive categories, and package it for efficient relay to the public. Thus, according to Gitlin and Tuchman, media frames are unavoidable for organizational reasons alone.

But what effects do standardized mass media frames have on the spread of democratic ideas? Gitlin claims that large mass media are a significant social force in the forming and delimiting of ideology.

He claims that:

those who rule the dominant institutions secure their power in large measure directly and indirectly, by impressing their definitions of the situation upon those they rule and, if not usurping the whole of ideological space, still significantly limiting what is thought throughout the society (Gitlin, 1980, p.10).

This does not mean that ruling ideologies are blatantly written into the media since those in power usually do not directly speak into a microphone or hold a pen. They may own the media, but they do not necessarily physically operate them. The relationship between elites and media operators is explained by Gitlin through the concept of hegemony. Gitlin claims that hegemony operates through a complex web of social activities and institutional procedures. Hegemonic ideology meshes with common sense in an attempt to become that common sense. Enduring ideology finds its way into the media through media worker routines which contribute to the construction and use of media frames. Using the example of journalists' routines, Gitlin explains this procedure:

These routines are structured in the way journalists are socialized from childhood, and then trained, recruited, assigned, edited, rewarded and promoted on the job; they decisively shape the ways in which news is defined, events are considered newsworthy, and 'objectivity' is secured (Gitlin, 1980, p.12)

Dominant social groups (corporate and political) secure the services of cultural practitioners to articulate their ideals and understandings. Despite elites' wishes, their ideologies are not always accepted outright:

In order to make their livings, these practitioners [organic intellectuals -ie., journalists, writers, producers] organize their production to be consonant with the values and projects of the elites: yet in crucial respects they may depart from the direct programs of elites who hire, regulate, and finance them" (Gitlin, 1987, p.241).

Media practitioners and elites differ because media workers have their own values, traditions and practices which may differ from the elites. Another reason lies in the existence of the market place. Market constraints exist which keep hegemonic ideology flexible. Gitlin claims popular culture "sluggishly and reluctantly" follows public mood and taste. He claims "They all take account of hegemonic ideology in the ways they package their contents" (Gitlin, 1987, p.243). For this reason, elite ideologies and values are not represented in media in a blatant and uncontested manner since they would probably fail to attract media workers and fail to entertain the mass audience. "Ideological domination, in other words, requires an alliance between economic and political groups on the one hand, and cultural elites on the other - alliances whose terms must, in effect, be negotiated and, as social conditions and elite dispositions shift, renegotiated" (Gitlin, 1987, p.241).

Both news and entertainment frame current and subversive ideology in similar ways. As with news media, entertainment media selectively absorb elements of discrepant ideology into their productions, according to Gitlin, to keep the hegemonic ideology up to date, encompassing, and remaining sufficiently pluralistic to attract different audiences. Both news and entertainment programming take note of alternatives and frame them so that some alternative features get assimilated into the dominant ideological system while the most subversive are driven to ideological margins (Gitlin, 1987, p.244). I do

not wish to analyze entertainment productions' framing of political issues at present (Chapter 3 discusses music's politics), instead I place my focus on media generally and how they frame their raw media materials in relation to democratic politics.

To analyze how different media frame their raw materials in relation to democratic ideals and the project put forward by Laclau and Mouffe, I examine each element which constructs media frames according to Tuchman and Gitlin. Through examples in Downing and Krieger, I determine whether small media frame their raw materials in the same manner. Although much of this analysis concentrates on news events and issues, the same principles apply to other raw media materials. In my analysis, music products, such as bands, groups, songs, and videos, are the raw materials that music media frame.

One factor which determines the construction of a media frame is the spatial constraint. This constraint produces a news net anchored in legitimate institutions and is characterized by 'the beat'. The beat helps "solve the problem of where to find news of interest to people and how to allocate its [the media institution's] scarce resources" (Tuchman, 1978, p.19). The beat revolving around centralized power organizations, along with press conferences, press releases, and centralized wire services act as convenient, fast and inexpensive mechanisms to normalize the unpredictable in the news industry.

The beat acts conservatively toward power sources because they are anchored in centralized information sources who have power. These power sources give their accounts of events and issues. These accounts can have a negative effect on social movements: social movements are less likely to gain exposure of their differing perspective

of an event or issue, if the issue gains exposure at all. That is, due to media institutions practice of the beat, it is not likely perspectives of social movements are included in the framing of an event. In fanzines, the spatial constraint is manifested in the beats the fanzine develops. For example, Rolling Stone tends to cover events involving stars in New York clubs and other big centres such as San Francisco. This beat limits the music coverage in Rolling Stone to stars who perform functions in big city clubs. Reargarde almost exclusively covers live shows from Montreal at alternative clubs and specializes in music from Montreal. This beat limits Reargarde's coverage to bands who perform in alternative places. MRR has a beat which is limited to punk bands and clubs concentrated mostly in San Francisco. These beats limit the frames of the fanzine in terms of music, especially when the beat is restricted to established places and sources where established acts perform.

Scanning through Downing's book confirms that alternative media use legitimate and quasi-legitimate sources (social activist leaders, student leaders) for their information. Most alternative media have beats and news nets spread between quasi-legitimate and sometimes legitimate sources, depending on the institution (Downing, 1984, p.287). This use of quasi-legitimate sources gives social movement leaders a chance to express their views.

Another factor affecting how a media institution frames its raw materials is the time constraint. Almost all media (whether radical newspapers in Italy, independent film-makers in Puerto Rico, campus radio stations in Ontario or the New York Times) have deadlines and limited time to produce and present material. Downing confirms these time constraints are at work in constructing frames in all forms of

alternative media. Having deadlines means that some events will be excluded from the news due to timing alone. Events which media institutions can plan for far in advance stand the best chance of coverage, according to Tuchman.

Governments and others rehearsed in the use of media use the time constraint to their advantage. They pick times which are difficult for news organizations to respond to news events, such as Friday afternoons, to announce news which is controversial or can act negatively toward the group. Due to the time of day and week, a skeleton staff has little time to interpret a negative or controversial announcement, if the staff has time to put it on the news at all. On the other hand, groups with less experience with the media, such as social movements like Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) (See Gitlin), do not take advantage of this constraint resulting in unbalanced coverage. Consequently, the use of centralized power sources as anchor points and the use of the media by power sources help perpetuate the existing order by the media framing stories with an imbalance in the existing power structures' favour.

Tuchman examines how the media handle claims of facticity, which involve sources and their credibility, and she claims that the way media handles these claims also strengthens the general order. This preferential treatment is not performed out of political choice but out of organizational needs. For instance, if an event conforms to societal notions, then there is no reason to verify claims. On the other hand, if an event or issue runs against societal norms, then verification and additional facts are essential. One reason for further verification is the threat of a libel suit which is a costly

hazard of the trade. Statements which are libelous need substantiation. Here, one sees how professional practices (verification) meet organizational needs (Tuchman, 1978, p.85).

These practices form a system of claims of facticity. Claims of facticity, in turn, produce a "Web of facticity" which further strengthens existing power structures, as Tuchman explains:

To flesh out any one supposed fact one amasses a host of supposed facts that, when taken together, present themselves as both individually and collectively self-validating. Together they constitute a web of facticity by establishing themselves as cross-referents to one another: A fact justifies the whole (this story is factual) validates this fact (this particular referent) (Tuchman, 1978, p.86).

It follows from the argument presented here that if a journalist questions sources of authority (who are their main suppliers of information), a journalist must question all facts originating from those sources. This would not only question the claim of facticity, but also the web of facticity. It is the imposition of a frame of other ordered facts which enables the recognition of facticity and the attribution of meaning. To prevent the destruction of established webs of facticity, journalists and media institutions are cautious about questioning power sources. It is in this way that claims of facticity are a part of the framing of issues and events and strengthen existing power relations.

The journalistic approach presented above applies to facts which can be verified. For unverifiable facts, journalists generally try to balance the story with different positions within legitimate power sources. Tuchman and Gitlin claim mainstream media require that facts from quasi-legitimate powers such as civil rights leaders or student group leaders need verification, additional information and supporting

claims by legitimate sources before they are considered valid. Information must enter from legitimate sources to be considered valid. The lower the legitimacy of a source, the greater the number of verifications. Similarly, some alternative media tend to follow suit in that they shun quasi-legitimate sources to the same degree that larger mass media do (Krieger, 1979, p.173-174). At the same time, other alternative media unquestioningly use quasi-legitimate power sources while some don't use legitimate sources at all (Downing, 1984, p.240).

The unquestioned use of legitimate power sources by mass media with a reluctant and qualified use of quasi-legitimate sources adds more legitimacy to existing power structures. It also hinders democratic projects of social movements. This is because social movement leader's claims, which may go against some societal norms, must be verified by sources whose power social movements threaten. They are framed in a way which does not legitimize their stance (unless supported by others). These same principles apply to fanzines. In non-musical articles, fanzines can use legitimate sources. In music articles, fanzines can add support to existing stars and the existing corporate music power structure by using only officials and stars as sources. This does not allow for new musical voices and opinions an opportunity to express themselves.

Professionalism is yet another factor which affects the framing of raw media materials. For journalists, professionalism is knowing how to get a story that meets organizational needs and standards. It is knowing sources; knowing who and what to ask. Professionalism determines the construction of frames of raw materials, according to Tuchman, in this way: "Knowing what to ask influences whom one asks: The choice of sources and the search for 'facts' mutually determine

each other. Together ...they flesh out the news frame" (Tuchman, 1978, p.81).

Professionalism is readily practiced and prized in alternative media. For instance, at KSAN (a radical radio station in the late sixties and early seventies in San Francisco examined by Krieger), two radio programs were cancelled because their technical standards didn't live up to the station's standards (Krieger, 1979, p.246). Contro-radio and Radio Populare, both of which are radical radio stations in Italy, discussed and eventually adopted forms of professionalism in the early eighties. Their previous "open mike" policies were based on a conception of pure immediacy, spontaneity and lack of professionalism in programming. This policy led to muddling through the day's programming, confusion about how to program, and isolation between programmers and listeners. The station decided to respond to the needs of their listeners and increase the level of professionalism technically and organizationally (Downing, 1984, p.287).

Professionalism works against social movements in most media. It demands that reporters give media institutions what they want. Media institutions are run by cultural and economic elites. It is these groups that benefit least from many of the demands of social movements. Therefore, professionalism dictates the preferences of the elites which generally run counter to, or at least are not complementary to, social movements. Professionalism in smaller media sometimes works in favour of social movements since many of these media are in close contact (and even run in conjunction) with one and usually more than one, social movement (Downing, 1984, p.108, 240). This means the demands of the institution, its 'professionalism' can consider social movements' desires when framing raw media materials.

Another factor which affects the framing of raw media materials, according to Gitlin is newsworthiness. He claims that for information to make news, it needs to have a peg; that is, an event which is significant. This criterion of newsworthiness affects both the frame of stories and the story-makers themselves. Both Gitlin and Tuchman illustrate the difficulty in getting an issue exposure in the media through their examples of the SDS and the women's movement. Media workers need an event to produce a story. For most reporters who learn reporting on the police beat, reporting arrests as the only coverage of demonstrations and social movements is convenient. This type of coverage is readily available (arrests are easily counted and processed by police), helps a reporter cope with complexity of an issue or event and deadlines, and lightens the reporter's load (Gitlin, 1980, p.42).

Even when an event or issue is recognized by the media, Gitlin claims the event must fit into the journalist's sociological and psychological grasp of the issue or event. The event or issue also must coincide with the journalist's purposes and practical activities. This is where the class of the reporter plays an important role. Since reporters are traditionally white upper-middle-class males who are trying to impress their white upper-middle-class male superiors, events are framed from a white upper-middle-class male perspective. Gitlin explains this process in great detail:

Managers' standards flow through the process of recruitment and promotion, through policy, reward, and the sort of social osmosis that flows overwhelmingly in one direction: downward. The editors and reporters they hire are generally upper-middle-class in origin, and

although their personal values may be liberal by the conventional nomenclature of American politics, they tend to share the core hegemonic assumptions of their class: that is, of their managers as well as the major (news) sources (Gitlin, 1980, p.259-260).

It seems obvious that if this is the dominant perspective of information in media, there is little chance of democratic ideals expressed in social movements being communicated in mass media. Krieger and Downing reveal that dominant groups and their values still exist in alternative media but to a much smaller degree than mainstream media. There is more room in these media for racial, working-class, and women's interests to function and gain access to the media. Some of these interests are integrated into the existing systems of information and entertainment, while others remain separate. In both cases, democratic ideals and oppressed groups stand a better chance of representation in smaller media than the mass media.

This examination of factors which contribute to the construction, use, and presentation of media frames illustrates how and why mass media generally frame raw media materials (in this study the raw media material was an issue or event) in a manner which acts conservatively. By conservatively I mean media frame their raw materials in a way which contributes to existing power structures. They aid in maintaining the status quo. This runs counter to the progressive nature of democratic movements who try to democratize the existing social space. Some alternative and radical media offer greater possibilities for democratic movements.

The entertainment industry works in a very similar way to the information industry. Many of the same considerations discussed in regard to news procedures also apply to the framing of issues, events, or music products in entertainment products. Gitlin confirms this.

He says "In news, as in entertainment, hegemony is the product of a chain of assumptions, concretely embedded in work procedures, that rarely require directorial interventions from executives or political elites..." (Gitlin, 1987, p.44).

Gitlin claims the system of popular culture is an important area where the terms of hegemony are negotiated. It is a space where the demands of insurgent groups and cultural change sometimes are addressed. Entertainment has the advantage of being able to be more creative in its approach to issues. Gitlin outlines some of the advantages and disadvantages of addressing issues in popular culture:

And popular culture is one crucial institution where the rival claims of ideology are sometimes pressed forward, sometimes reconciled in imaginative forms. Popular culture absorbs oppositional ideology, adopts it to the contours of the core hegemonic principles, and domesticates it; at the same time, popular culture is a realm for the expression of forms of resistance and oppositional ideology (Gitlin, 1987, p.242).

Popular culture takes notice of alternatives, according to Gitlin, and frames them so they are assimilated into the dominant ideological system. At the same time, popular culture such as is manifested in fanzines, can be a space where alternative and more democratic ideology can be forged and expressed.

This examination of the relationships amongst media frames, the dominant hegemony, and social movements confirms that the way media frame their raw materials helps determine their relationship toward the dominant hegemony and social movements. In other words, it is at the moment where media act as secondary encoders and frame their raw materials, that media give these raw materials a more defined and narrow meaning. For media to aid in actualizing the democratic potential of its raw materials (a desire not pursued by alot of media

workers and institutions), the criteria extracted from Laclau and Mouffe's writings are considered. The three points to consider are that there are both offensive and defensive social movements, and movements are most effective and progressive if their interests are articulated with as many other groups as possible. The criteria of articulating as many oppressed groups as possible together in an attempt to democratize as much of life as possible, determines the manner in which information in media (determined by their frames) has democratic potential.

A large part of the raw materials used in fanzines is music products. These raw materials, all of which contain varying degrees of democratic potential, are framed in different ways depending on the institution. Before I analyze the manner in which these raw materials are framed in ways which either flesh out or suppress their democratic potential in fanzines, I examine the raw materials themselves. I examine how the politics of popular music are created, how audience members use popular music, and how people make sense of the music and its politics. These are the issues discussed in the following chapter.

Notes

¹ Alternative and radical media are media which offer an alternative view to issues and/or culture than that of the dominant hegemony. I use these two terms interchangeably throughout my thesis.

² The arguments presented in the above mentioned articles and book are similar. Throughout this discussion I take quotes from the authors' individual works and their collaborative effort. Even though the arguments are similar, the reason for a quote from an individual author as opposed to one from their book is for clarity of the quote, not a divergence in the authors' positions.

³ Laclau and Mouffe define three distinct but similar relations which I rearticulate here. The relation of subordination occurs when "an agent is subjected to the decisions of another" (1985, p.153). Relations of oppression are "relations of subordination which have transformed themselves into sites of antagonisms" (1985, p.153). Finally, relations of domination are relations of subordination "which are considered as illegitimate from the perspective, or in the judgement, of a social agent external to them, and which, as a consequence may or may not coincide with the relation of oppression actually existing in a determinate social formation (1985, p.154).

⁴ Through this essay, Mouffe uses the Right as an example of a non-democratic force which articulates movements into its discourse. It is non-democratic because it satisfies the needs of some groups by creating new inequalities thereby widening an already deep split between the privileged and those who are not privileged.

⁵These definitions are taken from Ernesto Laclau, "Populist rupture and discourse", Screen Education, no 34, (1980), p. 89.

CHAPTER III

It's Only Rock 'n' Roll

But I Like It:

Popular Music's Potential Role in

the spread of Democratic Ideals

OR

You'd rather sail the ocean than make a big decision

-That Petrol Emotion

The purpose of this chapter is to examine some current sociological studies of popular music in order to address three questions. The three questions this chapter addresses are: (1) How meanings in popular music products are produced through the meaning-making process; (2) How audience members use popular music; and (3) How musicians, audiences and critics determine the politics in popular music. I define the politics in/ of popular music as references, in any form, to conduct or action which is considered by its exponents to be prudent, expedient, or advantageous. This definition is based on the Oxford dictionary's definition of politic and policy.

To fulfill the mandate described above, this chapter relies heavily on specific authors. John Street's Rebel Rock examines the relationship between popular music and politics. Sound Effects and other writings of Simon Frith are well known sociological studies of popular music. Dick Hebdige's Subculture: the Meaning of Style and The Sociology of Youth Culture and Youth Subculture by Mike Brake examine the relationships between youth subcultures and popular music. Finally, Lawrence Grossberg adds another level of analysis by examining the political functions of taste.

My study of popular music begins by accepting popular music as mass produced commodities for a mass audience. Mass production of music commodities is an integral part of today's popular music. This starting point of a study is accepted by Street and Frith. Frith claims that "Current debates start by accepting, even celebrating, music's commodity status..." (Frith, 1988, p.463). However, music as a mass produced commodity does not deem it apolitical. Some popular music can incorporate democratic ideals¹ into commodity form, as is illustrated in my analysis of fanzines in the next chapter. Both

Frith and Street claim that popular music fits neatly into youths' relations to work and their lifestyles. Frith claims that once a record is issued, it is used in a way that suits each individual consumer. Encouraged by market pressures, novelty, and fashion, individuals listen to the same few records at the same time, but they have a choice as to what they can listen to and when, within the limits of what is available. Some fans use music as an escape, to have fun; while others consider music's subversive, democratic potential as an important part of music's fun. By the democratic potential of popular music, I mean music's ability to promote awareness and possible action on an issue outside of music which brings different groups together for the better of all the groups. Democratic potential in music can be in lyrics, image, actions, and/ or context of music. The three factors in the politicizing of popular music (its meaning-making process, its uses, and the ways fans make sense of it) have democratic potential, thereby warranting examination.

The Meaning Making Process

Generally, popular music is no longer a space for protest as it was in the late sixties², but a part of youth's leisure; a mass produced commodity for a mass audience to consume for pleasure. Both John Street and Simon Frith claim that to understand the politics of popular music, the process of the creation, promotion, and consumption of popular music must be examined as well as the power relations between each actor in the process. Some of the democratic politics which emerge from some popular music products is the result of compromises and dialectics between these characters involved in the process of popular music.

Simon Frith and John Street offer in-depth examinations of this process. Simon Frith divides the meaning-making process into three parts. I review each of these parts and add Street's insights to each.

Frith claims there are three key elements which constitute the meaning-making process of music. These parallel the diffusion process of popular music. He labels these three elements as who records, what is recorded, and what reaches the public. The question of who records is largely determined by the A & R (artist and repertoire) men. These people scout out new talent that are either from other record companies or who are unsigned. The A & R men decide who goes onto a record label. Record companies want bands that act efficiently in the best interest of the company and sell records. What bands desire is not always the same as what the companies do. For this reason, bands hire managers to act as spokesmen and liaisons between bands and record companies. Managers are hired to ensure that a band continues to have a contract which works to their greatest advantage. The interaction between these characters aids in constructing the politics of popular music by the dialectic which develops between the interests of the company (monetary) and those of the musicians (creative, including politically democratic ideas and monetary success).

Street observes that the record industry makes conservative decisions based on the record industry's "common sense". For instance, company decisions relating to what artists they choose to promote may be conservative or innovative. The industry generally acts conservatively, meaning that they choose to promote what is familiar over what can be seen as experimental when signing on new acts, sponsoring performances, and giving big advances. These activities inevitably

favour well established acts or acts which sound like well established acts. Record companies also act conservatively through the use of stereotypical images of men, women, and ethnics. These practices are based on the industry's logic that it is financially better for record companies to sell a lot of records by a few artists than to sell a few records by many artists. These decisions by record companies shape the politics in popular music in a conservative way. Innovative music is shunned, in exchange for familiar sounding music. Stereotypes are exploited. Music and musicians must fit into the conservative logic of the industry if they are to be recorded, or record outside of the industry. This dynamic affects the politics expressed in popular music.

The second element in the meaning-making process identified by Frith is what is recorded. Frith claims that this question is decided in the recording studio. A balance between what is commercially viable (of interest to both the record company and the artist) and what satisfies artistic impulses (of interest especially to the artist) must be reached. The record producer is responsible for what happens in the studio. This person acts as a mediator between the musician as an artist and the music as a commodity. The recording engineer also plays a key role in balancing these two elements, but in a technical capacity.

The producer and engineer's job, as far as the company and artist are concerned, is to produce an item that sells. This is a single. Without a single, there is little chance of radio airplay which is vital to a record's success. Frith claims "this emphasis on the single makes clear what's at stake in the studio - a sound that can be

fitted into the appropriate radio selling-slots" (Frith, 1981, p.113). Street examines the question of what is recorded in great depth. He claims a song is the result of choices and compromises between artists and the record companies (including engineers and producers) who use criteria that mix the aesthetic, the political and the economic.

Musicians themselves affect what is recorded through personal choices. Street claims performers' politics expressed in their music are influenced by the artists' mediations in society as a citizen, an individual, and as a worker. As citizens they can be victims, supporters or opponents of governments and politicians. As individuals their work is bound up with a series of moral questions about what is right. As workers they are exploited and abused by record companies unless they carry sufficient clout. In the roles described above, musicians must answer questions, make decisions and commitments. Thus musicians' mediations in society also determine popular music's politics (Street, 1986, p.128).

The relationship between artists and record companies is another source of the politics of popular music. Musicians' politics and freedoms are determined by the record companies. Street says artists need record companies to gain access to the mass market. Companies, on the other hand, need artists for raw material. This relationship is dependent on the wealth and popularity of the artist. For example, Walter Yetnikoff, the president and CEO of CBS records, claims he has very little input into the work of big name pop stars like **Michael Jackson**, **Cyndi Lauper**, **Billy Joel**, and **Bruce Springsteen**, but he claims he plays a larger role in the day-to-day affairs of other artists (Rolling Stone, December 1988, p.166-175). All artists who work for a record company however, even the most popular bands, remain

employees of record companies who have the final say on how their products are to be produced and presented.

Despite this power, record companies cannot control the creative process. They do not want to control the sounds they produce, as Street claims, "unless the stock market is offended" (Street, 1986, p.107). For instance, EMI's reasons for dropping the **Sex Pistols** were "as much to the marketing problems [Sex Pistols] posed, [as] to the complaints of the label's other artists, and to the possible damage to the company's image" (IBID). It can be seen in this example and throughout this discussion, that there is no simple formula which determines what is recorded.

The final factor in Frith's three part meaning-making process is the record distribution process. This factor is determined by musical "gatekeepers" such as radio station music directors, disc jockeys (in clubs and on the radio) and concert promoters. For a song to be successful it must reach the public. For this reason, the single from the sound studio is aimed specifically at radio playlists. Frith stresses the importance of the radio disc jockey by claiming that "To sell a record, companies must, in the end, get a sound to the public - to do this they have to go through a disc jockey, the most significant rock 'gatekeeper'" (Frith, 1981, p.117).

Although they can dictate the rest of the meaning-making process, the recording companies do not have direct control over radio. Frith claims that this lack of control is due to the nature of the jobs of radio and club disc jockeys - to please the public. Failure to please the public spells failure in the business of the disc jockey.

However, radio stations are not totally unaffected by record

companies. Record company promoters attempt to persuade program directors that their products fit the station's format and audience needs. They also influence programming by limiting radio's universe of musical recordings; that is, record companies play a key role in deciding who and what is recorded. Also, record companies influence the music played on radio through financial arrangements. Frith claims that "The current record company strategy in America is to link the volume of advertising bought on a radio station to its 'favourable' treatment of the companies' product, advertised or not..." (Frith, 1981, p.120). In Britain, playlists are directly determined by charts (in North America some popular music stations' playlists are directly linked to the charts while other stations' playlists are indirectly linked to the charts) so record companies stack their sales figures to gain increased radio exposure.

In other words, both institutions affect one another. Record companies affect programming decisions directly and indirectly. Radio, on the other hand, is an essential link between record companies and the distribution of their goods. As Frith explains: "Radio moulds as well as responds to public taste, and record companies respond to as well as mould playlists" (IBID).

Street also sees radio as the key factor (but definitely not the only factor - for example, fanzines also play a role in promoting music and determining whether an article on a band or a review of a record reaches the public) in determining whether a record reaches the public. He claims that broadcasters decide which records receive airplay based on a "process of control and selection [which] is buried in a whole series of conventions and rules - 'common sense' - about what makes 'good' broadcasting" (Street, 1986, p.7). Street identi-

fies two ways this decision-making process acts conservatively. The first way is through radio's reliance on sales charts. The sales charts attempt to translate sales figures into popular preference. But Street claims that charts are more likely a representation of audience preference based on what they have become accustomed to. Since stations stick to well-proven formulae, they, in effect, restrict alternatives available to the public. This lack of innovative music programming acts conservatively.

The second way radio acts conservatively, according to Street, is through its handling of new releases and non-chart records. These are chosen on the criteria based on whether a song is from an established artist, from an artist with a previous hit, or if other stations play the song. Also, Street claims, "Records are chosen on the basis of technical quality, inoffensiveness, previous success and so on, all of which serve to maintain the status quo" (Street, 1986, p.124).

Street identifies governments as another deciding factor in what the public hears. In Eastern bloc countries governments control, license, and register bands. In the west, governments occasionally ban music (for example, *God Save the Queen* by the **Sex Pistols** and **Frankie Goes to Hollywood's Relax** were banned on British radio) and set the economic and political climate for music.

Another example of government interference in the west occurred when **Bob Marley** played a benefit for African freedom fighters in Boston in 1979. When the Boston City Council found out Bob Marley was to play at the benefit, they passed a law which prohibited Bob Marley from being the head-line act or even playing second from last in the show. He had to play during the day-time. The reason for this

occurrence, given by Roger Steffens in a recent lecture, was that the government feared Bob Marley's power and the audience's response to his music. They felt that Marley's performance would promote riotous behaviour in the audience. Another more recent example of government interference can be seen in the form of stickers on record sleeves warning against offensive language. This is yet another way governments set the political and economic climate for music. More subtle forms of government control over music in Canada include the content and format regulations for radio and the government's support of a national broadcaster. Street claims these actions by governments illustrate their fear, insecurity, and prejudices about popular music. Decisions by governments to control music consumption, according to Street, "are, albeit indirect, decisions about how leisure is to be controlled and enjoyed" (Street, 1986, p.17).

The factors examined in the discussion above all contribute to the politics encoded in popular music products. This meaning-making process is dynamic and ever changing which also accounts for the vast universe of political expression in popular music. Each character in the meaning-making process has a vested interest in final music products and attempts to alter the product for his/her own benefit. For example, the recording industry has an economic interest in a final product so promotes existing sounds and stereotypes in an attempt to sell many units of a few artists. Musicians, on the other hand, have an economic, as well as creative, interest in music products. A part of the creative expression some musicians attempt to express in their products is democratic ideals. These ideals may become buried due to the desires of other elements in the process. The mediations between these elements determine to what extent these ideals are expressed in

the final music product.

Fanzine owners and workers also have a vested interest in the finished product of music commodities. Once a commodity is produced, the fanzine writers extract out of the commodity what they feel is important. For example, if the owners and workers of a fanzine wish to maintain the status quo and feature only the most popular music (which supports the industry that supplies the fanzine with music commodities and readers), then the writers of the fanzine will ignore the democratic politics inherent in some music products which threatens to disrupt society, and concentrate on mundane issues such as the personal lives and personalities of the stars. A taste formation fanzine, on the other hand, selectively filters through popular music commodities and features those which celebrate the characteristics which distinguish the taste formation from other popular music. Finally, politically subversive fanzines focus on the message of the music taken from their political orientation. In all three cases, the meaning-making process determines the realm and character of politics in popular music products which fans and fanzines choose to present to readers.

How Audience Members Use Popular Music

As I mentioned earlier, music is a part of youth's leisure and youth enjoy it as it fits into their lifestyles. Politics, in many forms such as sexual, protest, conventional and more, also are a part of life for youth. Popular music is not compatible with all kinds of politics. Street claims that an examination of popular music's politics accepts that its politics are not always conventional or protest politics. Frith claims there is a serious incompatibility between

conventional politics and popular music's politics because popular music's politics are the politics of the immediate. In contrast, conventional politics are based on more long-term goals (Frith, 1988, p.472).

Both Frith and Street claim that popular music works better with political movements than with political parties. Frith claims that in the past, popular music has been able to make sense out of some issues better than others. He cites nationalist struggles (as in much black music), the politics of leisure (as with youth cults and gay disco), and a combination of the two (as in certain kinds of feminist music) as areas where popular music has succeeded in making sense out of issues (Frith, 1988, p.473).

There are many past and current examples of other non-conventional political issues in popular music in the music's lyrics, images, and activities associated with the music. Some of these ideas are expressions of democratic ideas such as gay love (**Frankie Goes To Hollywood's** *Relax* and gay bands which perform for gay rights like **The Village People**), women's rights (**Maximum Joy's** *Stretch*, **Crass's** *Darling*, **Cindy Lauper's** *Girls just want to have fun* and female vocalists and instrumentalists such as **Tracy Chapman** and **Michele Shocked**), black rights (**Gil Scott-Heron's** *The revolution will not be televised*, **Public Enemy's** *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold us Back* and the black and white ska movement out of Britain), native rights (**Midnight Oil's** *Diesel and Dust*), and more conventional topics such as socialist causes and social conservatism (**Billy Bragg, Redskins**, and **Spongehead's** *Amerikkka* and the Red Wedge movement and concerts in Britain).

Despite these many political messages incorporated into music

commodities, not all audiences interpret and use music for the same purposes. Different audiences interpret and use the same song in different ways, according to Frith, depending on how the music fits into their lifestyle. Frith and Street claim the politics of a song are determined by how an audience connects its private feelings with the issues of the music, making the music's politics ambiguous until deciphered by fans. For example, *Beds are Burning* by **Midnight Oil** can be interpreted and used as (i) a song to listen to by a group of star musicians; (ii) a dance hit with a good dance beat; or (iii) a song with democratic politics for native aborigines in Australia. I now examine this active meaning-making role by audiences by highlighting the different ways audiences use music commodities.

Like the other areas of study I have examined, there is much written on this subject. I have been selective in picking out a few current examples. These few are enough to gain an understanding of some of the issues relevant to audiences' roles in the production of meaning. I examine subcultural theory first because it highlights how some subcultures use music as part of their subversive stance toward society. I then examine an article by Lawrence Grossberg which explores how audiences (not just subcultures) use popular music.

Mike Brake's The sociology of youth cultures and youth subcultures provides a starting point for an examination of subcultural theory. This book explains why subcultures are formed. Brake claims that youth is a complex 'kaleidoscope' of several subcultures which are related to age and class. They work as follows.

Brake claims that subcultures erupt as attempts to resolve common problems arising from contradictions in the social structure. Youth

cultures and subcultures work at a cultural level to collectively resolve structural problems of adjustment into mainstream society where no effective solution already exists. By creating a collective identity independent of school, class, and the resulting limited opportunities of both, youth form youth subcultures. These cultures put an emphasis on spontaneous gratification and mobility outside of establishments' structures.

Brake identifies style, value, ideology, and lifestyle as cultural elements of subcultures. Style, which is an important aspect of all subcultures, not only expresses the degree of commitment one has to a subculture, but also "indicates membership of a specific subculture which by its very appearance disregards and attacks dominant values" (Brake, 1980, p.12).

All youth subcultures use music as part of their style. Music style is selected by subcultures based on its homology to the subculture's lifestyle. Each youth culture interacts with manufactured popular culture, like popular music, in ways which suit their subcultures. This means that various groups use music in various ways and fanzines attempt to cater toward these various uses. This point is in accordance with Frith and Street's claim that youth use music as it fits into their lifestyle. Brake contends however, that popular music is more than a background for subculture's activities. He claims popular music is central to some subcultures. For instance, reggae acts as a cultural link between Britain and Jamaica for black-English youth.

Brake explains the relationship between popular culture and subcultures. This relationship involves an interplay between elements of subcultures that are drawn from manufactured popular culture (which,

in turn can originate from the subculture itself, as Hebdige illustrates below), such as popular music and its artifacts, and transformed and relocated to fit the lifestyle of the subculture's members. For example, punk music was a "distorted reflection of all the post-war subcultures" (Hebdige, 1979, p.26). Punk music originated out of the punk movement, but its elements were borrowed from glam rock, American proto-punk, Northern soul, reggae, and rhythm 'n blues. From popular culture and its products, young people work to create a collective identity which articulates their problems, values, and meanings. This borrowing of popular cultural products helps members of a subculture create an identity for themselves which celebrates youth and symbolizes a position outside of that ascribed by society. Brake's analysis of subcultures complements that of Hebdige. Brake, however, speaks of British youth cultures and subcultures in general while Hebdige focuses on British working-class subcultures. Although this is not the most recent work of Hebdige, it is a valuable analysis of the way some youth use popular music.

Dick Hebdige in Subculture: the meaning of style highlights the importance of style in subcultures. Music, dance, and dress make up the style of subcultures. Hebdige analyzes British post-war subcultures (teddy boys, mods, rockers, skinheads, and punks) in this well-known book. Hebdige claims that subcultures and popular culture are involved in a complex interplay. Subcultures borrow everyday mundane objects, such as safety pins, pointy shoes, and motorcycles, and use them to symbolize tokens of a self-imposed exile. Hebdige claims the tensions between dominant and subordinate groups can be found in the styles of subcultures. These styles are made up of mundane objects

which have double meaning. On the one hand, the "straight world" (those not in the subculture) sees the objects as a presence of difference. On the other hand, for those who erect them as icons, or curses, these objects become signs of forbidden identity and a source of value.

Styles of subcultures threaten the dominant hegemony. This is because consensus is a necessary condition for successful hegemony and subcultures have signalled a breakdown in consensus in the post-war period. This challenge has been direct, expressed through signs which make up style. Subculture's styles are made up of objects which are stolen by subordinate groups and made to carry coded meanings of resistance to the dominant order. These styles interrupt hegemony by moving toward a speech which offends the majority and challenges the principles of unity, cohesion, and consensus.

Hebdige sees subcultures as representations of noise in the orderly sequences which lead from real events to their representation in the media. Subcultures violate authorized codes through which the social world is organized and experienced. Subcultures express forbidden content such as consciousness of class and difference in forbidden forms like behaviour codes and law breaking.

The relationship between subcultures and the media helps explain how music is used by these cultures. Hebdige claims media's handling of a subculture leads to its fall. When subcultures first appear they are treated as a threat to society through a wave of hysterical dread, fascination, outrage, and amusement. Media celebrates subcultures in fashion pages while ridiculing them in articles which portray subcultures as social problems. Then the threat and difference of subcultures are eventually played down by the media. The members of the

subculture are positioned where the dominant common sense has them fit. This media coverage invariably ends with the simultaneous diffusion and defusion of the subcultural style. Hebdige explains this process:

It is through this continual process of recuperation that the fractured order is repaired and the subculture incorporated as diverting spectacle within the dominant mythology which it in part emanates: as folk devil, as other, as frenzy (Hebdige, 1979, p.94).

In other words, the recuperation process begins with the conversion of subcultural signs which make up their styles, into mass produced objects. Then the media and/ or police label and re-define the subculture's actions and behaviour. Subcultures are defused by the stripping of the unwholesome connotations of the subculture's style to make the styles fit for public consumption. Hebdige believes that style does have its moment of resistance during the transformation of meaning by subcultural groups. It is at the moment of a subculture's eruption that Hebdige believes its political importance lies.

Hebdige's claim is that music in subcultures is part of their style, along with dress and dance. The style of a subculture represents its dissatisfaction with the existing order. Hebdige explains that "It [a subculture] communicates through commodities even if the meanings attached to those commodities are purposefully distorted or overthrown" (Hebdige, 1979, p.95). It is through commodities, like popular music, that subcultures express their difference. Popular music is used to reflect a subculture's sense of frustration and oppression (Hebdige, 1979, p.69). For instance, in the case of punk, music was used to reflect youth's frustration with unemployment. With media exposure, its unwholesome connotations are dispersed and some of

the music becomes diluted to mass consumable music commodities.

In the case of subcultures, music is used in a politically subversive manner. Musicians, fanzine writers, and audience members use music as part of a style which communicates a subversive message. Some of these messages can be politically democratic such as the rights of the unemployed or other power-minorities like blacks and the working-class. However, as I mentioned earlier, not all audiences interpret and use music in this manner. To make sense out of how audience members in and out of subcultures use music, another analysis is needed. Lawrence Grossberg's analysis of the use of music by fans introduces a different level of analysis which performs this function.

Grossberg examines how audiences use rock music (popular music which began in the late sixties) for fun; that is, at the affective level, not effective level. The politics of music are played out in the different activities associated with different tastes of popular music. He claims that fans 'empower' the music and the music 'empowers' them because the music is 'about' having fun and celebrating good times. Grossberg claims that rock redistributes our concerns, it enables "the construction of particular maps detailing what matters in our everyday lives" (Grossberg, 1987, p.182). It organizes the way we invest and locate energy, importance, even ourselves in the meanings we give the world.

Fans use rock in different ways depending on what fans consider to be their music (which makes up what Grossberg calls 'invisible subcultures' based on taste preference). Grossberg also claims the relation between the fan and rock music can only be understood in a larger context. These contexts vary. The contexts include definitions and selections of rock music, images, styles, dances, modes of

performing, forms of social relations, relations to other media, and technologies, as well as social, historical, economic and experiential events and relations. Grossberg claims these contexts or as he calls them, 'apparatuses' are important to the meanings an audience extracts from rock:

These contexts of everyday life and culture are not merely the background in which rock and roll works; they actively define and give shape not only to rock and roll as a cultural form, but to the specific ways it works for particular nominal groups (Grossberg, 1987, p.185).

Fans become encapsulated by the apparatuses and become different from those who don't 'understand' their music. Each apparatus embodies a particular relation to fun. Fans mark a difference, whether all prevailing or submerged, from what is considered the straight, adult, or boring world. The nature of the difference rock produces is affective. Grossberg defines affect as: "that dimension or plane of our lives that we experience as moods, feelings, desires, and enervation" (Grossberg, 1987, p.186).

Rock's affective quality is how rock works. Music's power depends on how the music feels and how it makes listeners feel.

Grossberg connects this idea with how youth make sense of rock:

Rock and roll works on the affective level of our everyday lives. at the level of the strategies we use to gain some control over that affective life, to find new forms of pleasure and excitement to cope with new forms of pain, frustration, and boredom" (Grossberg, 1987, p.186).

Rock organizes pleasure by shaping activities into fun. It brings other forms of pleasure (sex, dance, fashion, drugs) into its economy of fun. It transforms, relocates, and re-defines them as non-serious, non-boring fun. Grossberg claims this transformation is at

the source of rock's power. He says: "While rock and roll is not the only form of culture that works in this way, nor does it work only in this way, it is the dominance of this affective level which is largely responsible for the enormous power and popularity of rock music and its connection with youth" (Grossberg, 1987, p.187). Fun is an alternative strategy to the straight and boring, for navigating our way through everyday life. Music constitutes youth as an affective state whose primary investment is in fun. This can have a subversive element because rock's affective quality and rock's activities can not only be an alternative, but a site of resistance to the straight and boring world.

Grossberg claims rock and roll began in the 1950s at a time when there was great optimism for the present and the future on one hand, and a "postmodern sense of the impossibility of meaning and value" on the other. The latter was inspired by surface politics, the A-bomb, the holocaust, and economic and technological mobility which were all signs of new uncertainty. Grossberg claims this postmodern sense is an affective experience, most potent for the younger generations who had never experienced the certainty of values experienced by their parents. This younger generation takes uncertainty as a fact. It is because of this uncertainty that they invest themselves seriously in an affective relationship to the world.

Youth define themselves against the dominant-adult world by investing in their affective life, by celebrating their own fantasies and pleasures as a way of giving meaning to life, and by rebelling against attempts to impose meaning and order on them (Grossberg, 1987, p.191). These strains of thought have survived in rock since its inception and for this reason it has remained popular among youth and

looked at as a threat by society. Grossberg claims:

The power of rock and roll lies in its ability to bring together and celebrate the production of difference and fun. It marks its fans as *others*, as outsiders, even while they continue to live within the dominant cultural structures of meaning (Grossberg, 1987, p.191-192).

Youth dislikes society's social power which is unable to comprehend youth's affective life. Youth search for outlandish styles and take fun seriously in an attempt to hide from social power. Grossberg claims it follows that: "Rock and roll functions, then, precisely by constructing a connection between this postmodern affective difference and the social positions of youth" (Grossberg, 1987, p.192). Like subcultural theory, Grossberg claims youth use popular music to express difference from the straight dominant world. This difference is not materialized through effective means (such as lyrics which express democratic ideals) necessarily, but at the affective level - through the different ways people enjoy the music. Rock responds to a boring yet dangerous, unstable life by offering fun as a strategy to deal with life's boredom and dangers.

Grossberg claims rock locates fun on three major axes: youth, pleasure, and the postmodern. These axes are active and have different relations to one another. Youth, as a major axis, enables rock apparatuses to celebrate the impotence, frustration, and irresponsibility of adolescence. It converts risk and instability, mobility and the expenditure of high levels of energy into new forms of pleasure.

The second axis, the celebration of pleasure as fun, emphasizes the body as both sexual and sensual. By equating pleasure and fun, rock sets itself against the increasing disciplining of leisure in the modern world.

The third axis, the celebration of the postmodern as fun, in Grossberg's words, "enables rock and roll to celebrate the artificial and the ironic" (Grossberg, 1987, p.194). Rock substitutes style for authenticity and finds pleasure in the very structures of noise and repetition that are so oppressive in the straight world. Literally, noise feels good rather than painful. Rock opposes the artificiality of its own pleasures to the supposed naturalness of the values of the straight world by taking everything to excess. Rock "remakes the world in its own image -an image of surfaces, fun, and youth" (Grossberg, 1987, p.195).

Grossberg's analysis of the uses of music by audiences includes the importance of taste and the different democratic possibilities associated with different tastes. For example, music which is targeted at individual listeners who sing along to it while driving to work and dance to it at expensive nightclubs has less democratic potential than music performed by a black and white band (in an attempt to display racial unity) to a black and white audience at a rally in support of Rock Against Racism. Both audiences enjoy the music and its associated activities, yet the way audiences enjoy the music helps determine its democratic potential.

Fanzines must understand how their audiences use popular music, which the past two analyses illustrate, in order to frame popular music in a manner which appeals to their audiences. Fanzines highlight the elements of popular music and its activities which they feel are fun and important to their readers. What the readers feel is fun is based on their apparatuses. If a fanzine is one which presents mainstream music³, a taste formation⁴, or music from a particular

political point of view, it will present music products which are part of what the fanzine's readers consider 'their music'. A fanzine will also highlight the elements of music products and activities associated with music which readers consider fun. Music taste and its relationship to fun aid in determining what a fanzine highlights and a fanzine's democratic potential.

In all circumstances, it is the audiences' (and fanzines) uses of popular music which determine popular music's politics. Democratic ideas present in music products can enhance the democratic potential of popular music. As the study above illustrates, audiences must also be willing to use the politics inherent in these products. Another important concern which determines the political potential in popular music is the way audiences decipher, or make sense of its meanings. To better understand how audiences decipher the politics inherent in music products, I examine "Art ideology and pop practice" by Simon Frith.

How Musicians, Fans, and Fanzines Determine the Politics in Music

Frith claims the practice of popular culture involves the practice of theorizing (low theory) which draws from high theory. This practice of theorizing has materialized in the form of two distinct popular music sensibilities. He claims that from the mid-fifties with the advent of rock 'n' roll, to the end of the sixties there developed a distinct rock sensibility that had at its cutting edge, an account of itself that drew on the Marxist critique of culture. This rock sensibility understands good music and its politics as an expression of a community's needs and values. From punk's eruption onto the music scene in the mid-seventies to the present, a second sensibility which he names the pop sensibility became another way of making sense

out of popular music. It has at its cutting edge, an account of itself that draws on an avante garde critique of mass culture. This pop sensibility understands and judges music's politics based on the management of disparate pop signs.

Frith claims popular music sensibility, whether rock or pop, "works as a grid placed over pop practice and pop experience, a framework, a common-sense *within* which musicians, record buyers, record producers, disc jockeys and so on, make sense of what they are doing, account for the choices and judgements they make" (Frith, 1988, p.469).

These grids shape how popular music acts politically. Different criteria of political correctness are produced by different popular music sensibilities. For example, a rock band playing to an audience with a rock sensibility (more likely in the past and in North America than in the present in Britain) who donates its time to perform for a workers' rights cause or denounces other bands for signing on to a major record label is considered politically correct by audience, fan, and critic. However, these actions would seem politically irrelevant for people with a pop sensibility.⁵

A pop band playing to an audience with a pop sensibility is politically relevant by managing disparate pop signs. For example, at the Glastonbury Rock Festival, Frith notes that **Fun Boy Three** which was made up of two black men and one white, used women musicians for their back-up musicians. This is counter to the historical norms of popular music. They sang to their audience as though they did not care if they pleased them. Also, in this performance, during their rendition of **The Doors'** song *The End* (which Frith sees as an iconic song of the

rock sensibility), Fun Boy Three set fire to an American flag. Setting fire to an American flag was an ambiguous gesture because not only did it seem to be a gesture against Reagan, American Imperialism, and cruise missiles, but also a gesture against American music, rock culture, and the festival itself. Frith notes that the audience was confused for a moment: "There was a moment of hostility; as in avant-garde precedents the audience had to react without knowing how" (Frith, 1988, p.463).

The pop sensibility has changed how fans of popular music interpret its politics. Punk was an important factor in this transformation. Frith explains:

On the one hand, punk was a raw restatement of the rock argument - a challenge to the multinationals' control of mass music, an attempt to seize the technical and commercial means of music production, a rank-and-file youth expression of class solidarity. On the other hand, punk was a deliberate attempt by the bohemian demi-monde of the fashion industry to make a spectacle, to manipulate the media, to con the kids, to make money - 'cash from chaos' in Malcolm McLaren's slogan" (Frith, 1988, p.463).

This two sided view of punk formed the basis of squabbles about the meaning of punk; authenticity versus artificial style. It marked the division between oi and the new glittery pop movement, the latter of which ended up prevailing. Frith claims the role of pop in the era of youth unemployment has turned out to be 'escapism'. Frith claims "Escapism is, in cultural practice, not an easy activity, and the problems it poses are precisely the reasons why pop debates now turn around the issues of style and artifice rather than class and capital, drawing their terms from avant-garde rather than Marxist models" (Frith, 1988, p.464).

Put in terms of how artists and audiences use these concepts,

rock musicians and audiences define themselves from 'the mainstream of pop hackery' in terms of authenticity, sincerity, and solidarity while pop musicians and audiences define themselves against the cultural mainstream in much more "self-consciously formalist terms". Frith adds:

Similarly, while the rock tradition depends on a sense of community - musicians speak for as well as to their fans - pop musicians have no desire to represent anyone but themselves, are more concerned with cult and coterie, with establishing difference" (Frith, 1988, p.464) .

According to Frith, audience, artist, critic, and everyone else involved in music decipher, or make sense out of popular music according to the sensibility of the genre of music. The rock sensibility has faltered in the mid-seventies because of the collapse of the idea that youth is a community. With this breakdown of youth as a community in the 1970s recession, different ways of conceiving of pop politics began to be attractive .

The radical version of pop sensibility, according to Frith, draws on three strands of avant garde thought. The first strand of thought has its source in avant garde art music. This thought proposes that music can be made with little regard for the audience; that the music does not have to conform to listeners' expectations. The aim of music is not to please the audience, but to suspend all rules as to what is music and musical. "This paradoxical idea - musicians seeking to disrupt their form, to make unpopular music - has obvious resonance for postpunk performers, as does avant-garde formalism, the idea that as music is constructed so it can be deconstructed; taken for granted musical meanings are exposed by being placed in 'inappropriate' contexts" (Frith, 1988, p.465).

For example, many pop musicians claim to have the attitude that they don't care if fans enjoy their music. They perform for themselves. *Einsturzende Neubauten* challenge accepted rules as to what is music and musical by making music from garbage off the streets. The *Nihilist Spasm Band* claim to be noise makers who seek to express themselves, not musicians who seek crowds. Also, scratch mixers and rappers disrupt the form of popular music by using and altering the sounds of finished products as part of their music productions. This process literally deconstructs finished music products which alters what is considered music and exposes taken-for-granted musical meanings. Examples of this are Run DMC's song *Walk this way*, the work of Schooly D, dub mixes of most singles, and Frith's example of Malcolm McLaren's *Duck Rock LP*.

The second avant garde strain of thought which pop sensibility borrows from is that the combination of the sound, image, and personality of an artist is a commercial package. Frith explains this concept: "Artistic interest in the making of meaning does not end when the music is made, the record released, the performance over, but is equally invested in the way in which it takes on its public meanings via the media of television, radio, advertisement, the star system, and so on" (Frith, 1988, p.466). The distinction between making music and marketing a commodity is now blurred, the artist becomes a work of art.

Art school thought has been behind this new approach to music making because music making has become a viable career choice for art school graduates. Art school students have been involved in pop in the past⁶, but it is only now that art school thought is becoming central to how music is discussed and made sense of, according to

Frith. Signs of this include the increasing importance of designers and packagers in the process. The most direct evidence of the importance of art school thought is how music is discussed in fanzines and press hand-outs. Fanzines are consumer guides to rock and pop fashion, but they also assume a knowledge of art and design and media form. Frith claims "the terms of modernism, futurism, expressionism, and neoexpressionism are flung about in their attempts to define current styles in music" (Frith, 1988, p.467). This he sees as evidence of the art school influence in critics, audience and artists' attempts to understand the popular music genre of pop.

The third strand of avant garde ideas politicizes the process of pop construction. It puts an emphasis on pop as a spectacle, situation, event, as something that involves the construction of an audience. For example, punk exposed the process of pop construction by critiquing it. Frith claims the most significant political music has been pop whose concerns have been sexual politics.

For example, feminist musicians use the conventions of masculinity and femininity to situate the audience in unfamiliar ways and redefine the subjectivity of both. Some of these bands successfully position the male audience members so they are not the subject of the musicians' address. This is foreign to popular music audiences who, Frith claims, expect the male members to be addressed. Frith claims:

And it is precisely this effect [the repositioning of the audience] that bands concerned with sexual politics, like the Gang of Four and the Au Pairs, have tried to put into play: to confuse an audience and then to use that confusion as the basis for an active process of *making* sense out of conversation, hesitation, the movements in and out of private and public expression (Frith, 1988, p.468).

These strains of avant garde thought, as Frith has explained,

help musicians and audience members make sense out of popular music. Today's pop sensibility understands political relevance through the confusion and blurring of sexual and racial divisions, as well as engaging in confusing gestures. Inauthenticity; that is, accepting and using the popular music process to its maximum capacity is celebrated, not rejected as it is for artists and fans with a rock sensibility.

Both rock and pop sensibilities are used today by everyone involved in popular music to make sense of the politics of popular music. These two are not opposites or polarities, but overlap in audiences and individuals. Fanzines, likewise, use rock and/or pop sensibilities to make sense out of popular music's meanings. The choice of popular music and the manner in which they present these choices are reflections of their popular music sensibilities. These sensibilities, along with the ways fanzines assume their audiences use music, combine to form the way fanzines present music. For example, a mainstream fanzine may display a sensibility which incorporates both rock and pop sensibilities. However, because of the assumed apparatuses of fans and their definition of fun, in-depth accounts of the political meanings in music products may be limited. The elements of music which may be highlighted are the artist and his/her personal life, since these elements are of interest to readers and promote the star system. A taste formation fanzine may communicate a pop sensibility and concern itself with artists, their commodities, and the images of the products the fanzine covers. This fanzine may celebrate that the music it features is unpopular to mainstream listeners (which distinguishes its audience from mainstream audiences) and highlight

the music as an event, spectacle, or situation. Finally, a political-ly subversive fanzine may employ a rock sensibility (a subversive fanzine could also employ a pop sensibility) and acknowledge audience desires and feelings of angst against society. This fanzine may communicate that the audience is a community, that musicians are youth representatives and role models, and that popular music can make a change in society. These different pop and rock sensibilities are important factors which contribute to how fans determine the politics in popular music, especially when they are mediated through ancillary media, such as fanzines.

If part of my analysis is to examine fanzines' ability to highlight popular music's democratic potential, an awareness of the democratic possibilities in popular music products is necessary. This chapter has reviewed current literature to address three important issues in my thesis. The first is how music's meanings are created. This examination concerns how, why, and what are the elements which contribute to the democratic potential inherent in some popular music products. The second issue in this chapter examines the different uses of popular music by audiences. This examination shows how some of these uses are compatible with a democratizing project. The final issue examines the possible ways people involved in popular music can make sense out of popular music. This issue aids in establishing audience members, fanzines, and musicians' criteria for what is political and the political possibilities of popular music.

One way people make sense of popular music is through mediations with media other than the music itself (Frith, 1988, p.467). Fanzines are one of those mediations. How fanzines frame music products can enhance or shun the political potential of music products. Some

fanzines are very popular and can be considered large mainstream mass media, while others remain an alternative from mainstream media. According to my examination of mainstream and alternative media in chapter two, the manner in which ancillary media frame music products varies considerably. This means that some of the frames contained in fanzines can frame music products and other 'raw materials' in a way that promotes democratic ideas. For this reason, in the next chapter I analyze different frames of popular music constructed, used, and contained in fanzines to reveal their democratic political contribution to progressive social ideals expressed in many of today's social movements.

Notes

¹ The definition of democratic ideals I use is based on Laclau and Mouffe's definition of a democratic movement. That is, a music commodity can express democratic ideals if it addresses an issue outside of music which concerns the rights of subordinate groups and promotes alliances between groups for the better of all groups. In other words, a music commodity has a democratic message and incorporates democratic ideals if it promotes egalitarian distribution of rights, as well as understanding, and cooperation amongst different groups.

² Frith in Sound Effects claims that popular music deals with the politics of leisure. It publicly expresses private issues. Due to the war, sixties rock music politicized leisure. Frith claims rock (rock is popular music which started in the late sixties) "gave public, collective expression to usually private issues of risk and pleasure and sex" (Frith, 1981, p.195). Frith claims the sixties were an exception: "Young people in the 1960s had experiences (experiences of war and politics) that intensified the conflict between public and private obligations, between freedom and responsibility, and it was these problems that rock, more than any other form of expression, addressed and made plain" (Frith, 1981, p.194). Of course, today there are also many popular music fans who experience conflicts and contradictions which intensify their beliefs which rock can address.

³ I use the phrase mainstream music to describe popular music which is the most popular in terms of the sales charts. This phrase then refers to pop and rock music (as defined by Frith) which is in the sales charts.

⁴ A taste formation audience is an audience which listens to a specific style of music. This style of music forms a commonality of taste among its fans to form a taste formation. A more in-depth description of taste formation is presented in chapter 3.

⁵ An example of this difference in political relevance that Frith cites is when Molly Hatchet (a rock band) performed at a benefit for a steel workers' union local in Pittsburgh. They played for free while many new wave bands refused to play, even though new wave, at this time, was considered progressive.

⁶ Simon Frith's book Art into pop gives a detailed account of this phenomenon.

CHAPTER IV

Frames in Fanzines

and

Fanzines as Frames

OR

The Busier You Are, The Less You See -

Welcome To Liberty City!

- Mark Stewart and Maffia

In chapter two I examined the framing techniques of both mainstream media and alternative media. Through this examination, I noted that mainstream mass media tend to frame their raw materials in a manner which conserves the status quo in terms of existing power structures and culture. Some alternative media are receptive to social movements and interpretations of issues which are progressive.¹ Some of these media construct, use, and present frames of their raw materials in ways which offer possibilities in the spread of democratic ideals expressed in many of today's social movements. They are more likely to frame their raw materials in a way that highlights the commonality of social groups (the commonality is the attempt to democratize society) by opening up a dialogue, and building alliances amongst groups.

The third chapter exposes the limits and possibilities of democratic politics contained in some popular music. This political potential is both created and limited by popular music's form and process. It is further created and limited by the ways in which all people involved in popular music, whether as musician, critic, or fan, make sense of popular music's meanings and politics.

One factor which aids in determining how fans make sense out of music's meanings is the sites of interpretation of music products in ancillary music media. Ancillary music media include record sleeves, tape jackets, radio and television programs, and fanzines. These media frame popular music products using established norms and criteria set by the media institutions. Gitlin and Tuchman illustrate that the way media frame their raw materials aids in determining the meanings and political potential of the final media presentation. In

terms of my study, the manner in which radio stations, video stations, and fanzines frame music commodities such as artists, albums, concerts, and songs can affect the democratic potential of popular music media presentations. For example, music media can frame music products in a manner which highlights: (i) the personality and personal life of the artist responsible for the music product as a star, (ii) the characteristics of the music product which warrants it part of a taste formation, or (iii) the political messages of music products taken from a particular political perspective. Each of these framing techniques has different democratic potential (as I examine in this chapter) because each highlights and omits certain qualities inherent in music products. One of these qualities is the political ideas in popular music which can be highlighted and exposed to fans or omitted, giving audience members a diluted and sanitized (as in the case of subcultures when they are 'recuperated' by the system) consumable entertainment product.

Music media in themselves are also frames for music products and non-musical issues. Music media opt to omit and include issues other than music. The issues and political perspective music media contain and omit in their frames of information contribute to the democratic potential of ancillary media. For example, the democratic potential of a fanzine is different if (i) the fanzine includes only conventional political issues from a point of view which maintains the status quo and promotes consumption; or (ii) the fanzine rarely deals with any political issues and only refers to existing power structures and their inequalities in a sarcastic manner; or (iii) the fanzine discusses a broad range of issues by many groups from various positions which promote democratic change. The information in fanzines

affects the democratic potential of these ancillary media. For this reason, music media as a frame of information (of music and other topics) is included in my study.

This chapter analyzes the frames of popular music contained in different fanzines as well as different fanzines as frames of information. I limit my study to a sample of frames constructed, used, and contained in fanzines. I divide the frames employed by fanzines into three categories based on Stuart Hall's examination of encoding and decoding. Hall offers three hypothetical positions from which decoding of a discourse may be constructed. The encoding-decoding mediation he describes is between a mainstream televisual medium (encoder), and a televisual viewer (decoder). For my study, I want to transpose the mediations described by Hall, to mediations between popular music (encoder), fanzines (which I call a secondary encoder), and music consumer or fan (decoder). My study examines the relationship between music and fanzines and the potential democratic impact of this relationship on the audiences of music and fanzines. In my study, music products are encoded messages, meaning systems on vinyl. Fanzines, as secondary encoders, interpret these music products by framing them using their own system of values. This secondary encoding narrows music's ambiguous meanings for the music consumer who reads fanzines.

The manner in which fanzines can recode mainstream music parallels the three decoder positions described by Hall. The three decoder positions are called the "dominant-hegemonic" code, the "negotiated" code or position, and the "oppositional code". I transpose these decoder positions into secondary encoder positions in the context of my study. In Hall's terms, a viewer takes on the dominant-hegemonic

code when he/she connotes meaning from a programme "full and straight, and decodes the message in terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded" (Hall, 1981, p.136). In my study, this dominant-hegemonic position is represented by "mainstream" fanzines, which promote and celebrate mainstream popular music. These fanzines are generally supportive of mainstream popular music by interpreting mainstream music in a manner which 'operates within the dominant code'. That is, it promotes the consumption of mainstream popular music through the star system. The second decoder position Hall identifies is that of the "negotiated code or position". This position, "contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations (abstract), while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules - it operates with exceptions to the rule" (Hall, 1981, p.137). In my study, many "taste formation" fanzines recode music in such a manner. These fanzines do not attempt to challenge dominant ideas, but offer alternative styles and tastes to those offered through a dominant-hegemonic decoding position. Taste formation fanzines single out a genre of popular music and offer an alternative to mainstream popular music through the celebration of difference in style. They make their own rules and express concerns with regard to their specific taste. The final decoder position identified by Hall is the "oppositional" code. This position "detotalizes the message in the preferred code in order to retotalize the message within some alternative framework or reference" (Hall, 1981, p.138). "Political" fanzines in my study fit this description because they interpret popular music from an alternative-oppositional framework. They detotalize music's meanings and retotalize these meanings

from a specific political perspective.

The three fanzines I use in my study are Rolling Stone, Reargarde, and MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL (MRR). The roots of Rolling Stone is a small radical rock fanzine out of San Francisco in the sixties. It tamed its radical perspective and grew in popularity and range of content throughout the seventies. In 1978, it picked up and moved to New York. It is now a mainstream entertainment guide owned by Arrow Publishers Incorporated whose target audience is yuppies. According to a recent call to the Rolling Stone head office and its advertisements in other mainstream magazines (such as Interview), young male and female professionals with a large disposable income are Rolling Stone's target audience. It has a circulation, as of December 1988, of 1,273,681 with distribution to North America, Europe and Australia. It can be considered a mainstream mass medium. Reargarde and MRR have much shorter histories, smaller audiences, and an alternative orientation which classifies them as alternative media. Reargarde began as a program guide for CRSG radio (Concordia University radio) in Montreal in 1984. Within a year, it grew into an alternative rock fanzine complete with interviews and articles. In 1987 it severed links with CRSG and has since survived on advertising revenue and various grants. It now appears free and fairly regularly in many 'alternative' and university locations throughout Montreal and Toronto (as of December 1988). It claims a circulation of anywhere from 20,000 to 30,000 aimed at university age alternative rock fans. Finally, MRR which is based in Berkeley, was put together in 1981 in the midst of the California hardcore punk craze by a few musicians and supporters. It has always been a non-profit collective which solicits articles from

its readers and money from advertising and a cover charge. It claims a circulation of 14,000 in North America and Europe aimed at punk fans and people interested in "the truth", according to a worker in a recent telephone interview.

I analyze the frames contained in a sample of these three fanzines from a one year period.² Rolling Stone represents what I call mainstream fanzines. Mainstream fanzines are those which feature artists of the most popular music, according to sales, as their main focus. Mainstream fanzines frame music products (artists) in a way which emphasizes their star status, personality, and personal life. Due to their status as a large mainstream media, mainstream fanzines are most likely to frame music products and information in a manner which maintains the political status quo since the fanzine owners, and sometimes fanzine workers, have an interest in the existing system. This relation with power is not compatible with many progressive social movements whose objective is to alter existing power structures.

Reargarde represents taste formation fanzines in my study. A taste formation is the expression of commonality through a preference in taste. A taste formation fanzine emphasizes a particular genre of popular music such as speed metal, heavy metal, hip-hop, house music, etc, and frames music products in a manner which emphasizes characteristics common to the style of music. They are least likely to include information other than music related information. Reargarde's taste formation centers around alternative college radio rock music³. Like all taste formation fanzines, Reargarde frames music products as they fit into its taste formation; that is, it frames music products in a manner which stresses its "alternativeness" to mainstream popular

music and mainstream culture. Reargarde also expresses a preference for music which is marginal in popularity in relation to mainstream popular music. In taste formation fanzines, democratic politics inherent in music products are exposed if these politics are an important element of the style of a music product and/or if the politics contribute to the establishment of the music product as part of the taste formation. For example, the politics expressed in the music of **Billy Bragg** are an important element of his music and aid in establishing him as an alternative music artist. These politics are stressed in alternative rock taste formation fanzines such as Reargarde. Some taste formation fanzines can be politically democratic while others are conservative, depending on the importance of politics inherent in the genre of popular music the fanzine presents. For instance, a disco fanzine is less likely to include progressive politics in its framing of disco songs, because the lyrical content of these songs generally lacks democratic politics and the overriding concern of the fanzine (and presumably its audience) dictates that music products are framed in a way which stresses each product as a dance hit. This example can be compared to a straight-edge skinhead fanzine whose lyrics and style include the politics of social change through personal change. These politics are an important part of the taste formation and are likely to be included in the framing of music in the fanzine.

The final category of frames contained in fanzines is political fanzines, represented by MRR in my study. These fanzines clearly pronounce an interest in politics from a specific position and frame music products in a manner which highlights music's politics from the

fanzine's political perspective. Political fanzines as a frame, frame music and politics from the same perspective. Music products are framed in a manner which emphasizes their politics from the fanzine's perspective, whereas other inherent qualities in music products such as sound and style, are included as secondary in importance. This type of fanzine may also choose to include only a certain genre of popular music, similar to a taste formation. However, political fanzines differ from taste formation fanzines in that they frame music products in a way which emphasizes the music products' politics from the political perspective of the fanzine, instead of (or as well as) highlighting characteristics common to the taste formation. MRR, which represents political fanzines in my study, contains frames of music products which highlight the ideas of music products from a socialist/ anarchist perspective. Although MRR features various sub-genres of punk rock and celebrates what it considers to be punk rock, it frames these music products so as to highlight the music product's politics from a socialist/ anarchist perspective. An anarchist pose has been part of some punk rock, however, MRR goes far beyond this pose and analyzes music and its other raw materials from a well articulated socialist/ anarchist position. MRR also includes articles in the fanzine (ie., articles which deal exclusively with politics and/or articles which examine how music relates to politics) which highlight political issues from its perspective. This type of framing differs from a taste formation in that articles are written from a specific political perspective, characteristics common to the music interpreted in the fanzine are of secondary importance. This manner of framing music products and other issues fleshes out the politics in popular music products as well as political issues from other sources of

information. This framing technique promotes an anarchist/ socialist perspective in both its music and non-music articles (which separates it from being a taste formation fanzine) and can serve as a forum for the proliferation of ideas expressed in various social movements.

At this point, I divide my analysis up into two distinct studies. First, I analyze the frames contained in music articles in fanzines. I analyze these frames first because music articles are only one part of the information in a fanzine. After I analyze the democratic potential of music articles due to the frames employed by fanzines, I open my examination to include the democratic possibilities of each fanzine as frames of information. I perform my analysis of the frames in music articles in the following manner:

(i) I examine the music products which each fanzine features. That is, fanzines can frame the music product of an artist as a star, artist as performer and producer of music commodities, or artist and music commodities as media for political ideas.

(ii) I examine the elements of music products highlighted in the framing of music products. That is, I determine whether a fanzine prioritizes the personality and personal life of an artist, lyrics, sounds, style, mastering of technique, or the politics of music as important elements of music products. This analysis determines what the fanzine feels is important in each music product.

(iii) I attempt to discover what writers assume about readers. I note the assumption of readers' knowledge of music products and their politics. The examination of language (such as the use of "subcodes", categories, and obscenities) used in the fanzine aids in determining writers' assumptions. This examination indicates the type of reader

the fanzine assumes is interested in its content.

The second area of my analysis is a study of the fanzines as frames of information. I examine the music products and issues (political and others) the frame of fanzines highlights, include, and omit. The owners and workers of all three fanzines have the same (or a very similar) possible universe of music and issues to choose from when they write their fanzine. However, decisions by fanzine personnel are made which determine what is to be included in the frame of information in the fanzine. I examine different elements included in each fanzine. The different elements of fanzines I consider are (i) the cover, (ii) the handling of letters, (iii) music articles, (iv) non-music non-political articles, (v) advertisements, and (vi) political articles. I examine these elements not only in terms of their frequency, length, subject matter, and detail, but also in terms of the framing techniques used in each element. That is, I analyze the sources of information, the claims of facticity and credibility, and the perspective the fanzine takes on each subject. For example, does the fanzine extensively, and in great detail, examine political issues in a manner which frames existing power structures as legitimate, or in a manner which questions these?

These decisions which determine the frames used in fanzines indicate the relationship between fanzines and other groups (both power groups and subversive groups). These decisions help determine both the democratic potential of music articles and the frame of information in a fanzine in regard to projects such as that proposed by Laclau and Mouffe by fanzines.

Frames Contained in Music Articles in Fanzines

I begin my analysis by examining the frames contained in music articles which appear in Rolling Stone. My survey of Rolling Stone reveals the following points. Firstly, this fanzine highlights the music product of artist as a star. Rolling Stone employs various strategies to legitimate artists as stars. Secondly, the elements of the music products highlighted in Rolling Stone are the personality and personal life of the stars. By highlighting the personality of the stars, this fanzine strengthens and promotes the fascination and consumption of the star system. The star system is not only a system which is meant to increase consumption and profits for the record industry, but it also links the idea of economic and sales success with popularity and importance. Thirdly, music commodities by well-known artists, such as records, videos, and concerts, as well as elements of these such as the sound, lyrics, and playing technique, are also part of the frame of music in Rolling Stone. However, these are not framed as music products or characteristics of music products unto themselves, but as reflections of the personality of the stars. Finally, this fanzine assumes the reader is a middle-age professional who has an interest in existing power structures and is not concerned with change. The following analysis illustrates this type of framing.

The first monthly music article to appear in Rolling Stone is "Random Notes". Every month this feature displays pictures and short paragraphs describing the activities of artists both in and out of the industry. It is a listing of the latest private, public, and social functions of the stars. Although most of the articles examine music related activities, many of the stories have little to do with the making of music. For example, in September, "Random Notes" identifies

three 'celebrities' who are participating in a charity run. At the end of the article Rolling Stone mentions their music related activities. A few months later (January 1989), a story of a luncheon prepared by "the stars" to promote the book "Rock 'n' Roll Cuisine" appears. This article features a list of 12 artists, or stars, who were present at the lunch. In another story, the reader is informed of the circumstances surrounding a meeting between **Robert Plant** and **UB40** at a party.

"Random Notes" frames the perceptions of artists in a way which highlights the personality of artists. Their music-making is secondary to their personality. Quotes from artists, which are incorporated into most of these "Random Notes", feature their thoughts on their personal life and their personality, not their music. For example, the 22 September 1988 issue describes the problems **John Hiatt** has endured in putting out his latest album. The article states that Hiatt's former band bailed out on him. However, the reader is informed of Hiatt's outlook in such circumstances, revealing his personality. He says: "I'm a hockey fan, and in hockey, you change on the fly." The article's commentator then explains how Hiatt found another group and recorded the album. The article informs readers that one of the songs is named after Hiatt's new-born daughter. Hiatt's final quote adds more information on his personal life. Hiatt says: "The song pales in comparison to the baby." The choice of such quotes reveals the fanzine's desire to frame the personal life and personality of the artist as important.

This framing technique of prioritizing the artist as a star, runs through all music articles in Rolling Stone. The fanzine uses various strategies to frame artists as stars, depending on their claim to

fame. Their importance to music, whether it be in the form of sales, influence, or as an up-and-coming star, is identified, so as to legitimize their presence in the fanzine. The following is a sample of various ways artists are legitimized as stars.

Lesser-known celebrities must be proven worthy of celebrity status. Rolling Stone frames these artist in a manner which celebrates them as the best at something or influential. The band **They Might Be Giants** is framed as "the world's foremost absurdist rock band..." (12 January 1989, p.26). They "have made their contribution to the decade" with their intellectually humourous music. **Roy Buchanan** is not a name which frequents the music charts. To legitimize an article on his death, Rolling Stone frames him as: "The groundbreaking guitarist, whose innovations influenced a generation of rockers..." (22 September 1988, p.20).

Another way Rolling Stone legitimizes the star status of artists is by framing artists as up-and-coming stars. This happens when an artist releases a financially successful debut album. For example, in 9 February 1989, **Edie Brickell and New Bohemians** are framed in such a manner. The band not only "produced a successful debut album", but their music began by "conquering the somewhat stagnant local scene" before reaching the readers of Rolling Stone.

The final method of legitimizing the star status of artists is through their previous and/or present success in record sales. This is the most common method of framing artists in Rolling Stone considering almost all the artists they feature were or are in the top 40. For example, the band **Bon Jovi** is described as soldiers out to conquer the USSR who can succeed "for the same reasons it has succeeded

in the United States" (9 February 1989, p.54). **Metallica** is labelled as "thrash superstars" and "one of America's biggest bands, heavy metal or otherwise (12 January 1989, p.44). Past and present achievements are listed to further legitimize the band as superstars. The article claims:

Its the kids who have bought over a million copies of **Metallica's** latest album, ...*And Justice For All*, zooming it straight into the Billboard Top Ten. And it was the kids who put the band's 1984 LP, *Ride The Lightning*, its 1986 LP, *Master of Puppets*, and its 1987 'covers' ep, *Garage Days Re-Revisited*, in the gold- and platinum-record winners' circles (IBID, p.46).

Another typical framing technique employed by Rolling Stone which highlights the artist as a star is to isolate key members of groups and elevate them to star status. The preference of the individual, as opposed to the group, is evident in all aspects of Rolling Stone. Most of the features in the fanzine discuss individuals in groups or solo performers. Exceptions to this include **Van Halen** (14 July 1988), and **Metallica** (12 January 1989).

A review of **REM** and the **Waterboys** pick out the front men (Michael Stipe from **REM** and Mike Scott from the **Waterboys**) as the topics of their reviews. The **Kingdom Come** article singles out front man Lenny Wolf (22 September 1988, p.24). He is the only member of the band whose musical contribution and personal life is revealed through the framing of this article. An article on the band **Jane's Addiction** celebrates Perry Farrell (lead singer of the band) as celebrity (9 February 1989, p.34). The band is "his art project". He is the only member of the band who is quoted and instead of examining the group's ideas and goals, the article examines Farrell's ideas, history, and on-stage antics. Finally, Edie Brickell of **Edie Brickell and New**

Bohemians is quoted throughout the Rolling Stone article and the only member given a personal history, even though she claims the band is a group project, "there is no leader..." (9 February 1989, p.24).

Although articles mention the music in which each performer engages, the frame of the articles highlight the musician's personality and perceptions. For instance, every article contains the age of performers, their personal history as a child, teenager, and young adult, as well as their recording history. This applies to everyone from the members of Van Halen, to Billy Bragg, to Keith Richards, and U2. Music is discussed in these articles, but only as part of the artist's personality.

Feature articles also highlight the personality and personal life of artists. I analyze three features because I feel these are typical of the framing of artists in features in Rolling Stone. This analysis confirms the notion that artist personality and personal life takes precedence over all other elements of the music in the framing of music in Rolling Stone. The first article is a three page feature article on Bruce Hornsby (22 September 1988, p.75,76, and 78).

The article begins with the journalist describing a game of basketball played by Hornsby in Hornsby's hometown. The journalist claims this exercise "may provide some clues about who he is" (p.75). The reader is told what he looks like, what he is wearing, and his age. The journalist describes him as competitive and youthful. Finally a connection is made between the man's personal life and his music. The article explains how, like Bruce Springsteen, his music is inspired by his region of birth. The lyrics and instrumentation of his last album are used to illustrate this point.

The article drifts back to Hornsby's personal life and links his

hobbies and interest in literature with his writing. The article, which is the journalist's opinions on the man with quotes from the artist which confirm the notions of the journalist, describes Hornsby's personality: "Hornsby's thriftiness, love of quality literature and interest in politics and social issues tempts one to label him the Michael Dukakis of rock & roll — an earnest, sober, trustworthy guy" (p.76). The article continues in this manner, describing everything from Hornsby's driving speed to Hornsby's perceptions of his own music.

The reader learns of Hornsby's childhood, family history, education, and his brothers and sisters. The history of his band and circumstances surrounding a major label deal are discussed. The article ends by listing other stars Hornsby has worked with and relating his success to his personality revealed in the basketball game cited at the beginning of the article. The article claims, "He credits the band's success to the work ethic. Music, like basketball, he always takes seriously" (IBID, p.78).

The framing of an artist as a star and prioritizing the personality and personal life of the star is easier to do with some performers than others. An artist who is least likely to be framed in this manner, because of the importance of politics in his style and personality is Billy Bragg (12 January 1989, p.18). Due to this unusual match of fanzine frame and artist, an analysis of this is beneficial.

This article begins by identifying Bragg as being "well known as a lover of politics" to establish his credentials as a star. His age, childhood, and adult activities in and out of the music industry are exposed, as is his ideology of music. The article informs the readers

of a relationship that went bad for Bragg, largely because of his work. This relationship is framed as influential in his latest album which is a "compelling, heartbreaking song cycle". The article describes the latest album's sound and lyrics as part of Bragg's personal tragedy and how people identify with his music. The article examines how Bragg's music is a reflection of his personal life. It reads: "The best thing about the trauma and the bout of songwriting that followed was that 'it rehumanized me'" (IBID). This article successfully frames Bragg as a star whose personal life is revealed. His latest album *Workers Playtime* is described by Rolling Stone as a reflection of Bragg's personal life and personality.

The final article I examine is a record review. Even though this obviously is most concerned with the record itself, the record is seen as a reflection of the personality of the artists. In the 20 October 1988 issue, there is one review which examines *Nothing Shocking* by Jane's Addiction and *Land of Dreams* by Randy Newman. The review tells us that "Newman, forty-four and unprolific, makes immaculate pop music, with a lushness borrowed from movie soundtracks; Jane's Addiction, young and restless, makes music that scrapes against the smooth surfaces of commercial pop" (p.83). The reviewer claims that what they have in common is they both paint very vivid pictures of recognizable, real people in these albums.

The article describes the sound of the album by Jane's Addiction. Farrell, identified as lead singer and lyricist, "offers us his views" on various topics through his lyrics. The review explains that this album is the expression of what Farrell sees in the world, a reflection of his personality. The lyrics and sounds are praised because the lyrics of one song is "a worthy left-coast successor to 'Walk on

the Wild Side'" and because the sound of "Jane's Addiction is the true heir to Led Zeppelin..." (p.84).

The second half of the article examines the album by Newman. The review claims that in the past Newman role-plays in his songs, never revealing his personality. It claims, "Newman has spent much of his career animating and hiding behind disagreeable characters..." (IBID). This new album is praised because Newman not only role-plays, but he also "seems to speak directly and frankly about Newman" (IBID). This record describes Newman's personality and is celebrated for this. The reviewer analyzes each song's sound and lyrics and how these describe a part of the musician's personality. For example, "'It's Money That I Love' makes sense mostly as a way to illustrate Newman's lengthy writer's block" (IBID). This framing of record reviews analyzes records as expressions of the personality of artists.

The last element of the frames contained in music articles in Rolling Stone that I analyze is the assumptions of writers concerning readers. One feature I noticed after a survey of music articles is that age is mentioned in every article. If an artist is 30 years old or older, their age is incorporated into a sentence. If a group or individual is under thirty, they are described as "young and restless", "barely post-collegiate", or "kids themselves". For example, the members of Metallica are approximately 25 years old. Rolling Stone gives the impression that its readers are much older than Metallica by framing them as kids. The article reads: "They know instinctively what kids want - because they are kids" (12 January 1989, p.46).

This same article accentuates the youthfulness of Metallica

through their ignorance of an older band in which Rolling Stone assumes the reader has some knowledge. The article claims 'Young James Hetfield (a member of Metallica) does not like the "Beatles and ... like that". The article counters this claim by describing a time when the group's tour manager was playing "the big guitar crescendo in I want You (She's so heavy)" by the Beatles and Hetfield shouted "Hey what's that? That's pretty fuckin' hot" (p.48). This story shows how young the band really is due to their ignorance and proclaimed dislike for the Beatles. This article assumes that the reader knows the "big guitar crescendo" as well as the Beatles song in question. If this were not assumed, the story would not be funny to the reader because the reader would be as ignorant as 'young James Hetfield'. These assumptions indicate that the reader is older than Metallica and the reader knows music of the sixties. Due to the age of writers and readers of Rolling Stone, there is an emphasis on the rock sensibility in the writing of music articles, with a concern for authenticity and sincerity of the artist as I discuss below.

Another noticeable assumption in the writings in Rolling Stone is that obscenities are avoided to prevent offending readers and advertisers. Obscenities are allowed when they are part of a quote; otherwise they do not appear in the text. This practice assumes readers and advertisers are offended by the use of obscenities. By not swearing, Rolling Stone assumes readers and advertisers respect adult, business, linguistic etiquette. There may also be an assumption on the part of the fanzine that the people reading the fanzine have children who can read the fanzine, so swearing is kept to a minimum. Young professionals (that is, yuppies) fit this description, especially if the 'normal' age of performers are considered.

Like the other fanzines, Rolling Stone is concerned with a band "selling out". According to Frith, this is a concern of audiences with a rock sensibility (from the sixties and early seventies). Of course, the definition of selling out differs from one fanzine to the other. In the case of Rolling Stone, a band does not sell out because it switches from a small to a major label. The criteria is not becoming successful since this is celebrated, as I noted earlier. Instead, the criteria for selling out is whether or not a band maintains creative control over their music. For example, R.E.M. 'hasn't sold out' by signing on to Warner Brothers because it "has taken the opportunity to crack open the shell it's been pecking at since it recorded its first album" (12 January 1989, p.63). They are still producing the same style of music, with even better lyrics and sound, as they were before they signed on to a major label. They have not given up their creative freedom and sold out to the company.

In another article, "Metal Romances Radio", it is again discussed how selling out is not related to success or signing on to a major. A record executive dispels the myth that 'power ballads' by metal bands indicates selling out to top 40 radio by claiming: "They're [the bands] showing that they're not one-dimensional" (9 February 1989, p.22). What makes power ballads acceptable and not a gesture of selling out, according to this article, is that it is the decision of the bands, not record executives, to put these songs on their records. A record executive claims: "Our bands aren't stupid. You don't have to say to a band, 'These songs are great, but give us a ballad. They know what singles are going to motivate album sales'" (9 February 1989, p.22). Producing songs for top 40 radio is acceptable, according to

Rolling Stone, as long as the songs are artistic expressions of bands and not expressions of record executive greed.

The music articles in Rolling Stone are accompanied by articles about conventional politics, other media stars, people in power, and the latest in media hardware and software. There are also many full page advertisements for designer clothes and accessories, beauty products, cars, media software and hardware, food, cigarettes and liquor, all aimed at adult men and women. There are very few advertisements which promote music. These advertisements, once again, assume the readers are middle age professionals, which is the target group of the fanzine according to Rolling Stone.

Through my survey of the frames contained in music articles in Rolling Stone, a few observations can be made in regard to democratic politics. The first is that Rolling Stone frames music in a way which ignores popular music's democratic potential. The issues or ideas of artists and their music are not reviewed. Instead, individual artists are framed as stars and their personality and personal life are highlighted. The sounds and lyrics of songs are also included in the frames of articles, but as reflections of the star's personality. Rolling Stone assumes readers are young (approximately 40ish) professionals who have experienced the sixties and now are part of the establishment. Selling out is still an issue, as it was in the sixties, but is determined by whether or not an artist has artistic control over his/her music productions. Articles are written in a way which does not express concern for democratic social change, but supports a star system which promotes consumption by individuals and maintains the status quo. One of the reasons for this type of framing is that both the individual readers and the fanzine have an investment

in the establishment. It is assumed that music is just one element of the readers' consumable leisure. Readers are assumed to be more concerned with tomorrow's work agenda than today's social injustices.

I will now analyze the frames contained in music articles in Reargarde. Reargarde contains articles which review and analyze alternative college rock. Its framing of music products prioritizes the music commodity of artist (music group, not an individual) as performer and producer of alternative rock. That is, Reargarde frames music articles in a manner which highlights music groups as producers of alternative rock, unlike Rolling Stone which prioritizes the framing of individual artists as stars. The music related activities of music groups are prioritized, not their personalities. The elements of music products (the products of alternative rock artists such as records, cassettes, and concerts) which are framed as important are the characteristics of the music which warrant it part of the alternative rock taste formation. This includes a preoccupation with the classification of music into alternative rock sub-genres, the assurance that the music is marginal in popularity (that is, in contrast to mainstream rock), the music's sound (heavy guitar, home-made, raw sounds which are contrasted to the slick, well produced sounds of mainstream pop and rock), lyrics and politics (thoughtful yet fun which are contrasted to mainstream rock whose concern, according to Reargarde, is for mundane boring topics such as love), and the band's style of dress (long or short messy hair, jeans, leather jackets, Doc Martin boots, and a dominance of black in clothing. These elements of style have their roots in punk rock style and are in contrast to the fashion of mainstream culture).

The framing of music groups as performers and producers of alternative rock by prioritizing performers' alternative rock music activities is evident in all articles, including "Banned Info". This feature is Reargarde's answer to Rolling Stone's "Random Notes". "Banned Info" is a gossip feature which gives the reader the latest news on music related band activities. It reveals up-and-coming alternative rock concerts in Montreal and the activities of Montreal bands. It also lists personnel changes in bands and recording ventures by Montreal bands. It never discusses the personal lives or personality of performers unless it is a spoof. For example, in the April 1988 issue, after discussing in some detail the concert and recording activities of the Hodads, the article turns to the topic of one of the Hodad's hair. It reads: "The update on Dave's hair is its still black, and he's growing his sideburns down to his chin. (Boy, do we give you the scoops, or what)" (April 1988, p.4).

Feature articles also prioritize artists as performers and producers of alternative rock and highlight the characteristics of their style which warrant their music products part of the alternative rock taste formation. Once again, I select three examples of articles which are representative of the manner in which Reargarde frames music.

In the December 1988 issue, an article on the newly reformed Sham 69 appeared. Sham 69 is a politically aware band that tries to convey the idea that youth is a strong political force which should unite and change the world. They first appeared in the British punk movement in the late seventies and disbanded in the early eighties while still very popular in the post-punk scene. There were high expectations of the band when they reformed because they broke up at the peak of their

popularity amongst post-punk audiences (the alternative rock audience is a post-punk audience). Audiences across North America have not received the band well since reforming because their music is no longer raw and home-made sounding, but slick and more mainstream.

The article begins by introducing Jimmy Pursey (lead singer of the band). The article then claims that the band has experienced trouble with police and fans throughout their tour. Pursey is the only member of the band interviewed because the other band members were not feeling up to an interview. Reargarde almost always interviews as many band members as possible, unlike Rolling Stone which rarely interviews groups. A reason for Reargarde's desire for group interviews is its dislike for stars.

The interview begins with a question concerning some of the problems the group has experienced on the tour. After Pursey explains some of the problems with authorities, Reargarde asks which cities the band has performed at on their tour and the problems experienced during shows. Reargarde asks: "I don't want to harp on it but tell me more about your American tour, were there other hassles?" (p.9). The interviewer then directs the interview toward the performance of that evening. Reargarde asks: "Why didn't you finish the song (after you were hit)?" More questions are asked concerning the performance and Pursey's perceptions of the performance. Old songs from the late seventies (which many, including Reargarde, consider to make the band founders of alternative rock) versus new songs (which are not accepted by audiences as alternative) are discussed. The interviewer expresses this attitude towards their music by glamourizing audience response to old songs and repulsion to new ones. The interviewer claims people

were walking away during new songs and racing to the stage during old ones. In regard to new songs, Reargarde asks: "All tour, did you get the same sort of negative reaction you got tonight?" Toward the end of the interview, Reargarde asks more questions on Pursey's activities as a performer, such as: "You had an association with Jones-Cook?", "And now you have a new album out", and "What were you doing during the last break up and this reformation?". Finally, and inevitably, the interviewer attempts to classify the band. Reargarde asks: "Ten years ago you described Sham 69 as a rebel rockabilly band with country-punk influences. What is Sham 69 now?" Pursey replies: "Now we're a Classic blues-type Punk band."

In this article, Sham 69 is framed as a touring, performing, and album producing band who is classified in an alternative rock sub-genre. The element of music which is framed as important is the sounds and audience reaction to the band's old 'alternative' sounding songs. It is this raw alternative sound from the late seventies which made the band popular among alternative rock audiences. This sound is also the element of the band's style (along with their history) which warrants the band part of the alternative rock taste formation.

Depending on which band is featured, different elements of music are framed by Reargarde as important. For example, in the January 1989 issue, the sound and visual style of Montreal based D.B.C. are highlighted as important. Their sound, which is 'fast' and 'heavy' and their visual style, which is unkempt and dirty with long messy hair, contributes to their alternative 'speed metal' image. The interview begins by establishing D.B.C. as a music producing band. The topics of touring the U.S., record labels, management and the concepts behind a new album are discussed. The interviewer then defines D.B.C. as

alternative rock by contrasting their hair styles and record deals to mainstream bands. This is done when Reargarde sarcastically asks D.B.C.: "So when are you guys going to get haircuts and a major label deal?" More questions concerning distribution deals precede defining D.B.C.'s sound as alternative. D.B.C. says the sound of the second album is slower which leans toward a more mainstream sound, so Reargarde asks: "Is this going to be a more commercial album then?"; the band replies: "No, its still really heavy." After topics such as the band history, live performances, and over-playing benefits and Montreal are discussed, the band is asked to label itself. The interviewer asks: "So Dead Brain Cells are known as speed-metal. Is that something you like?" Finally, audiences response to the band's new speed-metal⁴ sound, as opposed to the more standard hardcore and heavy metal sounds is discussed.

This article, like others in Reargarde, frames D.B.C. as producer and performer of alternative music, and prioritizes genre classifications, sounds, and style as important elements of the band. These elements of the band's music are prioritized because these elements distinguish D.B.C. from mainstream music.

The final analysis I perform is on a record review to discover how these are framed. It is difficult to pick one, or even a few record reviews from Reargarde since they are written in many different ways by many different people. However, albums are classified as a sub-genre of alternative music and the qualities such as sound, lyrics, message, and/or politics are included in the framing of these artists and albums if these elements contribute to the alternative style of the band.

Hey Judester by the **Didjits** is reviewed in June 1988. Reargarde frames the alternative raw sound of this band as important because the Didjits' sound warrants this album (and the band) part of the alternative rock taste formation. The music product of performer is framed into the review, even though the performers are unknown to the reviewer. The review claims the album sounds like "a bunch of more-than-slightly-destructive guys got together in a back room somewhere in the mid-west and started yelling into a microphone and abusing their instruments" (p.19). This sentence supplies the reader with an image of the aggressive and technically imperfect sounds which emanate from this vinyl. This review illustrates the 'do-it-yourself' punk mentality still celebrated in alternative rock fanzines. The article continues by classifying the album as a sub-genre of alternative rock and distinguishes it from mainstream music. It claims that: "They end up with a dangerous mix of punk, hardcore and rockabilly [all three of these are acceptable sub-genres of alternative rock] : Fast, angry, honest and extremely offensive" (IBID). This analysis of the album not only makes reference to the sounds and their alternativeness, but it also claims the sounds are honest because they are fast, angry, and home-made.

In the same issue, M.D.C.'s *This Blood's for You* is reviewed. This article frames the band's democratic politics, as well as its aggressive sounds, as important elements of the music since these are important features of the band's alternative style. This review starts by claiming: "This records got everything going for it, catchy songs, lotsa emotion and intellectual social and political messages" (IBID, p. 21). The reviewer examines some of the political topics covered on the record. These are: "corruption in government and

hypocrisy in organized religion," and racism. The band is then typically categorized in a sub-genre of alternative rock, and their sound analyzed. The reviewer claims: "MDC are also one of the most musically competent and diverse hardcore bands around. Just listen to the spanish guitar intro to *Chock Full of Shit*." This review, like others, celebrates the elements of the music which contribute to the band's status as part of the taste formation. When one of these elements of their music is their politics, then the politics are included.

The final element of the framing of music articles I examine in Reargarde is the assumptions the writers make concerning the audience. These assumptions are exemplified through the language used in the fanzine. One assumption which is evident is the importance the fanzine gives to a knowledge of the alternative rock taste formation. The reader is assumed to be quite knowledgeable on the subject. The reader is assumed to know specific sub-genres of alternative rock, as well as its limits. A reader is supposed to be able to distinguish between techno-pop and chainsaw-pop; a party band and a mainstream corporate pop band; speed metal, death-core, metal core and heavy metal; hardcore and the 'sound of 77'; socio-political rock and sludge; reggae, ska, hip-hop, and raw rap. If a person who reads Reargarde is not knowledgeable in regard to alternative rock, they are chastized. For example, one article claims, "If you don't know the UK Subs, what are you doing reading this paper?" (June 1988, p.7).

Although the limits to the taste formation are always being defined, by distinguishing "kick-ass" bands from "corporate pop" bands, to catch some of the jokes in this fanzine, a reader is assumed

to know and appreciate these limits. For example, readers are expected to enjoy criticism of bands like U2, Loverboy, and Led Zeppelin. Preppies, the Canadian video channel "Much Muzak" (April 1988, p.17), Yuppies, and any other symbol of mainstream culture are also made fun of and put down. While dispelling rumours of a break-up of the band Failsafe, Reargarde says its not true, "don't worry, be happy" (December 1988, p.6). This phrase is stolen from a top 40 song and is a bit of tongue-in-cheek humour, assuming the reader understands the limits of the taste formation.

Another assumption I note in the writings of Reargarde in regard to its readers, is their age and living style. The fanzine attempts to appeal to a university age crowd. Mundane student concerns such as pizza, beer, and rock'n'roll are mentioned monthly: "Send us beer, lotsa beer" is a regular request. A review of a trip to Boston describes all the university bars, hang-outs, places to eat, and the campus itself (January 1989, p.13-15). Editorials and music articles (June 1988) frequently contrast old age to the assumed younger age of the reader. For example, bureaucracies are run by "old bored farts". There is also a limited use of obscenities incorporated into the text which assumes readers are unconcerned with the adult business linguistic etiquette. This is limited, in that obscenities are in quotes like Rolling Stone and also incorporated into the text, but far less frequently than MRR. It seems as though Reargarde is aware of this etiquette, knows it offends 'adult' readers, and so uses it enough to tease adult readers and keep its alternative rock readers.

A final assumption of Reargarde is that readers, like the fanzine, feel that selling-out is important. This is a big concern for the fanzine. Selling-out occurs when a band becomes mainstream by

either (i) signing onto a major label (as is illustrated by the D.B.C. interview), (ii) the music or other elements of the style of a band becomes too mainstream (as is illustrated in the Sham69 interview); and/ or (iii) a band becomes too popular and attracts a mainstream audience (as is illustrated by mentions of bands such as U2, Led Zeppelin, and Loverboy). This concern for selling-out differs considerably from that of Rolling Stone, and aids in distinguishing the taste formation from mainstream music.

These assumptions indicate that Reargarde attempts to attract university students and other university age people who are interested in the alternative rock taste formation. These people are most interested in the music, dance, clothing, and hairstyles of alternative rock as a conscious difference to mainstream popular music and culture. These interests are confirmed by the advertisements and lack of non-musical articles in the fanzine. The advertisements are of alternative music records, record shops, poster shops, used and new alternative clothing shops, alternative films at repertoire theatres, alternative and university bars, and alternative music concerts. These non-music elements confirm that the fanzine is aiming at university age people who are interested in alternative music.

Readers of Reargarde are assumed not to 'decode' mainstream popular music and culture straight out and not to entirely accept existing power structures. They are socially aware and interested in politics, as long as it is part of their fun. Lawrence Grossberg agrees that fun is the most important concern for young rock audiences and the democratic political potential in popular music is not as high a priority in Reargarde's concept of fun as the expression of diffe-

rence and choice from mainstream music. My analysis shows that some democratic ideas in music products take a backseat to taste formation style. Music groups as performers and producers of alternative music products (records, tapes, concerts, etc) are framed as important music products. The elements of a band's style which contribute to its alternativeness, such as its raw, aggressive sounds, its 'non-mainstream' lyrics, politics, hair, and clothing styles, and classification into alternative rock sub-genres, are framed as all important. According to Laclau and Mouffe, the expression of difference and choice from mainstream culture is part of a struggle against the uniformity of mainstream culture and a site of antagonisms. The democratic potential of framing music in this manner is that this site of antagonism, if allied with other antagonisms, can evolve into a democratic movement.

There is yet another way the framing of music by Reargarde has democratic potential. This democratic potential is displayed in its frame of music which includes many different sub-genres of alternative rock. Readers are assumed to be a collective group who are bound together by a taste in music which is not mainstream music. They are all part of a music and style taste culture. These readers are assumed to be different from the readers of Rolling Stone because Rolling Stone writes about individual stars to individual consumers. Reargarde writes about music groups from various sub-genres of alternative music to a readership who shares an interest in music and style which is an alternative to mainstream culture. The exposure of various sub-genres of alternative rock can attract different people from different backgrounds and concerns, outside of music, to the pages of Reargarde. This bringing together of different groups through a

commonality in music, in Laclau and Mouffe's terms, has democratic potential if these different groups can create a dialogue between each other and create alliances. This creation of alliances is something Reargarde falls short of promoting since it limits its exposure of various groups to music and its alternative qualities. However, Reargarde aids in creating a music taste group made up of various people, which is a start to creating alliances between groups.

The final frames contained in music articles I analyze are in MRR. My analysis reveals the following points. The first is that MRR, like the other fanzines, is concerned with music as an enjoyable pastime. But unlike the others, it is also concerned with music as a medium for political ideas. It frames the music product of music commodities (such as records and cassettes) and artists (always music groups) as vehicles for political messages. The second point is that the characteristics of music products which are framed as most important in MRR are the political ideas the music and the artists express. The sound of the music is also important since music which is considered politically correct, according to MRR, must be a sub-genre of 'punk' (as I explain later). The final point is that MRR assumes that political issues, music authenticity, musician sincerity, and youth as a community are important to readers who are assumed to be knowledgeable in punk. The following analysis demonstrates these points.

The first article I analyze is an interview with the band **Flux**. This band used to go by the name of **Flux of Pink Indians**. The members of Flux also run a record label called *One little Indian*, previously named *Spider Leg Records*. Interestingly, the band tries to steer away from being seen as a political band (a political band is a band which

sings about political issues from a point of view which desires a change in the status quo) because they no longer feel political bands are effective in bringing about political change. Yet MRR frames them in a manner which reveals the ideas behind the band and their music because the fanzine feels music which raises political issues is a valid means of bringing about political change. MRR frames the band members, and its music (albums, songs, and lyrics) as media for political ideas.

The interview examines and questions the political beliefs of band members. For example, MRR asks for the band's perceptions on the Animal Liberation movement. MRR also asks: "Many of your contemporaries from the 'anarcho-punk' (sic) movement subscribe to the belief that positive/ radical social change can only be achieved in the U.K. by violent confrontation with the state - would you agree?" The band's perceptions of major record companies are also questioned since large corporations are unacceptable to MRR. They quote the band and ask if the EMI label is still "lurking with bags of toffees". The band gives an evasive answer, but MRR pursues the issue by claiming to Flux that the "EMI corporation [has] involvement with manufacturing weapons systems and their close links with the Arms trade..." (IBID).

MRR also examines the goals, aims, and politics in the band's music. In regard to politics expressed in albums, MRR asks: "The feelings presented on Uncarved Block [an album] appear to be optimistic/ positive towards the future but with a strong sense of desperation/ disillusionment with the past - would you accept this? Why?" MRR asks more specific questions in regard to the music and politics of FLUX. MRR cites songs from the band's first album which deals with animal liberation and questions these. The interview also quotes

lyrics from the band which echo the band's disbelief in the ineffectiveness of political bands and asks: "so where do you stand now? Is there still a place for overtly political bands?" MRR questions the ideas behind these lyrics and the band which emphasize music's ineffectiveness by asking: "But isn't that a part of the problem? People wanting instant change instead of working toward it..." (IBID, p.37).

In other words, acting as a political conscience, this framing of music highlights the music product of artist and music as a medium for political messages. Despite Flux's obvious disillusionment with politics and popular music, the interview fleshes out the ideas inherent in the artists and their music commodities.

The next article I review is from a band whose politics are well known. This band is EX. They are a guitar-oriented experimental punk band based in Amsterdam who have produced six platters of vinyl since their formation in 1979. The opening paragraph claims EX are "fiercely politically motivated and motivating" (January 1989, p.44). It then lists their discography and describes their music style as "well-crafted slices of noise reaching sublime proportions". The paragraph explains that the band tackles such issues as "global oppression and authoritarianism; attacking both West and East, both capitalism and state capitalism." This opening paragraph frames the artists and their music commodities as packaged fun and as a carrier of political messages.

The first question asked situates the political message the band and its products relay. The question reads: "Do the EX subscribe to any particular political ideology?" MRR then turns to the internal

politics of the band, by asking: "There are two women members of the band; how does this affect the internal politics of the EX? Who writes the lyrics and music?" The interviewer then brings up the international perspective of the band through its support of international causes. The members of the band are asked their perceptions of political issues. For example, MRR asks: "Although the Dutch Peace and Anti-Nuclear Movements have suffered recent and obvious setbacks are they still strong forces? The approaches, especially at demonstrations, appears to be more militant and direct than those of their UK counterparts?" Questions continue in regard to the band's impressions and desires for the Anti-Nuclear Movement, sanctions against South Africa, and direct action.

MRR also frames the band's music as a medium for political ideas. MRR asks: "So what do you want from your music and those who listen?" The interview also frames an album as a vehicle of political messages. The interviewer asks, "With reference to 1936 the Spanish revolution you appear to be very much concerned with both the past and present, why does it remain so important and what lessons are there to be learned?" Lyrics, which MRR sees as an important element for the dissemination of ideas in music, are examined critically. MRR asks:

Your lyrics cover mass issues for instance, they're anti-war, anti-capitalism, anti-establishment, which are arguably detached from a more personal level. Why have you tended to neglect this area? Isn't it equally important to write about issues such as friendship/relationships and how we treat each other on a day-to-day basis? (IBID).

In this article MRR frames artists and their music commodities (music, records, and songs) as media for political messages. This is common to all articles in MRR. Sometimes the politics are not as agreeable to MRR as EX, and other times band's politics and ideas are

sheer jibberish (See *Artphag*, September 1988, p.45 and *Forgotten Rebels*, p. 64-65, to mention a few). However, artists and their lyrics, songs, records and cassettes are framed in a way which reveals these ideas. The same framing technique is contained in record reviews. These frame the music product (a record or cassette), as a medium for ideas and sounds, as the following analysis illustrates.

The April issue contains a review of the *If you don't like It...* cassette by Archie Bunker Politics. The review cuts down the cassette and the band for its politics with no mention of the sound of the music. It reads:

Well, their name is very appropriate, considering songs like "Just a Fuckin' Nigger", "queer Stomping Mosh", and I Hate Jews". If this is a joke...ignorance, stupidity, and hatred aren't funny. If this is serious, lobotomies are in order. Complete shit (April 1988, p.69).

Another more subtle review of an album called *Just say Yo!* by Bugout society is contained in this same issue. It does not define the politics in the music, but highlights the concept of music as a vehicle for ideas. This review reads: "A very funny record. These guys satirize just about everything, using thrash, punk, and reggae as their vehicles. All styles done with flair, making this a treat" (IBID).

Some reviews do not make reference to the politics of the lyrics at all, but concentrate on just the sounds. There are two related reasons for this type of framing. The first is that the politics in the lyrics of the music commodity reviewed are not an important element of the music. The sounds of the music commodity are fun and more important than the lyrics because the sounds deem the music commodity worthy of being punk rock. This point leads to the second reason for

concentrating on the sounds. This is because MRR equates punk rock and political correctness as the same. If a music commodity's sound is considered punk rock, then it is politically correct (more on this later). In the reviews which concentrate on the sounds of the music, the music is labelled and determined worthy of being punk rock, or a sub-genre thereof. For example, the review of *Shit Happens* by **Skid Marks** is reviewed favourably based on sounds alone. The review reads: "Full force power punk with loads of drive, momentum, and a metal influence which only adds to the devastation. Rockin' stuff" October 1988, p 101).

The last type of review describes both the politics of the music (usually lyrics) as well as the sounds of the artist. For example, the review of *Channel the Hate* by **Maddening Crowd** describes this record as, "Semi-catchy mid tempo punk with some interesting guitar work and good anti-system lyrics. 'Freedom?' stands out as a unique tune" (December 1988, p.109).

The framing technique in MRR is such that it prioritizes the artists and their music commodities as media for ideas as the most important music products. Although the sound of music products is framed as an important factor in determining whether music is authentic (as I explain below), it is the political messages usually conveyed through lyrics which are considered the most important element of music products. I will now turn to the use of language in MRR in order to identify some of the assumptions of writers about their readers.

The first thing which is noticed is that assumptions about political awareness of readers varies from very little (for example, Tim

Yohannan and Lawrence Livermore) to advanced political maturity. Sometimes readers are regarded as knowledgeable enough to experience angst, but not knowledgeable enough to define their politics. It is in these cases that music articles take on the tone of educator. For example, the review of the **Pink Turds in Space** describes this cassette as "Cutthroat vicious thrash with some metal licks and a relentless female screamer. Good anti-greed, anti-authority lyrics. Pure power!" (September 1988, p.75). This review explains that anti-greed and anti-authority politics as well as pure power sound are acceptable. These acceptable politics which are spelled out can be contrasted with the review of the **Archie Bunker Politics** cassette, whose racist and fascist politics are chastized by MRR and defined as unacceptable. The assumptions MRR is making of its readers is that they are interested in political issues raised by punk music from an anarchist/ socialist political perspective, but the knowledge, experience, and age of readers varies considerably.

Other reviews and major music articles assume readers can distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable politics. Many times a review claims a band has "good political lyrics" leaving the task of knowing what these are to the reader. Music articles also deal with relatively sophisticated political topics such as sexism, racism, authoritarianism, fascism, capitalism, socialism, communism, borders, environmentalism, and more. These music articles assume the audience believes that these political issues are important political issues. MRR also assumes readers are interested in these various topics approached from an anarchist/ socialist point of view.

Another assumption MRR makes is that readers share MRR's rock sensibility. That is, they believe in punk music authenticity, they

dislike selling-out, and they believe that punk music fans and musicians are a political community. Music is defined as authentic if it comes from "deep inside" (November 1988, p.44), if it has a politically correct message, and if "it rocks", or it's "punk". Punk is equated with being politically correct. For example, one headline reads, "Nicaragua is punk rock." (June 1988, p.21). In another review, "The Yeastie Girlz" are politically correct because they have "the punk attitude". Punk is not authentic if it is on a major label. This is displayed through the selection of bands interviewed in the fanzine (no band is on a major label), and MRR's preoccupation with asking bands if they would sign on with a major. The reason for MRR's dislike for major labels is because they are big corporations who are part of the existing power structure which has many social injustices; the social injustices MRR exposes in an effort to change.

According to MRR, punk is more than just music or an attitude; it is also a "scene". This scene is a comradery through a similar taste in music, youth, and politics. Many times, articles and columns mention 'the scene' as a force which can offensively or defensively take action on issues. MRR sees the punk scene as a potentially political community where change is possible. This vision of the punk scene as a political community is a continuation of the rock sensibility which began in the sixties described by Frith. MRR assumes readers see themselves as a political community, bound by a similar taste in music who consider political actions and awareness part of their fun associated with their music. This concept of fun can have democratic potential if the political ideas of the readers and the fanzine are articulated and to the benefit of as many oppressed groups

as possible.

The free use of obscenities throughout all articles assumes that this will not offend readers. This type of attitude ignores adult, business linguistic etiquette which suggests that readers and writers purposely defy and rebel against accepted social norms. Also, writers assume readers possess a knowledge of punk rock and all its sub-genres, almost to the extent of Reargarde. A reader is expected to know punk's sub-genres such as East Coast hardcore, West Coast surf-core, pop punk, funk punk, thrash, mid tempo punk, Scottish psychobilly, peace punk, anarcho-punk, '77 type punk, metallic influences, etc., to understand how a band sounds and the type of politics conveyed in their lyrics. MRR supplements these descriptions with comparisons to more famous bands. This helps the less informed reader and does not assume as much knowledge about punk as Reargarde does about alternative rock, though this difference is minimal. This information about sub-genres also assumes readers of MRR are not as much a homogeneous group in regard to their level of knowledge of music as is the case with Reargarde. By being open to readers of different levels of knowledge in music and politics, MRR has democratic potential because it will address and appeal to readers from different backgrounds and groups. This has the potential of building understanding and alliances between different groups.

The assumption that there is a diverse readership of MRR is strengthened by the issues and events discussed and advertised in the other elements of the fanzine. It contains many articles whose topics are issues of various oppressed groups written from a socialist/anarchist perspective. It also contains advertisements of punk commodities and events which deal with issues such as gay rights, anti-

racism, and the environment. It is in this context that readers interpret the music articles of MRR.

MRR frames music products in a way which highlights the messages contained in music commodities. The music products MRR concerns itself with are punk rock music commodities (mostly records and cassettes) as well as music groups themselves. Many times these messages deal with issues from a democratic position, highlighting today's social inequalities. Like the messages highlighted in music, a large variation in assumptions surround the readership. Some articles demand political maturity, while others do not. All, however, act as an informational guide to a readership who is assumed interested in punk rock for more than sounds and dancing. The writers assume the readership is one which is interested in democratic politics, which comes from many different levels of education, and is willing to collectively consider radical change.

This survey of frames contained in music articles in the three fanzines reveals how each type of frame in music articles can omit or highlight the democratic potential in music. Rolling Stone frames music in a way which promotes the personality and personal life of a few established individual music stars. It promotes the consumption of the star system to individuals with an investment in existing power structures. This type of framing of music articles is lacking in democratic potential because it does not promote alliances between oppressed groups which it assumes does not interest its readership. Reargarde frames music in a way that distinguishes the music it covers from mainstream music. It frames many different sub-genres of alternative music, to a readership who have a commonality in non-mainstream

music taste, in a way which highlights its difference from mainstream music. The democratic potential in Reargarde's music articles lie in both the expression of difference (an antagonism with mainstream culture which can be articulated with other antagonisms) and the different readers it brings together through its pages. Finally, MRR frames its music articles in a manner which highlights the political issues in the music from a socialist/ anarchist perspective. The democratic potential of this kind of framing lies in exposing oppression of many different groups to an issue-oriented readership. This can promote readers to ally themselves with other groups and readers.

I now open my analysis of the democratic potential of music articles to include the rest of the three fanzines. That is, I examine fanzines as frames of information (music and non-music).

Fanzines as Frames

Chapter 2 examined why fanzines frame music products in their present manner. Here I examine each type of fanzine as a frame of information and to what extent these communicate progressive democratic ideals.⁵

The first fanzine I examined was Rolling Stone. The frame of information in this fanzine holds little democratic potential as the following analysis of each element in that frame of information indicates. The cover of fanzines is an important area to examine since it "sets-the-tone", or gives the reader an initial impression, as to what is contained in the fanzine. Rolling Stone is a glossy bi-weekly which always sports a full page spread of a popular star (music or other media) on its front cover. For example, Tracy Chapman covers the front page of the 22 September 1988 issue, at which time she enjoyed the number one spot on the U.S. album charts, the fourth

position in the U.K. charts, as well the ninth position in the U.S. singles and video charts. Jon Bon Jovi is featured on the front of the 9 February 1989 issue while climbing up the charts (his album was number seven in the U.S. charts), and Van Halen is featured on the special double summer issue while touring the U.S. to support their latest hit album. Well established performers such as **Eric Clapton**, **Keith Richards** (of the **Rolling Stones**), and **John Lennon** win the cover spots on separate occasions without chart placings. The reason for these cover positions is their previous sales success. Popular film stars Mel Gibson and Lisa Bonet make the cover, as do television comedians David Letterman and Johnny Carson. The year end issue features 25 photographs of stars who made the cover during the course of the year. Rolling Stone only features posed photographs of well-known stars; that is, people with power in terms of popularity. The cover of Rolling Stone marks success. A celebrity is an accepted part of mainstream culture if he/she is featured on the cover of the Rolling Stone. This practice does not introduce new ideas and people; it only strengthens what is already accepted.

Another important aspect of the front cover is the listing of stars it features in the issue. It lists only a few of the most famous stars in each issue. Occasionally, a listing of lesser-known artists who are covered in the fanzine appear, but in smaller print. Through these listing techniques it seems the fanzine creates a hierarchy among the stars, which further strengthens the star system.

The next element of Rolling Stone as a frame is its handling of letters. Rolling Stone does not explicitly reveal its policy concerning its handling of letters. However, from my survey a few generali-

zations can be made. The letters to each issue are contained on one, or a part of one page. They have been edited to a length of one paragraph. A disproportionate number of these are written from famous people, people in the music industry, or people in power. For instance, letters were published by the Department of Community Affairs in Pennsylvania, the manager of the group **Guns n' Roses**, the executive director of a human rights organization, a famous songwriter, and the assistant director of the Leukemia Society of America. Each issue, which contains approximately ten letters, has at least two letters from people in power. The double December 1988 issue only allowed letters from music stars who discussed their perceptions of the year past and future. Rolling Stone is very selective in audience input allowing a few lines of opinion to a select few readers who are, many times, authority figures. Those in power, whether an artist (who is given the status of a star) or an executive of city council, are viewed, by this type of framing, as important, thereby strengthening existing power structures.

The next element of the frame of Rolling Stone that I examine is the music articles. Instead of analyzing the frames contained in these articles, as I did earlier, I analyze the universe of music included in the frame of information in this fanzine. Rolling Stone's framing of music is such that it gives only a few popular artists access to its pages, presenting them in a hierarchical manner, and allowing a dominance of photographs which can be interpreted as celebrating the star status of the artist, not their thoughts. Apart from the two or three feature articles in each issue, the small music articles in Rolling Stone are generally short (no more than one page long) and are dominated by posed photographs of artists. For example,

the cover of the 22 September 1988 issue advertizes feature articles on Tracy Chapman, Bruce Hornsby, George Michael and Randy Newman. Three of the four were in the charts at this time. The article on Tracy Chapman is five pages long, of which two-and-a-half are photographs. The second most important stars (according to listing style on the cover), Hornsby, Michael, and Newman, receive less space. Hornsby's article covers three pages (one-and-three-quarter pages of text⁶), Michael receives a full page spread photograph as well as a one-half page article, and Newman receives a one-page photograph along with one page of text. All other music articles are allotted one page or less. The prevalence of the posed photograph is an expression of Rolling Stone's uncritical fascination with the artist as star. The posed photograph is something to be stared at and admired, not criticized. The division of space in this fanzine, using stardom as the criteria, illustrates Rolling Stone's celebration of fame. This type of presentation strengthens those who are already powerful (in terms of sales success), and does little for new faces and new ideas. This hierarchical presentation of a limited number of proven artists maintains the status quo, in terms of music, and conveys a non-democratic ideal in terms of equal access to communicate.

The next element of the frame of Rolling Stone I examine is non-music and non-political articles. These are articles whose topics are something other than music and conventional or non-conventional politics. Rolling Stone carries many of these articles. There is at least one special article in each issue, as well as regular features. These articles and features present people in power (whether by popularity, economics or politics) and frame them in a way which cele-

brates their star status. For example, the president of CBS records, Walter Yetnikoff, is a good guy, friends with all the stars, and "the most powerful man in the record business", making him a star (9 February 1989). Other people featured include Lisa Bonet, and other 'Hot' people (19 May 1988), Jimmy Swaggart (July 14 & 28), Robert De Niro (25 August 1988), David Letterman (3 November 1988), Mel Gibson and Julia Roberts (12 January 1989), and Eric Bogosian (9 February 1989). These articles concentrate on their personal lives and perceptions. This way of framing artists and people in power creates and lends support to a star system where those with popular, economic, or political power are praised because they have power. This lends support to existing structures of power and promotes consumption of the ideas and products of those in power.

Rolling Stone also runs feature articles which do not feature a celebrity. These include a discussion (not an analysis) on divorce (14 July 1988), a 57 page autumn fashion segment (25 August 1988), and an analysis of job possibilities for graduates (6 October 1988). Regular features include the "Movie and TV" feature which discusses current visual media releases; and "Sight and Sound" which talks of new media technology like CDs, high definition television, home taping, and home recording studios. These articles do not examine each topic in-depth and critically. Instead they explain a problem or act as consumer guides by giving advice on what fashions to buy, what educational field promises a high paying job, and what video or technology is the latest and greatest. This uncritical manner of framing these issues promotes commodity consumption and existing power structures (such as educational institutions and the corporations who benefit from consumption).

The advertisements in Rolling Stone, which make up over half of its pages, perform a similar function to that of the non-celebrity articles. They promote consumption to a group which consumes. These advertisements, which are usually full-paged and coloured, promote designer clothes, beauty products, cars, media software and hardware, cigarettes, food, and alcohol, aimed at young adults. These readers, judging by the array of products advertised, have the disposable income to afford such luxuries and are consumers of such luxuries.

The final element of the frame of information in Rolling Stone I examine is the articles whose topic is politics. Almost all issues have at least one political story except 19 May 1988 and 20 October 1988. These come in the form of "Irrational Affairs" (a tongue-in-cheek examination of current political events), and "National Affairs" which is an in-depth analysis of current U.S. politics (most of the year of my study, National Affairs analyzed the U.S. election and its candidates). There are also occasional special features such as the coming recession (14 July 1988), the political implications of the U.S. being a debtor nation (25 August 1988), the fall of a gang due to drugs (22 September 1988, p.64-72), an article about Lee Atwater, Bush's campaign manager (12 January 1989), and a story on government policy and crack (9 February 1989).

These articles frame conventional political institutions and authorities as legitimate, whether or not the article is critical. For example, a critical political article on crack appears in the 9 February 1989 issue (p. 61-72). This article puts much of the blame of the drug problem in urban black communities on the shoulders of eight years of Republican policies. This article claims the Republi-

cans have neglected the black community, as well as other groups, implying the Democrats could do a better job. It does not suggest courses of action to remedy the problem or question the legitimacy of unfair governments. An article which is not critical of government is an article on Lee Atwater in 12 January 1989 (p.51-55). This article gives the reader a history of the man as a Republican, and his personal life including his love for rock 'n' roll. The article describes how Atwater plays on people's fears to win elections, yet the article does not criticize these tactics. The whole idea of deception on the part of Atwater is avoided. Despite the obvious criticisms which could have been used against this man's tactics of exploiting power, Rolling Stone chose to accept this strategy of 'doing politics', thereby maintaining the status quo.

Through my analysis of the frame of information contained in Rolling Stone, I have shown how each element maintains the status quo, with respect to music and other social issues, and politics. Each element strengthens those who have power by celebrating their power, whether this power is economic, political, or popularity in terms of sales. It leaves little room for voices other than a few of the most powerful individuals and does not include subversive ideas or issues covered from a democratic perspective in its frame of information. Instead it opts to not offend but rather support socio-political and economic norms to a relatively homogenous, but not collective, economic and social group. For this reason, it does little to promote democratic ideals that attempt to change today's social injustices based on existing power structures. Rolling Stone as a frame of information has little democratic potential.

The next fanzine as a frame of information I analyze is Rear-

garde. The following analysis reveals that Reargarde possesses different democratic potential than Rolling Stone. Six out of eight covers of Reargarde sport a large photograph of an anonymous live performer. The other two issues feature a full page graphic. Unlike Rolling Stone, the musicians on the cover of Reargarde are not posed as stars in big glossy pictures, but as unnamed musicians, performing live. The photographs celebrate the artist as musician, not as celebrity; the performer becomes a producer of alternative rock music, style, and entertainment.

The cover also communicates different elements of the style of the alternative rock taste formation, including a more egalitarian approach to listing bands. Style of hair, type of dress, the dominance of black, and the antics of the performers on the cover, reveal important aspects of the style of alternative rock. The listings of bands on the cover reveals the unacceptance of stars in the alternative rock style by not listing them in a hierarchical manner. Bands are listed (seven out of eight times) using the same print, in no particular order, which eliminates the possibility of an artist being perceived as a star (one better than another). This equal displaying of band names on the cover of Reargarde exposes bands as equals, which is more democratic than displaying bands in a hierarchical manner.

Reargarde has a stated policy for the handling of letters which gives a clear indication of its attitude toward audience participation. In the February 1989 issue, Reargarde begs for letters by proclaiming that "we'll print almost anything" (p.4). The March 1988 issue states:

We encourage you to send letters. Letters must not exceed 400 words in length and may be edited for

length, grammar or spelling, or for racist, sexist or homophobic content. All letters must be typed double-spaced and signed, and must include a phone number - not for publication but for verification (IBID, p.4).

Judging by these stated policies, Reargarde encourages almost unrestricted reader participation. Despite this policy, letters to the fanzine appear in five out of eight issues which leads one to suspect that there is a lack of mail, not a lack of interest on the part of Reargarde.

The length of letters in Reargarde range from a single sentence to almost all of the one-quarter to one-half page letter section. Reargarde frequently responds to letters. These responses consist of a one or two sentence response. Compared to Rolling Stone, which rarely responds to letters (only once in the issues analyzed and this was a rebuttle to a complaint by the manager of the group **Guns n' Roses**), Reargarde indicates a concern for audience participation and makes the effort to create a dialogue between readers and fanzine. Reargarde's letter section has the potential as a forum for debate among reader and fanzine, even though it seems vastly underdeveloped.

The next element of Reargarde as a frame of information is music. With the exception of "Random Notes" and reviews, each music article receives the same amount of coverage. That is, bands are discussed in one-page articles⁷ (usually in the form of interviews) which consist of text, graphics, and photographs of performing artists. The text always takes up most of the space, ranging everywhere from approximately half of the space of an article, such as the article on the group **Butthole Surfers** (December 1988, p.7), to approximately nine-tenths of the space in the article featuring **Vibrators** (February 1989, p.13). Judging by length alone, these articles are comparable to the

feature articles in Rolling Stone, except they put greater emphasis on what the band says, not what they look like when posed. This lack of posed photographs could also be a result of costs, since it is often more costly to produce photographs. However, the result of fewer photographs is in line with Reargarde's dislike for stars and the star system.

Reargarde also offers between six and twelve full page features (averaging around nine an issue), compared to Rolling Stone's two or three. This lengthy coverage of many bands illustrates Reargarde's dislike for putting one or two artists on a pedestal while the other artists get a short mention. Reargarde acts in an egalitarian manner by offering many equally in-depth reports of bands from many different sub-genres of alternative rock such as some rap, reggae, women's music, and many more with different views.

Reargarde offers other monthly music features such as "In Concert". This article is between one and two pages long and consists of impressions of concerts by various writers. These articles are as many times critical toward the concert as not. They are approximately 300 words long and are accompanied by either graphics of people in concert (December 1988, January and February 1989) and/or photographs of bands performing. This feature adds to the number of different music voices already heard in the fanzine.

Reargarde also offers record reviews. These are shorter than those in Rolling Stone, running approximately one or two paragraphs long. Reargarde allows many more albums into their frame of popular music than Rolling Stone as can be seen from the following comparison: a single issue of Reargarde features 50 albums, plus a separate column for cassettes and singles; Rolling Stone features less than ten with

no space for cassettes or singles. This is consistent with Rolling Stone's strategy of featuring only a few artists as stars, while Reargarde tries not to grant any group star status.

The final music article I examine is "The Chart Thing". Every issue except September and October 1988 carries this feature. Unlike Rolling Stone which bases their charts on sales only (which celebrates mainstream music culture), Reargarde takes the charts from university alternative music radio stations. It prints the top 33 1/3 from CRSG (Radio Sir George, Concordia University), the top 35 from CKUT-FM (Radio McGill) beginning in December 1988, and the top 25 according to CHRY (York University) in February 1989. These charts are based on radio airplay. This strategy for compiling charts ignores mainstream music culture and prioritizes the music which is part of the alternative rock taste formation.

Reargarde is almost exclusively a music fanzine. It carries very few non-musical articles. The articles whose topics are neither music nor politics are two regular features. Both of these help define the taste formation. One is called "Filler" written by Mr. Campbell. This column is either a story about, or interview with lesser-known comedians, or a satire on comedy found in mainstream media. For example, in the October 1988 issue (p.12), the column criticizes the use of baseball clips for comedy by major networks. Mr. Campbell sees it as "a bunch of overpaid professional workers screwing up - and there is nothing funny about that" (p. 12). In another issue (June 1988, p.22), Mr. Campbell claims he interviewed the famous mime Marcel Marceau on the telephone and received no verbal responses. The other feature is "Rockin' With the Rev" (it appeared every month except

September and October). This feature defines the limits of the alternative rock style by satirically examining its various aspects. For example, he defines the recommended haircutting procedure through satire. In the February 1989 issue, the Rev advises readers to get haircuts at cheap barber shops or do it themselves (but don't go to normal styling parlours). As the Rev says: "The Fun Thing about The Barber Shop is that it is cheap, its fun, and you get to Hang Out with God for a while." (p.15). He celebrates the inauthenticity of the alternative rock style by ridiculing elements of the style such as jeans and black leather (March 1988, p.23), and Doc Martin boots (January 1989). The Rev claims that when you try on a pair of Docs "You look real cool", but they are painful to wear. The reader is advised against buying the more comfortable yet "trendy Le Chateau heathenous stuff" (January 1989). The Rev acknowledges the fact that these elements of the taste formation's style are nothing more than a pose, but they are the essence of the taste formation.

The advertisements in Reargarde also contribute to the taste formation style. Advertisements are limited to those which tell readers where to go for alternative clothing, records, films, concerts, posters, and music. There are relatively few advertisements in each issue (probably due to a lack of demand for advertising), which does not promote consumption to the same degree as Rolling Stone. For example, 82 of the 140 pages in the February 1989 issue of Rolling Stone are advertisements, while the February issue of Reargarde has only six and one-half pages of advertisements in its 28 pages. This limited advertising helps define the taste formation and limits the promotion of consumption to taste formation commodities.

Reargarde contains no articles whose topics are conventional or

non-conventional politics. In place of these, this fanzine features a monthly editorial which offers some insights into the fanzine's political orientation. The December 1988 issue claims: "Politically correct: We're not. Politically Oriented: We're not." This proclamation in Reargarde's editorial displays a distaste and rejection of politics completely which is a political orientation in itself. This political orientation has an anti-bureaucratic and anti-mainstream culture bias. In four editorials, the CRTC is criticized. The editor claims the CRTC: (i) is not attuned to Canadian culture (October 1988); (ii) is responsible for the bland music fare offered on Canadian radio and offered by Canadian recording companies (April 1988); (iii) engages in bureaucratic interference with progressive radio programming (September 1988) and (iv) is no more than a "Bunch of overpaid bureaucrats [who] should be put out to pasture before they destroy Canadian radio completely" (December 1988). Other bureaucratic power groups which are criticized are (i) the Canada Council which is "a masturbatory method for the over-50 Canadian art establishment to give itself lots of money and cushy jobs in the Civil Service" (December 1988); (ii) the M.U.C.; (iii) the Quebec justice system and (iv) mainstream media (March 1988).

The editorials also define the taste formation. It describes what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in terms of music. In the December 1988 issue, the editor claims the content of the fanzine is "Not Top 40. Just about anything else." In the same article it claims to be a "Rock 'n' Roll" fanzine. The term rock 'n' roll is very flexible, as Larry Grossberg points out in the article examined in the last chapter. However, the editorials offer more insights into

what it considers part of its rock 'apparatus'. The September 1988 editorial puts down "60s pap" and claims that most skinheads are not bad. It also cuts down the Grammys as being too worried about record sales and not actual recordings. "Money-grubbing" corporate artists who cater to the "Big Chill" (yuppy) generation are not the editor's idea of rock 'n' roll. The editor claims: "I always used to think that rock 'n' roll was based on young people making a racket, now its just old people making money." These editorials help define what is an acceptable part of the fanzine's taste formation.

This fanzine frames music and other issues (mostly music) in a manner which constantly distinguishes important elements of the taste formation of alternative rock from mainstream popular music and culture. This occurs in each element of the fanzine. It displays a distaste toward government bureaucracy as well as big corporations and their artists. Although democratic politics are rarely discussed in Reargarde, the fanzine as a frame offers great potential through its egalitarian handling of many different bands and letters. Reargarde offers democratic potential by bringing different people and ideas together through a commonality of non-mainstream taste in music. It is with this frame of music and other information that readers consume their favourite alternative music products.

MRR is the third and final fanzine I examine as a frame of popular music and other issues. This political fanzine frames its raw materials from a socialist/ anarchist perspective. This is evident throughout the entire fanzine, as I verify through the following analysis.

MRR rarely celebrates an artist to the extent of placing a picture or name of an artist on the cover in a way which celebrates one

artist over another.⁶ Instead, a common theme on covers is people displaying angst (political, musical, and combinations of the two). The April 1988 cover features graphics of Russian music bands singing toward a uniformed man who is screaming back at them. May 1988 offers a full face graphic of a man screaming (this is a graphic of a band). One month later, the graphic of an angry woman with clenched teeth and fists beside a wall which has the word "FUCK" spray painted on it captures the spirit of angst. On the July cover, an unhappy native stands in front of a map of the U.S. with the words "THIS IS INDIAN LAND!" inscribed beside him. The cover on the following issue displays a graphic of an angry man snarling from inside a garbage can. September offers an Andy Warhol type graphic of 12 identical faces of a man looking straight at the reader with intensity (this is another graphic of a band). In October, a performer screams into a microphone, and February 1989 sees a young fist-clenched man in flames standing in a fighting position. He wears a "BAD RELIGION" T-shirt (this is a name of a band) while staring out a window at a Dali-type cross figure. These covers reveal MRR's concern and anger for groups who experience political angst. These covers juxtapose this political angst with musical images and names, suggesting possible links.

Like Reargarde, MRR encourages reader input (In fact, 90 percent of each issue is reader produced (September 1988, p.21)). The letter section has democratic potential by allowing people and groups with many opinions to express themselves and develop a dialogue between each other. It runs from five to nine pages in length and many letters are answered frequently by "shitworkers"⁹. The length of letters (which are uncensored) averages around eight paragraphs. Like the other fanzines, some letters complain about articles printed in

former issues. However, most letters are the vehicle for communication between various groups and individuals, such as between racist and non-racist skinheads. Between two and four times an issue, letters are answered by a shitworker or contributor. The replies to these letters either add to the theme of the letter submitted by a reader or criticize its contents. For example, Skully Sullivan wrote a letter describing the importance of a conscientious decision by voters on election day which "takes into account the good of the entire country." One of the shitworkers, Tim Yohannan, added the concern of voters and candidates should take into account "the good of the entire population of the planet" (p.10, December, 1988). Criticism of letters occurs when a letter is racist, sexist, or fascist. In August 1988, "Hughey the skin" responded to previous letters which slighted racist skins. Hughey claimed he was a "racist and belligerent nationalist" and expressed concern for both a "communist/ socialist takeover" and Jews. One of MRR's regular contributors, Lawrence Livermore, responded by pointing out that there is a difference between communism and socialism (something Hughey is "too ignorant" to recognize) and described how corporate America uses nationalists and racists for profit and war.

The next section I examine is music articles. MRR went through a format change beginning in the October issue. Despite the increase from 72 to 128 pages, both sizes of MRR contained the same number of feature interviews. During the period of my study, each issue contained six articles of "newer bands" and six interviews of "more established bands", which outnumbers the feature articles in the other fanzines. Articles which feature newer bands are approximately one-

half page in length. More than half of each article is text. More established bands receive much more space in MRR. These articles run from one to four pages long, with close to 80 percent of the space occupied by text. Once again, this lack of photography and abundance of text could be a result of budget constraints, but it is also in line with MRR's concern for the ideas behind musicians and for their music. Almost all of these articles are in a question-and-answer interview format (SNFU in October is an exception), which exposes ideas of the band and their music. The framing of many different bands into the frame of information of MRR allows for many different bands to air their beliefs. Although they make a distinction between new and established bands by giving more space to established bands (which can be viewed as non-egalitarian), this is compensated for by the sheer number of articles on different bands.

Other music related ideas are included in MRR in other articles. The "scene reports" which run between eight and sixteen pages in length, describe the musical and political climates of states, regions, and countries. Anyone in a region can write one and submit it to MRR, although it is asked that the reports consist of: "Hard info (phone numbers, promoters, clubs, etc) and photos, but please, please, please do make an effort to cover the atmosphere, awareness, and general political insights of your region. Enlighten us to not just the music scene" (September 1988, p.2). MRR also has articles written by fanzines, concert promoters, and radio programmers which describe their contributions and perceptions of the scene. The monthly feature "Welcome to the Scumpit" offers critical advice to record collectors. "Between the Lions" is a selective and critical monthly

review of current underground fanzines. It is selective by only reviewing "the ones that have something in common with what MRR covers and communicates" (January 1989, p.93). Despite this limiting of fanzines, it still reviews approximately 75 fanzines each month which allows many very small fanzines and viewpoints a chance to be recognized and gain exposure.

The record review section offers more reviews than the other fanzines (approximately 130), allowing for more bands and ideas to be expressed. This complements the non-hierarchical, egalitarian notion of many voices having the opportunity to express their thoughts. MRR is the only fanzine in my study to review cassettes, singles, and records together. (Rolling Stone reviews only records and Reargarde has a small separate cassette section). This practice does not privilege one music product over another based on access to technology. These reviews can be very critical to a degree not found in the other two fanzines. Part of the reason for the lack of critical reviews in fanzines such as Reargarde is reviewer assignment policy¹⁰.

MRR does not have a chart list like the other fanzines. Instead, MRR supplies a "Top 15" list of favourite new releases by five or six shitworkers. Usually one of these lists is by a guest. Even though these lists dominate page three of every issue, MRR trivializes their importance by introducing the feature: "For what its worth, here are the Maximum Rock'n'Roll Crews current Top 15 lists." These charts, like Reargarde's charts, are not based on sales. Instead these charts reject sales success, as well as other institutions like radio playlists, and develop their own charts based purely on preference. This method of compiling charts is a rejection of the mainstream attitude which claims that charts and sales success are a

measure of popularity.

The framing of music in MRR is such that it allows for many different views from many different people and groups to be heard. These are groups and individuals who do not normally receive exposure in mainstream media. MRR frames music in a manner which has democratic potential by allowing many varying critical voices to express themselves, which can create understanding and alliances between different groups.

The next element which contributes to the fanzine as a frame of information is the non-musical, non-political articles. There are very few of these. In fact, no regular feature or article of this description appeared in the fanzine until after the format change when a book and film review feature began. These occupy approximately three pages at the back of the fanzine, with about three reviews on each page. The book reviews cover books which range from independent releases like Notes from the Nest by Kurt Brecht (November 1988), to political books like Guatemala by Jean-Marie Simon (October 1988), to books which examine social problems like Adult Children of Alcoholics by Janet Geringer Woititz (November 1988). Out of the 29 reviews in the five months of running book reviews, there are 13 books which directly deal with corruption of power in government and transnational corporations. The others deal with everything from war of the sexes, to punk rock, human rights, and drugs. The topics of these books illustrate MRR's concern for power and change.

Advertisements in MRR are limited to commodities which are important to the politically-concerned punk scene. Almost all the advertisements (which are not many - only 32 of 128 pages in the February

1989 issue) are for records, record shops, and punk bands. There are also advertisements for punk books, T-shirts, videos, and other fanzines. The subject matter of these commodities is not only punk rock, but also political issues. There are books on women's issues, homosexual fanzines, anti-Nazi T-shirts, and collectively-run record distribution and concert halls which advertise in MRR. Although these are advertisements which do promote consumption, some of the products contain democratic ideas which gives them democratic potential.

The final element of MRR's frame of information is its features and articles whose topics are politics. MRR has three types of political features. These are (i) feature political articles, (ii) the news section, and (iii) columns by regular contributors. These articles make up a dominant part of MRR in terms of their space in the fanzine and their contribution to MRR's political identity.

Every issue offers at least one feature article which deals with a political issue from a perspective which promotes and proposes democratic change for different social groups. A survey of the year's issues confirms this notion. April explains the legal interference that Pacifica broadcasting (a progressive, non-commercial broadcasting group) endures from the F.C.C. and other conservative power groups; May features an article written by the non-aligned Chumbawamba group who analyze the Northern Ireland war and blame power groups from all sides for a lack of concern for residents' rights. June's issue was written by women for everyone. Articles cover issues such as a woman's perspective on 'punk' music, a woman's perspective on Nicaragua, an article describing the shortcomings of the feminist movement, as well as an article describing the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp in England. July describes an anarchist Indian group's philosophy of

"white capitalists [who] exploit the environment, wildlife, and themselves for short-term financial gains, causing irreversible damage and threatening the world with nuclear annihilation" (July 1988, p. 36-37). In August, free trade and acid rain are critically analyzed; September features an article on how to prevent rape; and the following month, an anarchist gathering is described by an anarchist, as well as an article which links big business and capitalism with environmental problems. November examined U.S. and C.I.A. involvement in Guatemala, and December features articles on pornography, the unfairness of the British poll tax, and a person's rights when investigated by police. Finally, MRR writes articles in January which attempt to mobilize readers against racist youth and inform readers about the positive aspects of Cuban life, while February outlines some of the martyrs and movements involved in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. This survey of topics illustrates MRR's concern for issues which involve existing power structures and their infringement on the rights of various groups.

The topics outlined above are framed in a way which promotes MRR's anarchistic/ socialistic perspective. They criticize existing power structures on political, social, personal, and interpersonal planes and offer solutions outside of authorized power, such as direct action and demonstrating. This type of framing acts critically by challenging existing power and offering more democratic answers. For example, in the January 1989 issue (p. 43 to p.46), an article examines the recent rise of the Nazi skinhead movement. The article puts the blame for the existence of this movement on power groups. Nazi skinheads "receive financial support from the super-rich ultra-chris-

tian businessmen, gain sympathy from segments of law-and-order institutions like the police and military" (January 1989, p.43). The article frames the issue in a way the readers can relate to by claiming: "As anyone within the punk scene knows, skinheads have been recruited/ created in growing numbers the last few years" (IBID). Finally, MRR offers ways to fight back, including the suggestion that readers get in touch "with others trying to organize against such tendencies", and organize a petition. This framing technique highlights government and big business's role in racism and their lack of concern for readers. It expresses concern for the rights of those without power (ie., the readers who are victims of authoritarianism) and then offers strategies to remedy the problem which are external to existing power structures.

The news section also examines political issues from a anarchist/ socialist perspective. This section attempts to "put current events into focus and provide informational background on just what the hell is really going on - something the mass media rarely does" (September 1988, p.2). Typical topics for news stories are anti-racist demonstrations, anti-nuclear direct action, and police interference with radical anti-racists, anti-capitalists, and demonstrations. More conventional political topics include the questioning of the authoritarian intentions of the U.S. government in trying to control drugs in the U.S., and labelling Bush as a drug trafficker and another joker in the "Capitalist party". These articles expose struggles of various groups which informs readers of other group's oppression.

The final type of feature I examine in the category of political articles/features are the columns written by regular shitworkers and contributors. These are personal accounts of political issues and how

these issues relate to the punk scene. Each columnist has his or her own personal method of tackling issues. For example, Mykel Board who receives more letters (usually hate mail) than the other columnists reveals current issues, then preaches dominant, typical stereotypes to uncover their absurdities. For example, in the women's issue, Mykel preaches stereotypes of men and women. He claims men don't think with their brains, but with their genitals. He offers this analogy for women: "Can you imagine what its like walking around with that thing between your legs constantly screaming? Like the human eating plant in Little Shop of Horrors, it demands, 'FEED ME! FEED ME!'" (July, 1988, p.21). Mykel also claims that "its the girls who want to get married and the guys who don't" (IBID). The reader is confronted with these obscene stereotypes which are often taken-for-granted and are forced to question their own beliefs.

The other regular columnists are much more direct in their approach to issues. "The Web of Interconnections" by The Irish Rocker brings up the possibility that the C.I.A., U.S. government, and big business are responsible for social problems such as AIDS and cults. Lawrence Livermore and Tim Yohannan directly tackle prevalent issues by questioning the legitimacy of existing power structures and suggest courses of action for readers. For example, in the September issue, Livermore counters the notion of what patriot skinheads think is American through an economic and historical analysis of U.S. culture. He illustrates how taken-for-granted American institutions such as the power of money in the justice system, big armies which only support the interests of multi-national corporations, as well as the C.I.A., racism, conformity, a limited amount of freedom of speech, and exces-

sive materialism, are all against the notion of a true democracy. These, Livermore believes, are very un-American, yet defended by nationalistic skins. The existence and activities of big business, the C.I.A., the government, and other sources of power are all "un-American", a claim which questions their legitimacy.

This survey of the frame of information of MRR illustrates how this fanzine frames its raw materials in a manner which possesses democratic potential. It promotes alternative views to current issues and relates them to the music scene. It rejects existing forms of power and offers action outside of the structures. The fanzine displays democratic potential by allowing many different groups (music and political) an opportunity to express their opinions, question others, and forge alliances between each other. This democratic potential is actualized by the multiple issues displayed on its covers, its letter section which is extensive and is an area for debate amongst readers and groups, its enormous number and length of music articles, its selection of issue-oriented books which are reviewed, some of its advertisements which promote commodities which possess democratic ideas, and the diverse issues and groups represented in articles whose topics are politics. MRR limits its democratic potential due to its limited political perspective and music taste. These prevent groups who are not interested in either of these from becoming readers. By limiting groups from its pages, MRR limits its democratic potential.

Reargarde also allows many voices and groups a chance to express themselves which can lead to alliances between groups. The only problem is these voices are restricted to musicians and music groups. This is displayed through the large number of musicians from various

sub-genres of alternative rock who are featured and reviewed. Rear-
garde also displays a distaste for some existing power structures, but
does not articulate courses of action or alternatives. This is evi-
dent in its editorials. Reargarde's distaste for existing power
structures includes an antagonism with mainstream culture and main-
stream music. This antagonism is coupled with a celebration of diffe-
rence. The importance of being alternative and not being mainstream
is evident in the alternative style it promotes on its covers, in its
music articles, in its non-music articles, in its advertisements, and
in its editorials to a readership bound together by its music taste.
Reargarde's democratic potential lies in (i) its ability to articulate
the antagonisms between its alternative music taste readership and
mainstream culture with groups outside of music and (ii) articulate
alliances amongst the music taste groups who are attracted to Rear-
garde's coverage of the sub-genres of alternative music.

Rolling Stone, on the other hand, works as a pillar of existing
power structures in terms of politics and music. It strengthens the
existing order through its prioritizing of people in power (either
economic, political, or popularity) and by presenting its materials in
an hierarchical manner. Its covers which feature a posed photograph
of an individual artist with a list of other artists presented in an
nierarchical manner, supports star system consumption by individual
readers. The limited access to its letter column, the limited number
of music articles of stars, the articles whose topics are politics, or
non-music and non-politics, all prioritize those in power and limit
access to those without it. Its advertisements, support of the star
system, and articles on technology further promote consumption to

individual readers who have an economic interest in existing power structures. The frame of information of Rolling Stone supports existing power structures and allows minimal access to ideas which counter these structures. This framing technique contains very little democratic potential.

The democratic potential of these three fanzines are different. In the next chapter, I summarize my findings of the democratic potential in the frames in music articles and the fanzines as frames of information and relate these findings to the democratic project proposed by Laclau and Mouffe.

Notes

¹The definition of a progressive social movement I am using is the one used by Laclau and Mouffe. According to Laclau and Mouffe's criteria, a movement is progressive if it is linked to other struggles because this link allows for as many groups of people as possible to be considered when democratizing society (Mouffe, 1988, p.100).

²I examine between eight and twelve issues of each fanzine taken from a one-year time period. The study period is from 1 March, 1988 to 28 February, 1989. This is a random year chosen purely out of interest because it is current. I analyze between eight and twelve fanzines because one of the fanzines, Reargarde, published eight fanzines during my study period. MAXIMUM ROCK 'N' ROLL (MRR) published twelve, but I analyze eleven because the March 1988 issue is out of print. Rolling Stone published bi-weekly throughout the entire year. I analyze twelve Rolling Stones because I feel that this number is sufficient for me to gain an understanding of the fanzine as a frame and the frames contained in Rolling Stone. For my sample of Rolling Stone to be representative of my study period, I analyze issues throughout the course of the year (See appendix A for the issues included in my study).

³Punk rock is a genre of popular music from the late seventies. Its image was, and still is, one of defiance. It differs from alternative college radio rock only in its connotation of being defiant, as opposed to different.

⁴Speed metal is a sub-genre of alternative rock. It is the combination of hardcore punk music (which was named by the band D.O.A. in 1981), and metal music which emanated from California in the mid-eighties.

⁵Once again, I use the definition of democratic ideals according to Laclau and Mouffe. A movement is a democratic movement if it links up with many groups to allow for many groups to be considered when democratizing society. In terms of fanzines, a fanzine communicates democratic ideals if its presentation of people and issues is non-hierarchical and allows for as many voices as possible from as many groups (musical and otherwise) to be presented.

⁶ I use the word text in this analysis to describe written information, as opposed to photographs and graphics.

⁷Exceptions to this are the articles on the band DOA who received two pages and Lydia Lunch who received one-and-a-half pages in March 1988.

⁸Nine out of the twelve issues feature a graphic on the cover. Only one cover displays a full page close up photograph of a live performer (October 1988) and he is not identified. Three other covers display graphics of performers (April 1988, July 1988, and November 1988) but these images do not dominate the cover.

⁹Shitworkers are the people who put the magazine together. There are no editors, only shitworkers and contributors.

¹⁰ Reargarde gives reviews of bands to people who know and like the band being reviewed. This is the policy which was explained to me by the editor of the fanzine. This policy results in fewer extremely critical articles.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Laclau and Mouffe claim that for a movement to be progressive and democratic it should forge alliances and be articulated with as many democratic movements and ideas as possible. This allows many subordinate groups the benefit of consideration when attempting to democratize society. Mouffe's criteria for the most democratic program is one which considers "a chain of equivalences between all the democratic demands to produce the collective will of all those people struggling against subordination" (Mouffe, 1988, p.99). I propose that some ancillary music media, or more specifically, some fanzines have democratic potential because they can be a common ground for discussion and consolidation amongst different groups of subordinate people. This common ground is determined by the way music articles are framed and the frame of information of fanzines. The way music and other information is framed helps determine the information in fanzines which can aid in the forging of alliances between various subordinate groups for the benefit of those groups.

Music has a unique quality, according to Rosselson, which makes it "the most intense way - of sharing, of making connections between the personal life and the public world" (Rosselson in Frith, 1988, p.474). Rosselson claims music can give a vision of a better world. Hebdige (reviewed in chapter 3) illustrates how some music fans use music to express their frustration with existing power structures; while Grossberg's analysis shows how all music fans use music for fun. The way fans have fun is determined by their taste in music. Some audience members consider music's subversive, alternative, and/or political qualities part of music's fun because these ideas are part of their subversive, alternative, or political lifestyles. Audience members, critics, and everyone else involved in music determine what

is political and how to express politics in music according to their popular music sensibility, according to Frith. Audience members with a rock sensibility consider good music as an expression of a community's needs and values. The artist is seen as the representative and voice of youth as a community. The pop sensibility understands and judges music's politics based on the management of disparate pop signs. For example, the burning of an American flag at a rock concert which is a nostalgic celebration of American rock, is a statement against American imperialism as well as the absurdity of a nostalgic American rock festival taking place in England. Another example of the management of disparate pop signs is the use of female musicians playing traditionally male instruments. These gestures are considered political because they cause confusion and contemplation on taken-for-granted matters in audiences. Ancillary music media interpret the fun and politics of music and frame music products in a way which reflects reader's definitions of fun and politics in order to attract readership. The way fans and fanzines use and determine the politics in music affects the framing in music media. Framing of music affects the democratic potential in music media. With these constraints in mind, I summarize the results of my analysis of the democratic potential of fanzines.

Rolling Stone, Reargarde, and MRR were chosen as samples of ancillary music media based on three hypothetical secondary encoder positions (described in chapters one and four) derived from Stuart Hall's "Encoding/ Decoding". Rolling Stone is a mainstream fanzine which promotes mainstream popular music. Reargarde is an alternative rock taste formation fanzine, and MRR is a fanzine which interprets

music from a specific political perspective. Each recodes or frames popular music and other information in different ways for audience members which gives each fanzine different democratic potential.

My analysis of the frames in Rolling Stone reveals that this fanzine contains very little democratic potential. In music articles, the democratic potential of music is ignored so individual artists can be framed as stars in order to promote consumption of these stars to individual consumers. The personality and personal lives of the stars are highlighted at the expense of the ideas and images in their music. Even when the sounds and lyrics are included in the frame of these articles, they are framed as reflections of the star's personality. Readers are assumed to be young (approximately 40ish) professionals with a large disposable income who have experienced the sixties and now are part of the establishment. Selling out is still an issue, as it was in the sixties (this displays that Rolling Stone holds on to part of the rock sensibility), but is determined by whether or not individual artists have artistic control over their music commodities. Music articles are written in a way which supports the star system which is in place to promote consumption of music products. The star system promotes individual stars (as opposed to groups) in an hierarchical manner which is based on their financial success, to individual audience members. Due to this focus on the star system, the democratic potential of music in Rolling Stone music articles is buried beneath the promotion of consumption.

Rolling Stone as a frame of information also shows little sign of democratic potential. Each element in the frame of information is limited in access to individuals with popular, economic, or political power. The letter section is edited to approximately half a page and

displays a disproportionate number of letters from individuals in power. This section allows minimal input by readers, especially readers without power. Rolling Stone limits the topics exposed in its covers, music articles, and non-music non-politics articles to a few stars who are presented in an hierarchical manner, based on their economic success. This framing technique does not allow input into the fanzine by anyone other than those individuals with economic or popular power. This type of framing promotes consumption of the most popular stars (popularity based on sales) and allows no room for expression from any other individuals. Advertisements and articles whose topics are media hardware and software act as consumer guides and further promote consumption. Articles whose topics are politics are uncritical examinations of legitimate political leaders, their perceptions, and their institutions. There is no room in these articles for social groups to express their views and opinions. As a frame of information, Rolling Stone opts to not offend but rather support socio-political and economic norms. This type of framing exposes a lot of information and promotion about consumption to many individuals who are from a similar socio-economic class which has money to consume and an investment in existing power structures. This leaves little or no room for groups without a lot of power to expose and hear each other's views and build understanding and alliances between each other. In other words, both the music articles and Rolling Stone as a frame of information contain little democratic potential.

The music articles in Reargarde and Reargarde as a frame of information offer different democratic potential from Rolling Stone.

Reargarde frames music articles in a way which highlights the differences between alternative rock and mainstream music. Reargarde assumes alternative music's differences from mainstream music is a high priority in its readers' concept of fun. For example, Reargarde rejects the star system. It does not concentrate on the personality of economically successful individual stars to promote consumption by individual readers. Instead, it is concerned with alternative music groups and how they are part of the alternative rock taste culture. This framing does not emphasize the individual artist, but defines a group bound by similar taste. By framing commonality through music taste not individualism determined by sales, Reargarde helps perpetuate and define a group who does not like mainstream music and culture.

Reargarde's music articles possess democratic (potential through the different people and groups the fanzine attracts and promotes. The readership is an audience w`o is assumed to be of university age, have a similar knowledge of alternative rock, and to be interested in any of the sub-genres of alternative music. One of the editorials claims that the music covered in the fanzine is anything but top 40 music. This means that different people from different backgrounds who enjoy different sub-genres of alternative rock are attracted to the pages of Reargarde. These readers read the same information about different music groups. Although alternative rock is only one genre of music, its diversity is present in the music reviewed in Reargarde. For example, there is everything from reggae, to ska, to rap, to women's alternative music, to Native music, as well as garage, West coast surf, and others. Readers are most concerned with alternative music style. However, because Reargarde contains the expressions of different cultural groups via their alternative music, the readership

who is also from different cultural groups have a chance to form alliances. Once again, these various cultural expressions are only through music taste, not social groups. This diversity of readers and music framed in a way which highlights difference from mainstream music gives the music articles in Reargarde the potential of bringing people from different socio-economic backgrounds and interests together to express their choice of difference which has the potential to lead to a better understanding of one another. This, in turn, has potential to lead to alliances between different readers and other groups in struggles for rights.

Another way Reargarde shows democratic potential is through its expression of difference. According to Laclau and Mouffe, the expression of difference from mainstream culture is part of a struggle against the uniformity of mainstream culture and a site of antagonisms. Reargarde expresses to its readership of alternative music fans, difference from mainstream music and culture through an emphasis on music and style which is alternative. For example, the elements of a music group's style which contribute to its alternativeness, such as its raw, aggressive sounds, its non-mainstream lyrics, politics, hair, and clothing styles, and its classification into alternative rock sub-genres are highlighted. Only when a band's politics warrant the band alternative, are its politics revealed. This has democratic potential if a band's politics are democratic. However, highlighting difference is also important. The democratic potential of framing music in a manner which highlights difference lies in articulating this site of antagonisms with other antagonisms. If articulated together, antagonisms can evolve into a unified democratic movement. This articula-

tion with other groups is something which is not expressed in the pages of Reargarde since it concentrates almost exclusively on music and its differences from mainstream music. However, it clearly expresses an antagonism with mainstream music and culture which has the potential to expand into a more democratic struggle.

The frame of information in Reargarde also contains democratic potential. This is displayed by its egalitarian handling of many different sources of information and its hostility toward government bureaucracy and artists who work for big corporations. Reargarde has an open letter policy. This allows for unlimited potential input from readers. Having many music articles which promote bands equally, increases the potential for people from different interests to expose and read each others' views, even though this is within the context of music. For example, there is no articles outside of music which expose views from women, blacks, Natives, workers, environmentalists, or any other social groups, yet many of the ideas of these groups are exposed in music articles. The rest of the elements of the fanzine further define alternative rock against mainstream music and culture. The editorials add to this antagonism with mainstream music by displaying a distaste for bureaucracies and artists who work for big business. Laclau and Mouffe claim a distaste for bureaucracy is a common site of antagonisms against today's hegemonic formation. Reargarde's democratic potential lies in its ability to articulate its antagonisms (with bureaucracy and mainstream culture) with other groups who are attracted to Reargarde's coverage of the different sub-genres of alternative music.

The final fanzine is MRR which, again, has different democratic potential due to the frames it employs. In music articles, MRR frames

music commodities and artists as media for political issues from an anarchist/ socialist perspective. The political messages conveyed through the sounds and especially the lyrics are considered the most important elements of music. Punk sounds are considered politically correct because they are the pure and raw expressions of angry youth which come from 'deep inside'. Framing music in a way which highlights music's political messages from a socialist/ anarchist perspective exposes the struggles by different groups such as women, Natives, youth, environmentalists, and blacks. MRR readers are assumed to consider political issues and possible action part of the fun of music. They are assumed to share MRR's rock sensibility which looks down on major label deals, and admires punk music and fans as a political community. The defining of sub-genre titles and politics by MRR assumes readers are not as homogenous in their knowledge of music as Reargarde readers. The democratic potential of the framing of music in MRR lies in the exposure of political issues in punk music which deal with the rights of groups. These issues are revealed to a diverse readership in terms of political knowledge, and a unified readership in terms of taste in music and politics. The democratic potential of the music articles in MRR lies in articulating these different readers with groups who are featured in music. By blurring the distinction between music taste groups and social groups, MRR attempts to articulate these different groups together.

MRR as a frame of information strengthens the democratic potential in its music articles. It does this by exposing issues concerning the rights of different groups and by allowing readers and groups to expose their ideas to its readers. The letter section is a forum

for people from different social groups to debate issues. This section in MRR is much bigger and used for this purpose more often than in the other fanzines. Other elements of its information frame such as the non-music non-political articles, music and political articles, covers and advertisements all expose issues which involve oppressed people's rights from an anarchist/ socialist perspective. MRR as a frame of information possesses great democratic potential because it attempts to create a forum where groups and individuals of oppressed people can articulate understanding and alliances amongst each other.

This analysis of the frames in fanzines describes the democratic potential of these music media. There are, of course, limits to this potential which must be recognized. The first is the popularity of the fanzines. Although Rolling Stone has a large audience of young professionals, alternative media such as Reargarde and MRR have a smaller and possibly more diverse (in terms of socio-economic class) audience. In fact, the combined circulation of these two alternative fanzines is under three percent of the circulation of Rolling Stone. However, my study is examining the democratic potential of fanzines and a fanzine which frames its information in a manner which attracts people from different groups to engage in a unified struggle for rights has democratic potential, regardless of its small readership.

At the same time, the more oppressed groups a fanzine can aid in creating understanding and alliances, the more democratic it is, according to the criteria of Laclau and Mouffe. This is where all fanzines in my study can improve their democratic potential. Rolling Stone limits exposure and access to its fanzine to those individuals in power. This severely limits its democratic potential.

As a taste formation fanzine, Reargarde limits its exposure of

information and music to music which is part of its taste formation. This means music which is outside of its taste formation is ridiculed or ignored. Its frame of information is further limited because it only concentrates on music and makes no attempt at exposing antagonisms of other groups with the dominant hegemony. It does not publish any work from Natives, women, blacks, the unemployed, environmentalists, or workers. It expresses a distaste for bureaucracy and mainstream culture, but offers only its alternative style as a solution. Laclau and Mouffe warn against movements which are only negative and not linked to any viable project for the reconstruction of society. They claim that this type of strategy is condemned to marginality or easily dismantled or articulated into non-democratic potential (Laclau and Mouffe, 1988, p.189). In the case of Reargarde, it is negative toward government bureaucracy. It makes no mention or complaints of big business except for major label artists. At the same time, it offers no alternatives or solutions to government bureaucracy (except for alternative music and style). Reargarde's distaste for bureaucracy can be articulated with other non-democratic discourses such as big business rhetoric which also dislikes government bureaucracy. In this case, the total negativity of Reargarde in regard to government bureaucracy is vulnerable to non-democratic discourse of big business profits. This total negativity can severely limit the democratic potential of Reargarde.

MRR also limits its democratic potential because of its limited music taste and political perspective. The music the fanzine includes in its frame is punk rock music, which is a small sub-genre of alternative music. This limits the people and groups who read the fanzine.

Even if a person is interested in the issues MRR covers, it is unlikely readers will buy it if they dislike the music it highlights. This limiting of readership is furthered by its limited political perspective. Although the rights of many groups such as Natives, women, blacks, youth, and environmentalists are revealed in MRR, these writings and articles are from a socialist/ anarchist perspective. This perspective alienates many potential readers from the pages of MRR. This exposure of one political perspective to a limited number of people and groups limits MRR's democratic potential because the only groups MRR reaches are people in groups who share the music taste and politics of MRR.

My thesis has revealed that ancillary music media, like fanzines, can play an important role in the democratizing of society. They can provide a space where groups with subordinate rights can articulate alliances with other groups with subordinate rights for the benefit of all those concerned. This democratic potential is determined by the way workers and owners of fanzines frame music articles and determine the frame of information in a fanzine. In other words, framing is the key point where democratic potential in fanzines is possible. At present there are fanzines which frame music in a manner which has the potential to aid in the democratizing of society, while others show no such potential. On the one hand, the information I provide in my thesis can provide those in music media and/ or those involved in a democratic project with useful tools for democratizing society. This information is also a starting point for other studies on the democratic potential of music media other than fanzines. On the other hand, this information is useless unless democratic ideals, movements, and change become important to those who control and contribute to the

content of music media and those who consume it. These ideas are important to a relatively small number of people. However, a small number of people does not mean democratic change aided by music media is not possible. The potential exists which makes its pursuit a worthwhile endeavour.

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Appendix A

These are the issues of fanzines by name, date, and issue number that I used in my sample:

Rolling Stone

DATE	ISSUE
19 May 1988	526
14 - 28 July 1988	530/531
25 August 1988	533
22 September 1988	535
6 October 1988	536
20 October 1988	537
3 November 1988	538
15 - 29 December 1988	541/542
12 January 1989	543
9 February 1989	545

Rearguard

DATE	ISSUE
March 1988	23
April 1988	24
June 1988	25
September 1988	26
October 1988	27
December 1988	28
January 1989	29
February 1989	30

MAXIMUM ROCK 'N' ROLL

DATE	ISSUE
April 1988	59
May 1988	60
June 1988	61
July 1988	62
August 1988	63
September 1988	64
October 1988	65
November 1988	66
December 1988	67
January 1989	68
February 1989	69